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Rural Areas and County Towns

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INTRODUCTION

5e.1 This section details significant issues specific to the County Towns of Melton Mowbray, Harborough, and Lutterworth and the Rural Areas. Issues relevant across the whole of the Leicestershire LTP area are detailed in earlier chapters.

5e.2 Leicestershire is a predominantly rural county and, whilst there are a number of larger towns, the majority of settlements in rural Leicestershire are small. The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) has an approach to "Rural Leicestershire" which reflects "the inter-relationships between small and large villages and market towns". That is, both the market towns and some of the larger villages act as a focus for, and provide services to, rural communities.

5e.3 In transport terms, the issues of towns and villages must be considered together in order to ensure adequate solutions.

5e.4 The County Council is a major partner in the LRP, and can control or influence many, but not all, of the "levers" which will enable the aims of the LTP to be achieved.

RURAL AREAS

5e.5 The following facts, whilst relating to the whole of Leicestershire, illustrate the rural nature of the LTP area:

- 75% of the total population live in 220 rural parishes;
- 311 settlements have a population of fewer than 10,000 people;
- 48% of these have a population of fewer than 250 people;
- of the settlements with fewer than 10,000 people 30% are in Harborough District and 22% in Melton Borough.

5e.6 Parish data presented in the Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council's annual Rural Services and Social Housing Report 1999/2000 shows the following transport related issues across the county:

- 79% of parishes have a bus service either six or seven days a week;

- 37 parishes reported their bus service had recently been enhanced;
- 9 parishes reported their bus service had been cut;
- 50% of parishes have no village shop, with 17 village shops closing during 1999/2000;
- 79% of parishes have a village hall, but 29 parishes do not have a village hall or community centre;
- 37% of parishes have no post office, with six post offices closing and one post office opening during 1999/2000;
- 79% of parishes have at least one public house, but five public houses closed and one opening during 1999/2000.

5e.7 Some of these figures illustrate the extent to which rural dwellers rely on transport for access to everyday facilities.

5e.8 Leicestershire County Council, in partnership with the District Councils, has produced "Community Profiles" for each District. These Profiles help identify areas suffering from rural isolation and deprivation.

5e.9 The results of the 1997 Survey of Rural Services, carried out by the Rural Development Commission (now the Countryside Agency), have been used in the Profiles to identify the range of community facilities and services available within each Parish. The Profiles identify Parishes with ten or fewer services (out of a possible 20), and highlight settlements which are more than seven miles from an urban centre and which are more than a quarter of a mile from a bus service. Based on this model, Melton Borough and Harborough District are most isolated in the county.

5e.10 The problems associated with rural isolation can be made worse in pockets of the county which also suffer from deprivation. In addition to the lack of facilities and regular public transport, some households may be further isolated because of lack of access to a private car.

LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP - RURAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

5e.11 The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) includes Leicestershire County Council, Borough and District Councils, the Countryside Agency, the East Midlands Development Agency (emda), Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish Councils, Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council, Leicestershire Health Authority and Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council.

5e.12 The LRP has developed a Rural Strategy and Action Plan for Leicestershire. This was launched at a first annual conference in 1996. This document has been reviewed in the light of experience over the last four years, and the new Consultation Draft was launched at the LRP's Annual Conference in June 2000. The LTP and the Leicestershire Rural Strategy have, therefore, been developed in parallel, with developments in one reflected in the other as far as possible. To this end there is continuing LTP input into LRP Seminars and Member and officer meetings, with reciprocal involvement of the LRP in the development and annual reviews of the LTP.

5e.13 The LRP's vision is that rural Leicestershire will comprise thriving and inclusive rural communities where:

- there is sustainable growth and regeneration;
- everyone is able to participate fully in society;
- the natural environment is protected and enhanced;
- the prosperity and competitiveness of the rural economy is strengthened.

5e.14 A series of Leicestershire strategic objectives is set out in the Consultation Draft of the Leicestershire Rural Strategy. These echo not only national and regional guidance, but also take into account needs and opportunities at a local level. These objectives have been taken into account in producing the Strategy and Action Plan.

5e.15 The Leicestershire Rural Strategy and Action Plan includes a series of themes and

actions which the LRP aims to pursue over the next few years. Though most of the themes interact with transport issues, some are more clearly related to transport, including Rural Transport, Market Towns / Rural Centres, Community Development and Services and Resources. The action plan for each theme is currently the subject of the consultation exercise.

5e.16 Through the LRP the Leicestershire Rural Strategy has been produced in partnership with a wide range of agencies including District Councils, the Countryside Agency, emda, the Association of Parish Councils and the Rural Community Council.

5e.17 The LRP has developed and supported many projects over the last few years. These include the Village Shop Development Scheme and Village Appraisals.

5e.18 The Village Shop Development Scheme is now in its third year and to date, in Leicestershire, 23 out of an estimated 70 eligible shops have received grants. The Scheme is helping to safeguard the future of village shops so that they can benefit their rural communities, which in turn will lead towards reducing the need of local residents to travel. Village Appraisals continue to be successful, with 25 groups having completed their report, and a further 15 groups in the process of carrying out their appraisal.

5e.19 One of a series of participation exercises undertaken as part of the review of the Leicestershire Rural Strategy was a questionnaire handed to delegates of the LRP conference in 1999. The questionnaire asked delegates about essential and desirable services in rural areas. The top twenty transport related "services" deemed to be essential included:

- speed limits (4th);
- bus service (6th);
- street lighting (7th);
- pavements (footways) (9th).

5e.20 However, a number of other services affect whether travel needs to take place, and amongst these are:

- village hall (8th);

- post office (11th);
- primary school (16th);
- general store (18th);
- doctor (19th).

TRANSPORT ISSUES IN RURAL AREAS

5e.21 The location of rural villages and rural employment developments results in high dependency on the car. This presents a considerable challenge in terms of influencing travel choice. The Strategy, as outlined in Chapter 4, aims to minimise the adverse impact of traffic in rural areas through planning policies and measures, to ensure that traffic uses appropriate routes and, where opportunities exist, to improve and promote alternative modes.

5e.22 The LTP participation exercise highlighted the view that the decline in local facilities, such as shops and post offices, has contributed to growth in car travel. There was also a particular concern that people in rural areas, especially the young and the elderly, are becoming isolated from essential services where they do not have access to a car.

5e.23 Many of those living in rural areas will inevitably remain car-dependent; key issues are:

- improving rural public transport services, both to provide transport choice and, in particular, to meet the access needs of rural residents who do not have a car available;
- speeding vehicles on rural roads and in country villages;
- the use of country roads by inappropriate traffic, particularly heavy lorries;
- the extent and priority of accident remedial measures, and measures to help pedestrians and cyclists;
- a particular emphasis on school travel plans for rural primary and secondary schools.

RURAL AREAS: ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE

Bus and Community Transport

5e.24 The LTP participation highlighted strong concern about the quality of bus services in rural areas. The general view was that villages need better, more frequent and integrated public transport services that allow travel between villages, as well as to and from the main urban centres. It was also felt that public transport information needs to be much more readily available.

5e.25 There was strong support for more community transport, and many communities expressed a strong desire to be more involved in developing transport provision and services to meet their local needs.

5e.26 In view of the rural nature of the county, the County Council's strategy for public transport is highly geared to supporting the rural areas. The Strategy is described in some detail in Chapter 4. Briefly, the County Council supports rural services through its own funding and the Rural Bus Grant. It also develops inter-urban bus services, and community transport schemes. In particular, there is a minimum level of service which the County Council maintains in order to ensure that minimum access standards can be guaranteed.

5e.27 The County Council's School Travel Strategy supports the provision of home to school transport for children not statutorily entitled to free transport.

5e.28 Improved rural public transport services are essential to provide transport choice, and in particular to meet the access needs of rural residents who do not have a car available. The County Council will continue to seek cost-effective solutions to provide the maximum access opportunities through a range of transport types, and using both existing bus subsidies and the Rural Bus Grant.

Public Transport Initiatives

Rural Rider Bus Service

This has served 17 villages in rural East Leicestershire since September 1999. It has been developed with Rural Bus Challenge funding.

As it connects with bus services to Leicester, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray, it provides additional journey opportunities.

5e.29 The Rural Rider Bus Service operates on Mondays to Saturdays, and the aim is to provide a friendly and helpful service that stops anywhere along the route. The driver will help passengers on and off the bus if needed.

