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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Core Strategy

- 1.1.1 Blaby District Council is producing a Core Strategy (CS) as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF) for the District. The CS will set out the spatial plan for the District up to 2026 (Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function). The document will supersede some of the policies of the Blaby District Local Plan 1999 (See Appendix 1 for details).
- 1.1.2 This document is the submission version of the Core Strategy (the submission CS) which sets out what the Council consider to be an appropriate Vision; Strategy; Objectives; Core Policies; and, Monitoring and Implementation framework. Following consultation (and appropriate amendments) a final version of the submission CS will be submitted to the Secretary of State (Department of Communities and Local Government).
- 1.1.3 The CS has been divided into 6 main sections setting out 1) A 'spatial portrait' setting out the key characteristics of the District 2) A spatial strategy 3) Core Strategy objectives 4) Core Policies 5) A monitoring framework and 6) An implementation framework.
- 1.1.4 Whilst every effort has been made to make the document as clear as possible, it does use some technical language. In order to assist the reader a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms is appended to the rear of the report (Appendix 2).

1.2 What is the Local Development Framework (LDF)?

- 1.2.1 The LDF is a series of documents that set out the 'spatial plan' for the area. The LDF addresses environmental (including land-use), social and economic issues.
- 1.2.2 The LDF is a portfolio of Documents that will set out the Council's spatial plan. The LDF for Blaby District will comprise:
- Core Strategy
 - Allocations and Designations Development Plan Document (DPD) – this document will identify specific land-use allocations and designations.
 - Sustainable Urban Extension and Strategic Employment Site Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – this document will set out the planning framework for the chosen SUE.
 - Affordable Housing SPD – this document will provide detailed policy guidance on the provision of affordable housing in order to build on the broad policy approach contained within this document.
 - Other documents as appropriate.

1.3 What is the Core Strategy and how was it prepared?

- 1.3.1 The CS is a key part of the LDF. It sets out the strategic approach which will guide future development of the District. In addition, it sets the framework for future Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents mentioned above (which must be in conformity with the CS). The CS has to be in conformity with the East Midlands Regional Plan (which is part of the development plan), consistent with National planning policies as well as take account of other plans and strategies including the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.3.2 The submission CS has involved a number of key stages of production. Previous documents have looked at strategic 'issues' that need to be addressed and alternative options for delivering these. 5 key stages have preceded this current document, these are: Issues Papers (November 2004); Issues and Options document (March 2005); Preferred Options (May 2006); Issues and Options (version 2) (March 2008), and; Alternative Options (November 2008).
- 1.3.3 The proposed approach set out in this and previous documents has been based on evidence that has been gathered on key issues.
- 1.3.4 The submission CS sets out the general scale and broad locations of development and the role of various settlements in light of other key documents such as the Regional Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands). It is not site specific in terms of the location of development with the exception of the Sustainable Urban Extension and Strategic Employment Site. This is a matter for later Allocations DPDs, (including that relating to housing and employment that are proposed in the Local Development Scheme).
- 1.3.5 The CS includes a set of clear and concise policies to ensure that development is in accordance with the vision, objectives and strategy.

1.4 Policy Framework

- 1.4.1 The Core Strategy is not a 'stand alone' document. It is prepared in the context of a number of National Regional and Local Strategies and Guidance. The CS must be in conformity with the Regional Plan, broadly consistent with National Policy and have regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy and other important strategies. The key areas are set out below.

1.4.2 National Policy Framework

- 1.4.3 The submission version Core Strategy has been prepared in the context of National Planning Policy contained in Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG). It is considered that the submission version of the Core Strategy is consistent with Central Government Policy.