5e.30 The service uses an eight seater minibus on timetabled routes, and charges fares just like other bus services. Its key attribute is the provision of guaranteed connections and through-fares for journeys to Leicester and elsewhere. All County Council concessions are accepted on this service.

5e.31 The County Council has been able to develop the Rural Rider as a result of its successful bid for Rural Bus Challenge funding from Government. The County Council worked in partnership with West End Travel (Melton Mowbray) and Arriva Fox County in this initiative.

5e.32 Consultation between the County Council, rural communities and Parish Councils was a key factor in deciding when and where a local service should be provided. Whilst the service is primarily intended for people who do not have access to a car, it also offers a real alternative for those who do. Already people are choosing to leave their cars at home and travel on the Rural Rider instead.

5e.33 In another local initiative, Melton Borough Council are using taxis and private hire vehicles to provide essential services to under-privileged groups and to children. In the rural area of Melton, this provides a particularly important service to those people without cars, the elderly for example, since other forms of transport are not available.

5e.34 Also in the Melton area the Vale Transport Group has been established. It involves community groups, individuals, parish representatives and District and County Councils looking at ways of improving public transport in the Vale of Belvoir. Initially established to look at evening travel for young people across a wide area, the group has evolved as both a focus group and catalyst. Current work includes one-to-one surveys with every resident in over 15 villages. Clearer views on developing services are already apparent.

5e.35 Charnwood Community Council has been running a community transport network "to reach the parts that other buses cannot reach". The scheme has been very successful in bringing people into the town for access to the facilities of John Storer House and the shops. It was nominated for a "good practice" award.

5e.36 The County Council has long worked in partnership with Parish Councils and other community groups in the delivery of rural transport. In the last two years these partnerships have been strengthened through the efforts of a Rural Communities Transport Officer, who works directly with communities to facilitate the transport solutions they seek. Now the Council, within the well established Leicestershire Rural Partnership, is planning to establish a more formalised Rural Transport Partnership.

5e.37 Further initiatives will be developed throughout the LTP period to enhance public transport services in the rural areas.

Social Inclusion/Economic Development

5e.38 Social exclusion and poor economic opportunities are important issues for rural areas. Through Single Regeneration Budget (SRB 6) submissions Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough Outreach Partnership and the County Council will seek to address the isolation of rural areas. The submissions are likely to include measures to help the sustainability of village communities and provision of access to facilities through, for example, community transport, support to rural communities and remote learning.

5e.39 The lack of access to employment on some of the industrial estates outside Loughborough town centre also needs to be addressed. Some of these offer low paid jobs, often with unsocial hours. People who might wish to work there may live in rural areas and be reliant on public transport which does not serve these more isolated areas at the required times. Some similar employers in Nottingham and Derby provide buses to take workers from Loughborough to their places of work. Something similar will be considered as part of the new SRB Community Transport project.

5e.40 Community Transport has been identified as an important issue both through SRB consultation with potential partners and in emda's Rural Action Plan for the East Midlands

5e.41 The SRB submissions will also address social exclusion, health promotion (with its accompanying transport issues), community safety (crime and disorder) and access to training.

Highway and Bridge Maintenance

5e.42 Chapter 4 outlined problems experienced in the rural areas with respect to road and bridge maintenance and strengthening.

5e.43 With respect to road maintenance, the issues which arose from the Highway Maintenance review (see Chapter 4) were the backlog of footway and rural carriageway edge damage repair and the need for renewal schemes on the unclassified road network. This work is funded from the Council's revenue budget.

5e.44 To monitor the network's condition in these and other areas, an annual "state of the highway network" report will be produced, and savings from elsewhere in the maintenance budget will be redirected to tackle the backlog of structural work.

5e.45 Arising from the County Council's bridge assessment programme, management of substandard bridges has involved consultation with rural residents and businesses. The imposition of weight limits can split agricultural holdings, adversely affect the collection of milk, disrupt crop harvesting and

interfere with emergency vehicle routes and bus routes. These consultations can affect the planning, programming and method of managing and improving the bridges. This activity is described in more detail under the Bridge Maintenance and Strengthening section.

5e.46 The County Council also consults with relevant environmental bodies such as English Heritage and English Nature to safeguard the built and natural environment whilst undertaking bridge inspections and renewal activities.

RURAL AREAS: ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE

5e.47 The significance of links between economic development and social exclusion in the rural areas was identified in 5e.38.

Freight

5e.48 The participation exercise emphasised concerns about the use of rural and village roads by heavy goods vehicles, resulting in road safety, environment and maintenance issues. Deterioration in surface quality and edge damage has ensuing road safety implications.

5e.49 However, whilst there is understandable concern in some quarters about the levels of freight traffic and size of vehicles in rural areas, there is also concern about lorry route restrictions from essential users of these vehicles, such as farmers and rural businesses.

5e.50 The County Council's freight strategy (described fully in Chapter 4) seeks to balance these often competing demands.

5e.51 Much of the county is covered by the County Council's Lorry Control Plan, due for completion during the LTP period (see Figure 4.3). The use of village and rural roads by inappropriate traffic, particularly heavy lorries, will be controlled through the completion of this strategy. In order to minimise the impact of lorries on communities which lie on lorry routes, necessary improvements will be undertaken on these routes.

Waterways

5e.52 The waterways can act as a catalyst for a number of policy objectives, including:

- rural regeneration (Grantham Canal, Ashby Canal);
- community development (traffic free routes);
- urban regeneration (Loughborough and the Leicester River Corridor);
- tourism (Foxton Locks, Ashby Canal);
- sport and recreation;
- conservation (Foxton Locks).

5e.53 These will have traffic and transport implications, as well as offering potential opportunities for both freight and vulnerable road users.

5e.54 The time to pass through locks militates against the use of the navigations for public transport. Use is likely to be limited to recreational trips, for example gaining access to other waterway sites or as an end in itself. Public transport can ensure that the general public will be able to gain access to the waterways for recreational purposes. The principal benefits of the canal system are now recreational, leisure and tourism.

5e.55 Improved towpaths can be used by both walkers and cyclists, although joint use must be carefully managed, particularly as anglers also use the towpath network. The Sustrans network incorporates the towpath network where appropriate, for example Foxton to Debdale Wharf, Market Harborough.

5e.56 Towpath improvements can be made accessible to, and suitable for use by, people of all abilities. Further, around the country several hire boat companies now have boats adapted for disabled people. The Ashby Canal will link Sarah's Wood (a woodland with access for disabled people) at Moira to other canal side attractions by way of a wide and level towpath.

5e.57 The County Council will continue to work in partnership with others, e.g. Sustrans, to improve access for disabled

people to the canal environment where routes meet with the highway network.

5e.58 Anglers are a major source of income for British Waterways, and their active participation in promoting the use of the waterways should be encouraged. Improved towpaths will assist access for this user group. However, most anglers now have large quantities of equipment and usually use cars to gain access. These access points may need to be actively managed to avoid road safety problems.

5e.59 The County Council will continue to consider supporting the following transport related initiatives:

- working with partners to encourage the development and creation of infrastructure and services for recreational boating in Leicestershire;
- encouraging commercial operators to offer "waterbus" recreational services;
- improving cycle and pedestrian provision by:
 - widening towpaths where feasible, and where this will not destroy rare habitats;
 - the maintenance and repair of non-highway bridges which are crossed by footpaths or cycleways;
 - creating new cycleways and access links to the towpaths;
 - improving accessibility for disabled people;
- the development of low impact freight potential on an individual basis.

5e.60 Examples of initiatives already undertaken include the Ashby canal, most of which is in the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. The condition of the canal towpath was improved some years ago and, whilst accessible for pedestrians, its condition is generally not suitable for cyclists. Several development sites identified in the Local Plan are adjacent to the canal. Development briefs will include details of buffer zones, where open spaces are to be provided to enhance the canal. Additionally the Borough Council will be seeking improvements to the towpath, or alternative routes adjacent to the towpath, for

the provision of cycle routes. Although there may be some small opportunities for use of the canal for freight carriage, at present activities are leisure based.

RURAL AREAS: HEALTH OBJECTIVE

Walking

5e.61 Leicestershire has a comprehensive rights of way network, with a team dedicated to maintaining and preserving the network. The County Council produces leaflets and plans on parish walks to promote use of the network. Views expressed during the participation exercise indicated that wherever possible the walking action plan for rural areas should be linked to the public rights of way network.

5e.62 The network of public rights of way within the county is actively promoted at the parish level. This is complemented by the Rights of Way Strategy, which ensures that rights of way are maintained, with particular emphasis on safety and security.

5e.63 The Walking Strategy, as well as the Safer Routes to Schools initiative, are equally applicable to rural and urban areas, provided the unique character of the countryside is recognised. The Countryside Agency's Quiet Roads concept also supports the objective of increasing walking opportunities in the countryside.

5e.64 A range of *Parish Walks and Rides* leaflets covering recreational walking routes has been produced by the County Council in partnership with Waymark 2000. Information on links to public transport is contained in the leaflets.

5e.65 An important aspect of the County Council's Walking Strategy will be the identification and improvement of pedestrian facilities in rural areas, including links to public transport.

Cycling

5e.66 There will be benefits to cyclists, particularly for leisure activities, from the extensive number of links of the Sustrans National Cycle Network that are within the

county. There are also an increasing number of County Council cycle links being implemented to complement the basic Sustrans routes.

5e.67 A separate initiative being developed jointly with the 'National Byway' and other bodies is a 'heritage cycling route' in the east of the county, totalling about 40 miles in length, which it is hoped will be opened during 2001.

5e.68 In a partnership between North West Leicestershire District Council, the County Council, Parish Councils, local cycling groups, community groups and Sustrans, a District Cycle Strategy has been adopted.

5e.69 In this initiative, the District Council identified a programme of cycle routes that connect into and complement the Sustrans national cycle network, but also serve the local needs of the community, for example for school and recreational routes. The routes are being progressed in partnership with the District Council, Sustrans and private developers (through planning conditions and agreements), and will complete a comprehensive cycle network and remove the existing deterrents to safe cycling.

5e.70 Another initiative, by Charnwood Borough Council in partnership with the National Forest Company, has been providing cycle parking within that part of the Forest lying in Charnwood.

5e.71 Where the fringe urban areas are well connected to the minor road network, they can be used by cyclists (and walkers) to gain access to the leisure opportunities in the adjacent rural areas (as in the Countryside Agency Quiet Roads initiative).

5e.72 Hinckley residents are able to use the Fenn Lanes to the north of Hinckley and the Sustrans network to undertake leisure activities at the Ashby Canal, Bosworth Country Park, Bosworth Water park and other tourist attractions.

5e.73 Further initiatives will be developed through the LTP period to improve facilities for cyclists in rural areas.

Highways Agency

5e.74 In 2000/01 the Highways Agency will be providing a cycle crossing across the A5(T) in the vicinity of the new right turn facility between the B578 and the B4114 at Smockington Hollow.

5e.75 At the request of the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC), a study is being undertaken into linking the above facility with a footway/cycleway from the A5(T)/B4114 Smockington Lane junction to Sharnford.

5e.76 Also at the request of the CTC, a study is being carried out into the improvement of crossing facilities for cyclists at the A5(T)/Longshoot signalled junction.

Local Health Strategies

5e.77 Leicestershire County Council is currently a partner in the county-wide Exercise Alliance, as part of its corporate objective of "building a healthier community". A major element of this is to encourage people to take up regular walking to help avoid, or recover from, problems such as heart disease. Leicestershire County Council has 3,000 km of public rights of way, which can be an invaluable resource in this campaign. Bids have been made for external funds which can be used to promote walking, especially on appropriate routes in the countryside, graded in terms of severity. This form of activity will also be linked with the GP "exercise prescription" schemes currently being run by District Council Leisure Departments.

RURAL AREAS: SAFETY OBJECTIVE

Road Casualty Reduction

5e.78 Whilst the overall casualty reduction strategy covers both urban and rural areas, particular attention will be paid to rural areas. Recent data indicate an increasing number of people killed or seriously injured in rural areas, compared with a continued decrease countywide. There is also a significant problem with increasing motorcycle casualties.

Speed Management

5e.79 In 1999 there were 165 reported road accidents resulting in casualties where the primary cause was exceeding the speed limit or driving too fast for the conditions. 165 represents 10% of total personal injury accidents.

5e.80 Speeding drivers and riders, lack of enforcement of existing speed limits, and road safety in villages are major concerns in rural areas. This was borne out by the LTP participation in 1999, and by analysis carried out by Loughborough University of the attitudes of rural communities to transport issues.

Leicestershire Speed Limit Initiative

5e.81 The County Council has continued its initiative to introduce new speed limits in rural communities, to extend existing speed limits and to introduce new street lighting schemes over the last year.

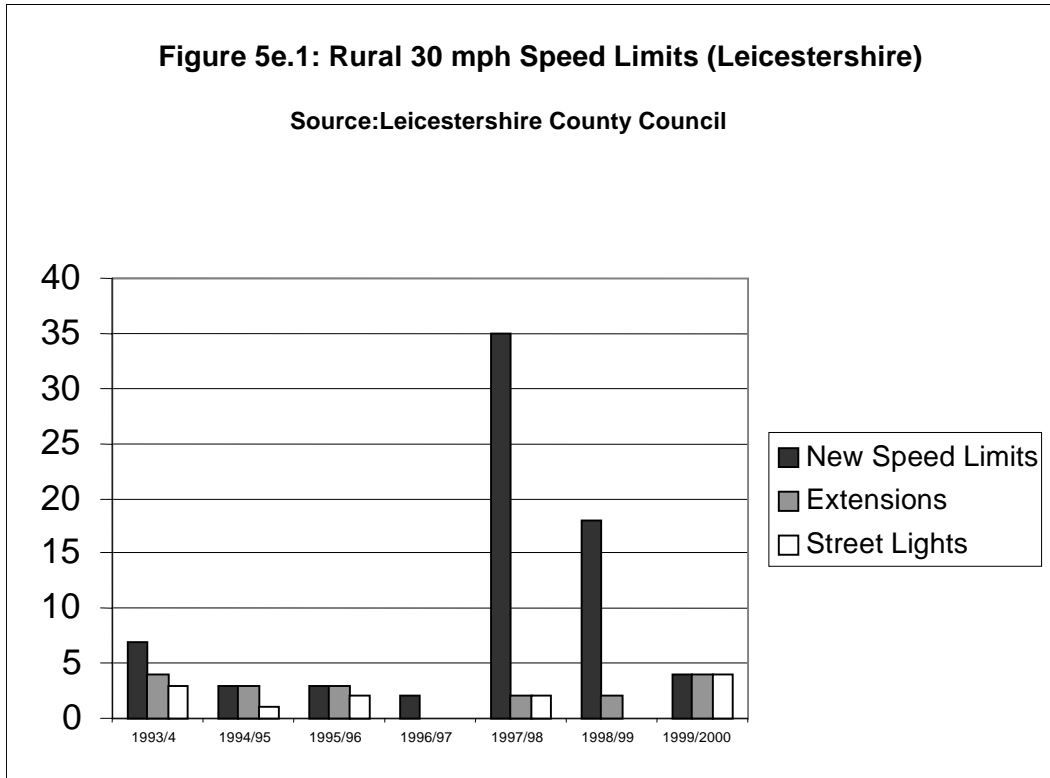
5e.82 Since 1997, 52 new limits have been introduced across the County as part of that initiative (Figure 5e.1). Surveys have shown small reductions in drivers' speed since the introduction of the new limits, with greater reductions being achieved in the highest speed ranges. A further eight limits are programmed for implementation over the 2001-04 period.

5e.83 This initiative is compatible with the Government's recent publication "New Directions in Speed Management - A review of Policy", which recommends 30 mph as the norm in villages.

5e.84 Inappropriate speed in country villages and roads will be tackled through the continuing implementation of the speed management strategy. This includes the continued programme of new speed limits and rural traffic calming where appropriate, following public consultation. A continuing programme of local initiatives in speed management is also being undertaken.

Figure 5e.1: Rural 30 mph Speed Limits (Leicestershire)

Source: Leicestershire County Council



Initiatives for the Future

Rural Home Zones

5e.85 Over the five-year LTP period (and beyond), the County Council will be developing the “Home Zone” concept for rural villages. Home Zones are pedestrian-friendly areas, designed to improve the quality of life for residents by returning their streets to them. Around the country, Home Zones are beginning to be introduced in the urban environment. Initially, zones are being implemented in individual streets or small discrete areas. Initial results seem to indicate some successes.

5e.86 The County Council will develop this approach to bring the benefits of speed management to areas where the excessive speed of vehicles can create a climate of apprehension about safety. In developing this concept, the County Council will ensure that the particular needs of the rural area are taken into account, and that all measures and signing introduced are in keeping with the rural nature of the surroundings and the type of traffic (such as large tractors). It is important that the

measures introduced bring about a change in attitude to the use of the road space, and create a better environment for vulnerable road users.

Quiet Roads

5e.87 In a similar way, there is a need to manage traffic on rural lanes to allow their increased use by the more vulnerable road users, such as cyclists, walkers and those on horseback. Though many of the potential benefits would accrue to leisure related activities, the aim will be to improve quality of life and travel choice, for local residents and businesses, as well as for visitors to the countryside.

5e.88 Particularly in rural areas (and often on the fringe of urban areas) there is an extensive network of public rights of way. Connections with links along the minor road network would extend the network making it more effective and attractive. However, potential users are often concerned about the speed of traffic on the minor road network, and to make the concept workable this needs to be influenced. Nevertheless, even this has to be handled with care. This is because as speeds are lowered,

cyclists may be encouraged, and some walkers can find groups of cyclists travelling at speed intimidating. A careful balance has to be struck to accommodate all the vulnerable road user groups.

5e.89 A body of experience is being accumulated through the Countryside Agency's Quiet Roads initiative. This is using demonstration projects to develop best practice codes and guidelines. The progress of these will be monitored, and best practice incorporated into the County Council's strategies.

5e.90 Redressing the balance on the minor road network towards more vulnerable road users will, it is hoped, encourage more sustainable activity on footpaths and bridleways, which can be linked to attractive minor lanes.

5e.91 These measures will also be able to link with improved buses, safer routes to schools, lorry controls and encouragement of people to use forms of transport other than the car.

5e.92 The bid includes a specific sum for the development of rural Home Zones, as well as making funding available for speed management and casualty reduction.

Street Lighting

5e.93 As a consequence of a review of night-time accidents on the A42(T)/M42 corridor, the Highways Agency is carrying out a study of the street lighting on this route.

Personal Security

5e.94 Improved lighting can assist in reducing perceptions of poor personal security. Requests from rural communities for street lighting are evaluated in terms of their contribution to community safety. These bids are considered along with those from elsewhere in the county to establish the annual programme, and are funded from the community lighting bid. Grants may also be available to Parish Councils for small lighting improvements.

5e.95 As noted above under "Leicestershire Speed Limit Initiative", new street lighting

schemes have been introduced as shown in Figure 5e.1.

Initiatives described within the Leicestershire Rural Partnership Annual Report and Audit 2000

5e.96 There are two common transport related themes running through the Community Safety Strategies. These are:

- improved road safety and reduced road traffic accidents;
- reduced incidence of vehicle crime.

5e.97 Improvements in these will reduce the incidence and the perception of poor personal security. They will be tackled through the six Crime and Disorder Partnerships within the LTP area. These have three year plans of initiatives with the aim of tackling identified local crime and disorder problems. The strategies are tailored to the needs of the individual areas.

RURAL AREAS: ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVE

Highway Network Improvements

5e.98 The LTP participation demonstrated that whilst there was no general support for a return to extensive road building, there was still support for town and village bypasses. Ashby Bypass was accepted for funding in the provisional LTP, and the bid in this LTP seeks a start on construction of the Earl Shilton Bypass. These are detailed in the earlier Area Strategies. In addition, funds are being sought in the Central Leicestershire LTP for a bypass for Rearsby. A bypass for Melton Mowbray is to be provided as part of a new village proposed in the Melton Local Plan (see paragraph 5e.153).

M1 Junction 19 Study

5e.99 One of the studies emerging from the 1998 Trunk Roads Review was a roads-based study to address the safety and capacity issues at Junction 19 of the M1, and the severance issues arising from the construction of the A14(T).

5e.100 The Highways Agency is in the process of appointing consultants for the study, and a final report is expected in summer 2001.

School Travel

5e.101 There was strong support during the participation for the School Travel Strategy for rural primary and secondary schools. The aim of the School Travel Strategy is to reduce car use and improve children's safety on the journey to school. Chapter 4 sets out how the County Council will be approaching this through encouraging children (and staff) to walk, cycle, car share, or use public transport for school journeys. This will be through a co-ordinated programme of physical works, as well as a wider based "hearts and minds" approach.

Parking Management

5e.102 Many people in rural areas rely on the car. Within individual villages there may be a need to manage the locations where vehicles park to improve the vitality of the village. The District Councils, in partnership with the County Council, are working to ensure a consistency of approach across the county. This will involve the development of an overall parking management plan, but one that can be implemented at different rates in order to take individual circumstances into account, whilst still moving towards an agreed objective.

Tourism

5e.103 Tourism is a major contributor to the economy and employment of Leicestershire. Twenty two million people visited Leicestershire tourist attractions in 1998, and in the county 18,700 jobs are supported by tourism, with 13,600 directly related. This is set to continue and to increase.

5e.104 Tourism can support business regeneration and assist in improving community environments. It can make a significant contribution to both rural and urban economies. It can support agricultural diversification into areas such as farm attractions, walks, trails, fishing and accommodation.

5e.105 Whilst tourism is important and beneficial to local communities, the traffic

generated by tourist attractions can have an adverse impact, especially in some of the more rural areas. Access to tourist attractions can be difficult for those people without access to a car. Highest demand for tourism is during the summer period, and especially on Sundays and Bank Holidays when public transport is limited. At present there is little cross marketing between promotion of tourism and transport facilities. Easy access between sites is important to encourage visits within Leicestershire, especially by public transport, cycling and walking.

5e.106 The County Council's Tourism Strategy has seven objectives, which are broadly consistent with the LTP Objectives. This Strategy is being reviewed. Tourism related transport issues are also addressed through the LTP Public Transport, Cycling and Walking Strategies.

5e.107 To date, there have been several successful projects in Leicestershire, among which are:

- the 'Cream of Leicestershire' leaflet, which promotes City and County attractions, and includes transport and access information;
- increased use of brown tourist information signs where appropriate, in order to assist the use of the safest and most suitable routes to tourist attractions;
- Central Trains has produced "Go", a publication which encourages visitors to travel to by train to towns and cities.

5e.108 The current Tourism Strategy provides the framework for an ongoing integrated approach for tourist provision. This will be achieved by working with partners and organisations such as the National Forest Company and the Heart of the National Forest Foundation, with a view to improving accessibility to all, and not just those with access to a car. Better access to tourist attractions could be achieved by encouraging public transport services between attractions, including services for the local community.

5e.109 Low cost measures which will be considered to improve awareness of transport opportunities for tourists include:

- ❑ signing to, and details of, tourist attractions at rail and bus stations and stops;
- ❑ encouraging attractions to have public transport information and timetables available;
- ❑ encouraging rail and bus operators to supply attractions with current travel information;
- ❑ encouraging rail and bus operators and the attractions to have combined travel and entry tickets;
- ❑ including tourist attractions on bus and rail maps and timetables;
- ❑ continuing to include detailed public transport information in all County Council tourism, leisure and countryside publications;
- ❑ including public transport information in tourism publication material.

5e.110 An example of a linked conservation and tourism related scheme is in Harborough District at Foxton Locks. As well as tourism related infrastructure, this scheme includes the provision of a footpath/cycleway to Market Harborough. It was undertaken in a partnership between British Waterways, Sustrans, the County Council and Harborough District Council.

5e.111 Leisure and recreational opportunities have also been improved along the Grantham Canal, including major towpath works which will improve disabled and cycle access along the Canal. This work has been carried out by a partnership between Melton Borough Council, British Waterways and others. Specific canal-based attractions include Sibley Mill Boatyard in Charnwood Borough.

5e.112 Cycling routes act as both a tourist facility, through recreational cycling, and as a means of transport between tourist attractions. Opening during 2001 will be a 'heritage cycling route' in the east of the county. Similar opportunities exist for the development of walking activity holidays, as walking is currently an under-developed leisure option in Leicestershire.

5e.113 The Great Central Railway in Charnwood Borough is a significant tourist attraction. It was 'Highly Commended' in the Heart of England Tourist Board's Tourism Awards 2000, and won the 'Best Visitor Experience' award at the 2000 Leicestershire Tourism Conference.

RURAL AREAS: INTEGRATION OBJECTIVE

Land Use Planning

5e.114 The participation exercise revealed concerns in general about new developments being built in rural areas.

5e.115 The Deposit Draft Structure Plan recognises these concerns, and requires that the vast majority of development should occur within and adjoining the main urban areas. However, more limited and small scale developments will still be necessary to maintain the vitality and viability of local rural communities and to encourage the 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 serve a wider hinterland. The Deposit Draft Structure Plan identifies those settlements which it is considered meets these criteria, although it accepts that revisions to the list may occur as part of the Local Plan review process. In other settlements, developments should be limited to small scale ones.

5e.116 Although most developments in the rural areas are small scale, and do not give rise to significant volumes of traffic, opportunities will be taken through planning obligations to ensure that public transport, pedestrian and cycle access is adequate for the scale of development and that any adverse traffic impacts from the developments are mitigated.

Regeneration

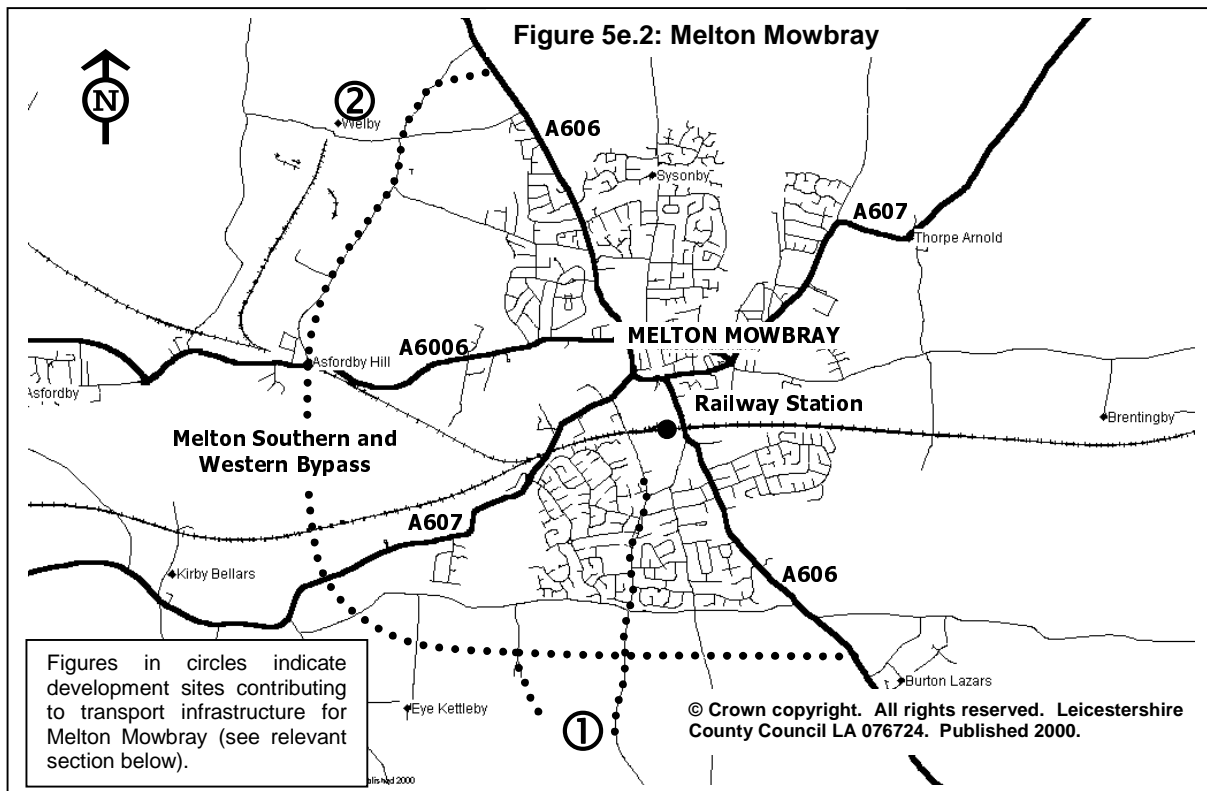
Bagworth Colliery Site

5e.117 Since the closure of Bagworth Colliery in 1991 the Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council and the village community have made attempts to regenerate the derelict colliery site. 2.2 hectares of residential

development have been allocated on land close to the former colliery, as well as 6.2 hectares at the colliery for residential and community uses, and 2.85 hectares of land at former railway sidings is also allocated.

5e.118 The following guiding principles should ensure that all development takes place in an appropriate and co-ordinated way. It will be ensured that:

- ❑ the heart is put back into the village, creating a village focus;
- ❑ a quality environment and sense of place is created using appropriate design;
- ❑ a safe and secure environment is created;
- ❑ good accessibility and transport choice is provided;
- ❑ traffic speed along Station Road is reduced;
- ❑ a quality woodland setting is created which respects the unique location in the National Forest and provides links with existing woodlands and a useable and well managed open space.
- ❑ well designed and functional areas of public open space are created;
- ❑ a sustainable settlement results.



COUNTY TOWN: MELTON MOWBRAY

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

5e.119 Melton Mowbray is the largest of the three County Towns, and together with Asfordby to the west, has a population of 28,000. The town lies 22 km north east of Leicester. It is the focus for the surrounding rural area and at the confluence of six important routes.

Melton Borough Transport Plan

5e.120 Since the publication of Leicestershire County Council's provisional LTP in 1999, Melton Borough Council has made significant progress towards developing a Transport Plan for the Borough. The Plan will be consistent with, and complementary to, the County Council's LTP, whilst at the same time representing the transport needs of the communities within the Borough. The two Councils have worked in partnership to undertake the preparatory work necessary to develop the Borough Plan and to feed into the LTP, and this will continue as the LTP

progresses and detailed programmes are developed.

5e.121 As a complementary exercise to the County Council's public participation process, the Borough Council has engaged a broad cross-section of the local community in a series of Focus Group discussions on transport issues.

5e.122 Outputs from the discussions have been used by the two Councils in developing the Area Strategy for Melton Mowbray.

5e.123 The Borough Transport Plan will be developed on a 'bottom up' basis, drawing heavily upon the information collected through the Focus Group meetings and the County Council's public participation exercise. The Plan will look forward for at least five years and encompass all modes of transport including walking, cycling and motorcycling, buses, taxis, voluntary service transport and the private car.

5e.124 In order to assist in the evaluation of alternative transport strategies, the Borough is developing a model of the highway network around Melton Mowbray. The model will also provide a common basis on which to assess anticipated new development proposals.

5e.125 It is intended that when the Transport Plan is completed it will contribute to the LTP implementation programme.

MELTON MOWBRAY: ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE

Bus and Community Transport

5e.126 The Strategy will seek to develop bus travel as a realistic alternative for existing car users, and as a quality service for more people who have no choice, particularly for those living in the rural areas.

5e.127 The issues of concern to the public which need to be improved include: passenger information, security and weather protection, frequency of service, reliability of service, cleanliness of buses and passenger comfort.

5e.128 Private operators clearly have difficulty in establishing new services, and partnership working with Local Authorities and local communities is essential; consideration will therefore be given to developing a formal Quality Bus Partnership. Priorities are improved facilities, and better information on availability and bus times.

5e.129 The participation indicated that opportunities to extend the geographical coverage of the bus and train services to improve access and service level to both town and rural residents should be investigated.

5e.130 The County Council values the rail service provided at Melton Mowbray's railway station, and is working towards establishing a 15 minute interval service. It is also seeking to address interchange issues at the station.

Taxis/Private Hire Vehicles

5e.131 Taxis and private hire vehicles can provide essential services, particularly to excluded groups, and in rural areas. In the rural area of Melton, they provide a particularly important service to those people without cars, the elderly, for example, where other forms of transport are not available.

5e.132 The Borough Council has, for a number of years, met with local taxi and private hire operators and the police to discuss

matters of mutual interest, including service standards and provision, licensing and traffic management. Melton Taxi Association has been formed, providing a self-regulating body, and regular meetings with members of the Association have seen improved co-operation between associate members and improved operating standards. Examples of these include the production of an Association Code of Practice, setting driver standards and a dress code, driver training and the provision of a new town centre taxi rank near to a local bus terminus. Further improvements will be sought through the Association.

MELTON MOWBRAY: ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE

Melton Mowbray Town Centre

5e.133 Output from the Focus Groups has confirmed the Borough Council's observations that congestion in Melton Mowbray becomes unacceptably high at peak hours and for longer periods on market days. This has a detrimental effect on the environment, substantially reduces the reliability of buses, and causes loss of revenue for businesses both local and nationally.

Freight

5e.134 The Councils will seek to safeguard and maintain existing railway stations and infrastructure, such as the link to the former Asfordby coal mine site, and also to protect as far as possible disused railway routes for possible future rail redevelopment.

MELTON MOWBRAY: HEALTH OBJECTIVE

Air Quality

5e.135 In support of the National Air Quality Strategy, Melton Borough Council is currently carrying out a review and assessment of air quality. Targets relating to transport generated pollutants are set out in the strategy, together with information on how the Council is working with others to assess and reduce pollution. Monitoring and modelling is currently being carried out on urban traffic for the Council by Leeds University Institute for Transport Studies.

Walking

5e.136 There has already been significant investment in pedestrianisation of the town centre and pedestrian crossing facilities to address the increasing problems of severance caused by high volumes of through traffic.

5e.137 There are six sites in Melton Mowbray identified by the public as being particularly dangerous for crossing, and these will be considered for priority action within the improvement programme.

Cycling

5e.138 Through a local cycle forum proposals for a cycle network are being developed. A cycle parking policy for new developments has been adopted which seeks to make provision for a minimum of 10% of employees and visitors to a site.

5e.139 Local Strategies will be developed to address road safety and cycle security issues, in particular to encourage more cycling trips to school. These were key concerns raised by participants of the Focus Groups.

MELTON MOWBRAY: SAFETY OBJECTIVE

Speed Management

5e.140 The subject of traffic calming continues to be a major transport issue with the public. Further evidence gathered through the Focus Groups supports the need for a shift in funding priority towards traffic calming schemes. The County Council's investment continues to be augmented by the Borough Council in this area of work.

MELTON MOWBRAY: ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVE

Highway Network Improvements

5e.141 As stated earlier, output from the Focus Groups has highlighted that congestion in Melton Mowbray becomes unacceptable during peak periods, and for longer periods on market days. This has a detrimental effect on the environment, substantially reduces the reliability of buses, and causes a loss of

revenue for business. In the longer term, the solution for this will be a bypass to remove the through traffic. The Borough Transport Plan will, in the short term, identify the need for improvements to alleviate the worst environmental effects of traffic congestion. Funds have been provisionally earmarked in the bid for the latter part of the LTP period.

School Travel

5e.142 Local initiatives supported by school head teachers are leading towards a pilot scheme of walking buses, to encourage more children to walk to school. This proposal has been supported by opening up thoroughfares to take footpaths away from main roads.

Travel Awareness

5e.143 The production of a Business Travel Plan for the Borough Council's own officers and Members is seen as an important statement to show a lead to local employers and organisations. An employee travel survey has been carried out, which indicated limited scope for change due to lack of available public transport and travel distance. Areas of potential to be considered in the plan period include secure cycle accommodation and home-working.

5e.144 Larger employers and organisations (including schools) will be encouraged to develop their own green travel plans with support from Council officers. Car parking policies and pricing strategy will be used to give incentives for communities to use other forms of transport than the car.

Parking Management

Parking in New Developments

5e.145 The Borough Council has developed parking standards for new development in Melton Mowbray which are consistent with the need to achieve a reduction in the use of the private motor car, but also seek to maintain a level of parking provision complementary to the economic health of the town centre.

Public Car Parks

5e.146 At the same time, the pricing strategy for Melton Mowbray's car parks is designed to

encourage parking in long-stay car parks on the periphery of the town centre, thereby helping to reduce traffic congestion, and releasing space for service users and through traffic.

5e.147 The LTP participation exercise showed that there was little local support for radical parking management measures. These views will be taken into account in the further development of the parking strategy for the town.

MELTON MOWBRAY: INTEGRATION OBJECTIVE

Land Use/Transport Integration

5e.148 The Melton Local Plan was adopted in June 1999. The Plan is in conformity with the approved Leicestershire Structure Plan, which concentrates new development in the main urban areas of the county and along "Transport Choice Corridors".

5e.149 The overall strategy of the Melton Local plan concentrates major new development in and around Melton Mowbray, which is the main urban area in the Borough. In pursuing its strategic policy for the location of development, the Local Plan seeks to reduce the need to travel and encourages the development of brownfield sites and other sites that are accessible by means of transport other than the motor car.

5e.150 The Local Plan includes proposals for new footpaths and cycleways, and policies that safeguard realistic highway improvements, redundant railway lines and land for a new railway station.

5e.151 The Borough Council intends to undertake an early review of the Melton Local Plan. Central to the strategy of the review will be the need to promote sustainable development through the land use planning system, and the integration of transport and land use policies.

5e.152 The Council is also active in producing development briefs for all of the major housing and employment sites allocated in the Local Plan. The briefs specify in detail the facilities and infrastructure required to provide for and

encourage access by sustainable modes of transport.

Developer Contributions to Transport Infrastructure

Figures in circles refer to development sites marked on Figure 5e.2 at the start of the Melton Mowbray section.

New village ① and the Melton Mowbray Bypass

5e.153 The development strategy for Melton Borough proposes a new village on the former Melton Mowbray Airfield, comprising in excess of 1,000 dwellings. This development is a proposal in the recently adopted Local Plan. A planning application has been lodged with the Borough Council, but has not yet been determined. The developer proposes a mix of housing, employment, school, health centre, village hall and sites for shops, public houses, church and country park.

5e.154 In order to avoid severe overloading and safety problems on the surrounding road network, the development of the village is linked to the construction of a southern and western Bypass around Melton Mowbray. The Bypass will link a number of principal radial routes (the A606 Oakham Road, the A607 Leicester Road, the A60006 Asfordby Road, and the A606 Nottingham Road), and offers the opportunity to remove through traffic on these corridors from the town centre, particularly heavy goods vehicles. It is anticipated that the Bypass will be built in phases as the new village develops.

5e.155 In addition to the Bypass, the new village is expected to provide and fund:

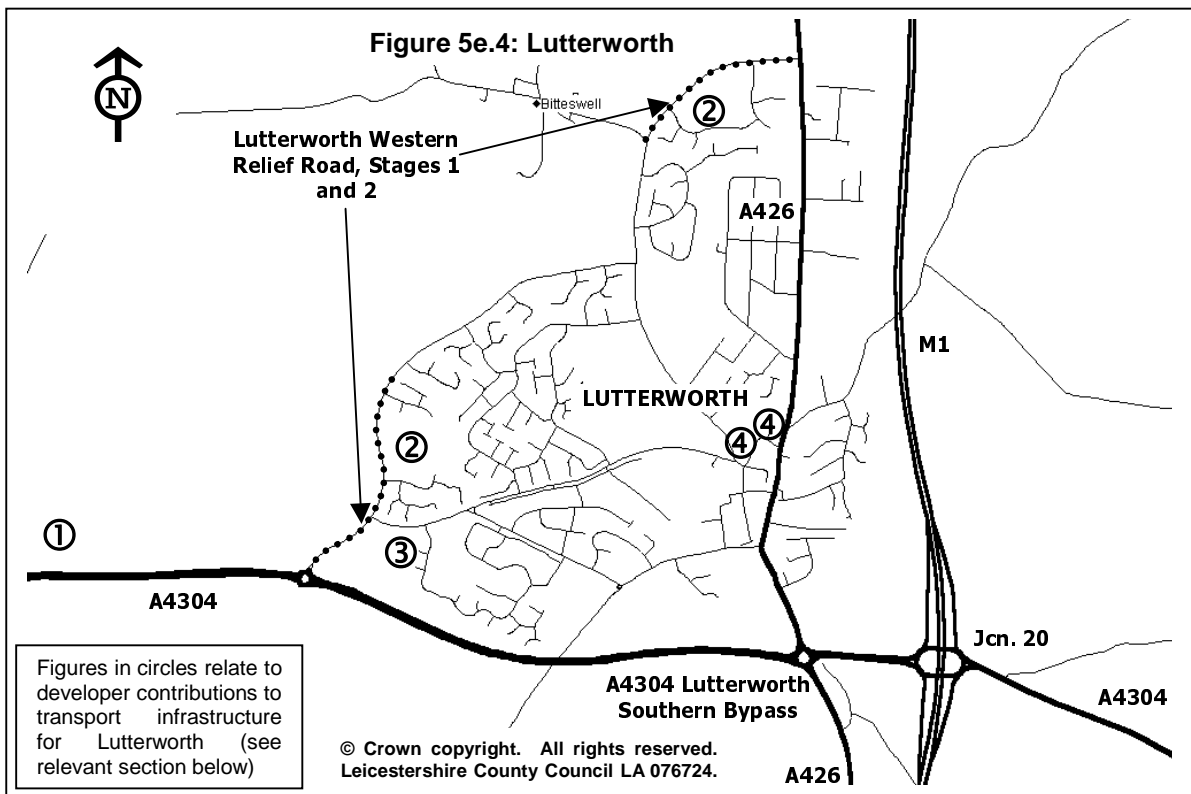
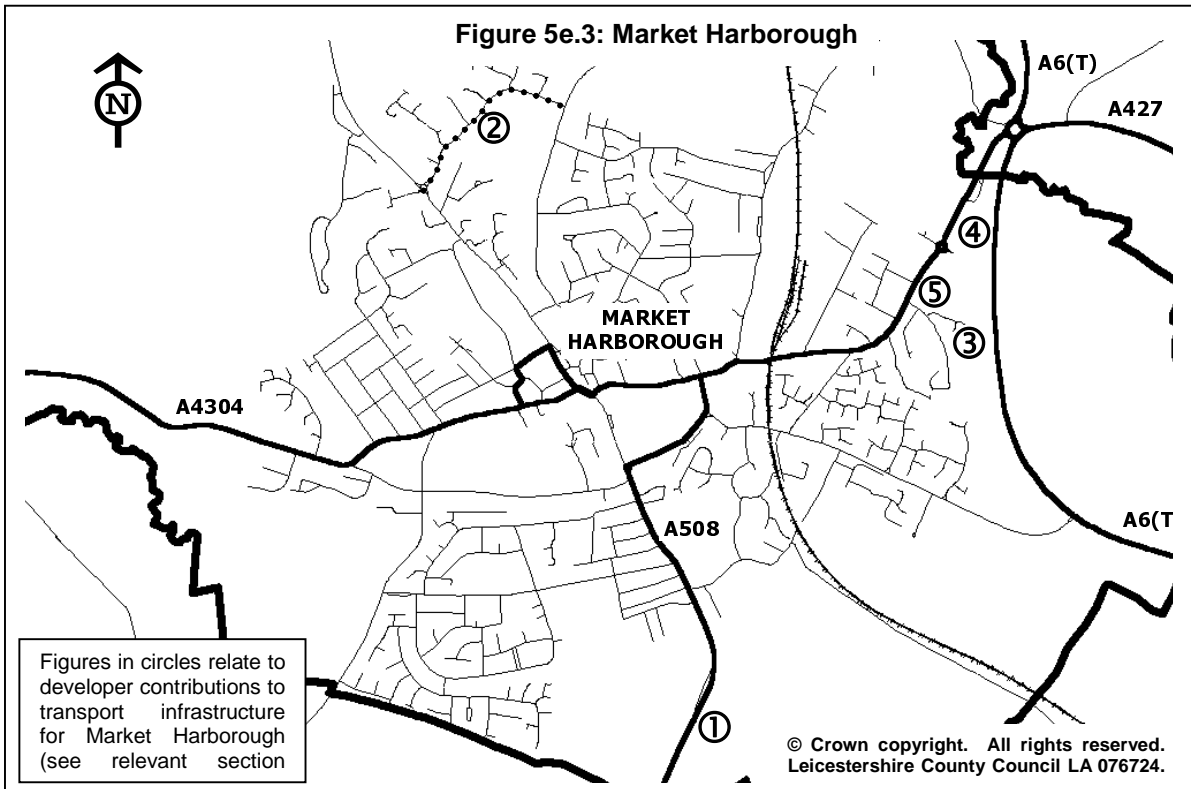
- ❑ a dedicated public transport route and cycleway between the village and the edge of the town;
- ❑ a subsidised bus service between the village and the town;
- ❑ traffic calming measures on a number of surrounding roads.



Rural Areas and County Towns

Development at Welby ②

5e.156 The redevelopment of the former Asfordby Coal Mine at Welby will contribute to the improvement of Welby Road, which forms part of the proposed Melton Mowbray Western Bypass link between the A6006 and the A606.



**COUNTY TOWNS:
MARKET HARBOROUGH/
LUTTERWORTH****LOCATION OF THE TOWNS**

5e.157 The County Towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth both fall within the administrative area of Harborough District Council. Many initiatives carried out by the District Council, either on their own or jointly with other partners, are therefore cross cutting across both towns, and for this reason are described together in this section of the Area Strategy.

Market Harborough

5e.158 Market Harborough has a population of 18,000 and is the largest town in Harborough District. It lies in the south eastern extremity of the county, adjacent to the Northamptonshire border.

5e.159 The A6(T) trunk road bypass was opened in 1992, and this was followed by the A14(T) trunk road 9 km to the south in 1994. These effectively removed the need for longer distance traffic to pass through the town.

Lutterworth

5e.160 Lutterworth has a population of approximately 8,000. It sits close to the southern boundary of the county adjacent to M1 Junction 20. It lies about 20 km south of Leicester and 10 km north of Rugby.

5e.161 Lutterworth lies close to the junction of the M1, M6 and A14(T), and this has attracted major distribution developments to the area. Magna Park lies 3 km to the west of the town and the Daventry International Freight Terminal (DIRFT) lies about 20 km away to the south in Northamptonshire.

5e.162 The developers of the Magna Park site were required as a planning condition to fund the Southern Bypass for the town, which opened in June 1999, to provide a direct access from the site to the M1 Junction 20.

The bypass has reduced traffic using the town centre.

**MARKET HARBOROUGH /
LUTTERWORTH: ACCESSIBILITY
OBJECTIVE****Public Transport provision,
information and taxis**

5e.163 A programme of replacing and installing bus shelters districtwide continues in a partnership with the County, District and Parish Councils and consideration will be given to developing a formal Quality Bus Partnership to identify and bring forward further and more substantial improvements to local bus services.

5e.164 A SRB bid has been submitted based on rural information technology stations to assist with the development of community transport, car sharing and transport choice information. A register is being established to determine the availability and type of community transport.

5e.165 In order to serve the high demand for taxis, the District Council is providing new and improved taxi ranks in both towns. Taxis can also use lay-bys after 7pm and before 7am.

5e.166 Dialogue is taking place with taxi operators with a view to exploring ways in which more taxi buses may operate to and from the surrounding rural areas.

Passenger Rail

5e.167 Midland Mainline operates an effective service to Market Harborough, and as a result there has been a 20% increase in customers.

5e.168 As part of the Millennium Mile project (see 5e.181) further footway and cycle links to Harborough railway station are proposed. Additionally, the provision of secure cycle storage is currently under investigation.

5e.169 Discussions are taking place with bus operators with a view to providing improved bus links to Harborough station.

5e.170 Car parking at Harborough station has recently been improved, and CCTV has been installed.

Disability

5e.171 A Shopmobility facility has been established in Market Harborough, including the provision of some Shopmobility electric vehicles.

5e.172 A local forum for the District has been established to consider existing footway design and carriageway crossing points with respect to use by people with special needs. The County and District Councils also continue to provide tactile paving where appropriate throughout the town centres.

MARKET HARBOROUGH / LUTTERWORTH: ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE

Town Centre Management

Market Harborough

5e.173 Following construction of the A6(T) Bypass the Government chose Market Harborough to be one of the six trunk road Bypass Demonstration Projects. The aim of the project was to carry out environmental improvements to maximise the benefits of the Bypass, and to ensure that the benefits were not eroded by future traffic growth. In Market Harborough this involved extensive traffic calming works to improve conditions for pedestrians in the town centre.

Lutterworth

5e.174 Lutterworth town centre, which is a conservation area, is relatively compact, with most of the shopping development lying astride the A426 and around a one-way system to the west, which provides a link to Coventry Road. The conflict between on-street parking, traffic movements and pedestrians is a particular problem in the town centre.

5e.175 The implementation of Stage 3 of the Lutterworth Western Relief road would provide opportunity for removal of heavy goods vehicles passing through the town centre. Consideration will be given to its inclusion in the next LTP period (see 5e.188).

5e.176 If extra funds become available during this LTP period, it is proposed that

consideration be given to town centre improvements in Lutterworth. The main focus would be on environmental improvements in Church Street.

Freight

5e.177 The A6(T) bypass, along with the opening of the A14(T), has substantially reduced heavy goods vehicle traffic through the centre of Market Harborough.

5e.178 The County and District Councils are working with the Freight Quality Partnership to explore opportunities to move freight from road to rail or waterways where appropriate. Particular emphasis is being placed on the Magna Park Area near Lutterworth, and on the large number of HGV movements to and from this site.

Waterways

5e.179 The Grand Union Canal passes through the area, with branches to Market Harborough. A regeneration of the Grand Union Canal basin in Market Harborough has recently been undertaken in a partnership with public authorities, business representatives and voluntary organisations.

MARKET HARBOROUGH / LUTTERWORTH: HEALTH OBJECTIVE

Walking / Cycling

5e.180 In 1994, as a result of the Bypass Demonstration Project, Market Harborough was made much more pedestrian friendly, whilst controlling the movement of vehicles through the town.

5e.181 In a partnership between the County Council, District Council, local charities, Sustrans, local newspapers, community groups and individuals, a "Millennium Mile" riverside walk and cycleway running through the park and town of Market Harborough alongside the River Welland is being constructed in the financial year 2000/2001. The route will link to the town's railway station, the bus station and two major schools, with additional links to primary schools. The Millennium Mile will also become an integral

part of the National Cycle Network promoted by Sustrans.

5e.182 Additional cycle routes are being developed in Market Harborough, and local linkages are being developed with the Sustrans National Cycle Network that passes through the District.

5e.183 Stages 1 and 2 of the Lutterworth Western Relief Road include cycleways, and the Lutterworth Southern Bypass design incorporated cycleways to extend the route to Magna Park, providing a practical commuter link.

Walking/Cycling for Health

5e.184 The Harborough Health Forum has established a sub group to promote the positive health chapter of the Leicestershire Health Improvement Plan. They are considering issues which will link to Local Transport Plans, for example, the Active Life Style GP Referral Scheme, which encourages participants to take up more walking and cycling as prescribed treatment.

MARKET HARBOROUGH / LUTTERWORTH: SAFETY OBJECTIVE

Speed Management

5e.185 As a result of the Bypass Demonstration Project in 1994, a 20mph speed limit was introduced in Market Harborough Town Centre with traffic calming. The traffic calming has been extended into the outer town carriageway network.

Personal Security

5e.186 The safety and security of District Council car parks has been assessed against the criteria for the Secured Car Park Scheme with a view to meeting the specified standards.

5e.187 The District Council will provide CCTV in its town centre car parks. It will also provide information packs regarding vehicle security for distribution with all new cars sold locally.

MARKET HARBOROUGH / LUTTERWORTH: ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVE

Highway Network Improvements

Lutterworth Western Relief Road

5e.188 Stages 1 and 2 of the Lutterworth Western Relief Road (LWRR) were funded by the developers of two residential developments to the north and west of the town. They are now open to traffic. Stage 3 will be considered for construction in the next LTP period. Taken together with the recently constructed Southern Bypass, an alternative route would then be available for heavy goods vehicles which currently pass through the Town Centre of the A426.

5e.189 However, until the third stage of the LWRR is completed to link the other two stages to an appropriate standard, the route is not deemed suitable for heavy goods traffic, and a Traffic Regulation Order has been introduced.

School Travel

5e.190 In partnership with local schools the Councils are developing Safe Routes to School for Ridgeway Primary School in Market Harborough, and Little Bowden School.

5e.191 A planning condition requires a School Travel Plan at the new primary school being built at Rockingham Road, Market Harborough.

Travel Awareness

5e.192 Harborough District Council is considering a range of measures for its own employees and a survey has been conducted to assess the present transport modes and patterns, with a view to formulating a Travel Plan. The survey is being analysed.

5e.193 The District Council is working with the County Council to encourage Travel Plans for local employers, and is seeking to secure such plans through planning agreements and conditions in association with all new major development proposals within the District. Consent has recently been granted for a distribution warehouse at Magna Park,

Lutterworth which requires the submission of a green transport strategy with the submission of reserved matters.

5e.194 Local business community initiatives are being developed. An example of good practice is Travelsphere, a Market Harborough company which provides a minibus for its staff.

Parking Management

5e.195 The District Council is to review its current policy of not charging for public car parks. The Council is working in partnership with other Local Authorities in the area with a view to establishing similar and consistent regimes, and consultation is underway with the local community and Chamber of Trade. Survey work is being undertaken to identify volumes of long term commuter parking.

5e.196 Over the next few financial years the District Council will carry out further improvements to its car parks. These will include improved security, improved facilities for disabled people and improved car park management. The District Council's work in connection with the Secure Car Parks scheme is referred to in paragraph 5e.187.

5e.197 Provision for parking for people with disabilities, and motor cycle and cycle parking, is gradually being introduced into all car parks in Market Harborough and Lutterworth.

5e.198 The LTP participation exercise showed that there was little local support in either Market Harborough or Lutterworth for radical parking management measures. These views will be taken into account in the development with the District Council of the joint parking strategies for the two towns.

MARKET HARBOROUGH / LUTTERWORTH: INTEGRATION OBJECTIVE

Land Use / Transport Integration

5e.199 Market Harborough has been the focus for a significant proportion of the development in the District outside the Central Leicestershire LTP area. The Harborough District Local Plan is proceeding towards adoption during 2000.

5e.200 The main Local Plan developments are located on the periphery of the town and the Local Plan contains policies to encourage greater use of modes other than the private car. This is important, since the Bypass Demonstration Project design (5e.173) made no allowance for the growth which would occur from existing and proposed development commitments.

Developer Contributions to Transport Infrastructure

5e.201 Market Harborough:

(Numbers in circles refer to the sites as marked on Figure 5e.3 at the start of the Market Harborough / Lutterworth section).

- *Northampton Road* ① – Planning permission has been granted for this employment development. The agreement is being drafted, and is likely to involve various improvements, including improved cycleway access.
- *Alvington Way* ② – Now mostly completed, this housing development to the north of the town has provided a distributor road between the two radial routes of Burnmill Road and Leicester Road, which has aided circulation around the town.
- *Rockingham Road, Housing* ③ – Already commenced, this development will provide pedestrian and cycling facilities, at traffic signalled junctions and in the form of a combined use cycleway/footway.
- *Rockingham Road, Employment* ④ – Planning permission has been granted for this development, which will provide a combined use cycleway/footway and improvements for cyclists and pedestrians at an existing junction.
- *Rockingham Road, New School* ⑤ – A new school on this site is expected to be completed in 2000, and a School Travel Plan has been made a requirement. Additionally, a zebra crossing and other pedestrian facilities are to be provided between the school and local housing.

5e.202 Lutterworth:

(Numbers in circles refer to the sites as marked on Figure 5e.4 at the start of the Market Harborough / Lutterworth section).

- *Magna Park* ① – This major distribution centre funded the construction of Lutterworth Southern Bypass, completed in 1999, providing a link between Junction 20 of the M1 and the A5(T) trunk road, and relieving the town centre of much of its east-west heavy goods traffic.
- *Housing developments, east and north of Lutterworth* ② – these developments funded Phases 1 and 2 of the Western Relief Road, connected to Lutterworth Southern Bypass and the A426 respectively. Stage 3, linking Stages 1 and 2, will be considered for construction in the next LTP period.
- *Leaders Farm* ③ – the planning application for this employment area west of Lutterworth is currently the subject of negotiation, but the development is expected to provide cycling facilities on Brookfield Way, to complement those on Stages 1 and 2 of the LWRR.
- *Two Food Retail Outlets* ④ – transport improvements secured as a result of these developments include: controlled pedestrian crossings, pedestrian refuges on Leicester Road, network improvements to reduce congestion, traffic calming and Pelican crossings on Bitteswell Road in the vicinity of Lutterworth Grammar School and bus facilities outside the stores.