1.4.4 Regional Policy Framework

1.4.5 The East Midlands Regional Plan was issued by the Secretary of State in March 2009. The Regional Plan identifies 11 key objectives including the following:

- To accommodate the Region's housing growth;
- To reduce social exclusion;
- To protect and enhance the environmental quality of rural and urban areas;
- To improve health and well being;
- To improve economic prosperity and employment opportunities;
- To improve accessibility to jobs, homes and services;
- To protect and enhance the environment;
- To achieve a step change in the level of 'bio-diversity';
- To reduce the causes of Climate Change;
- To reduce the impacts of Climate Change, and;
- To minimise adverse environmental impacts of new development.

1.4.6 The Regional Plan sets out an annual Housing Target for the District of 380 units per year between 2006 to 2026 (7,600 houses during the plan period). The Three Cities Sub-Regional Strategy gives further guidance indicating that at least 250 of the 380 houses should be within or adjacent to the PUA.

1.4.7 In addition, the Regional Plan sets out the strategic policies that guide development across the East Midlands Region and also includes the Regional Transport Strategy.

1.4.8 Local Policy Framework

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

1.4.9 This is a District-wide Plan produced by Blaby Together (the Local Strategic Partnership), and was formally agreed in 2008, following public consultation. The Local Development Framework will seek to be the spatial planning part of the Community Plan. In addition, 'Leicestershire Together' have produced a County wide SCS which has been considered in the preparation of this document.

1.4.10 The key areas of concern within the SCS with which the Local Development Framework must have regard are: Making Communities feel safer; supporting children and young people; lifelong learning; enabling a healthy lifestyle; stronger communities; and, infrastructure.

1.4.11 Some of the objectives of the SCS lend themselves more easily to consideration as part of the Core Strategy, in all cases the CS has attempted to follow these overarching principles.

1.5 Other relevant Strategies

1.5.1 The Core Strategy has had regard to the following Plans and Strategies:

- The Blaby District Council Corporate Plan;
- The Blaby District Council Housing Strategy;
- The Blaby District Council Climate Change Action Plan;
- The Blaby District Council Air Quality Action Plan (May 2004)
- Leicestershire County Council Waste and Minerals Plans;
- The East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy;
- The East Midlands Regional Housing Strategy;
- Leicester and Leicestershire Bio-diversity Action Plan;
- Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2;
- Leicestershire County Council Waste Management Strategy.
- Parish Plans

1.6 Local Area Agreement

1.6.1 Development of the Core Strategy has been mindful of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Leicester and Leicestershire. The LAA has a number of objectives and Indicators. Appendix 3 sets out a matrix identifying how the policy content of the document reflects the LAA objectives.

1.7 Sustainability Appraisal

1.7.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and European Directives require that the Core Strategy is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process to assess the economic, environmental and social effects that may arise from the LDF.

1.7.2 A Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment have been carried out at all key stages of production of the Core Strategy. The SA / SEA have provided a structured 'iterative' process to shape the policies of the CS and to test the sustainability implications of the proposed strategy and policies.

1.8 Evidence base

1.8.1 National Guidance requires Local Development Framework policies and subsequent decisions to be based on strong evidence. Evidence has come from a wide range of sources, including demographic data (such as Census, Indices of deprivation and household projections), through regional and county bodies (for example the Leicestershire Biodiversity Action plan), and evidence gathered locally or in partnership with other Leicestershire Authorities. Many studies have been commissioned or completed (see appendix 4 for details). We must also ensure that all our local policies are in accordance with those at regional and national level.

2.0 Vision

- 2.1 The Core Strategy vision is the long term spatial vision from which the objectives and spatial strategy have been derived. The 'vision' is a statement of what the CS is trying to achieve. The vision is wide ranging, but focuses on the issues that are to be addressed.
- 2.2 The proposed vision for the Core Strategy should build on the vision contained in the District's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan which state that:

"In 2026 Blaby will be made up of thriving, sustainable, safe, healthy and secure communities where people are happy to live and work."

- 2.3 The Community Strategy for the District of Blaby has a number of key aspirations that are reflected in the vision below.

The residents of Blaby District will enjoy a clean, attractive and safe environment, where new developments will be of a high quality and where the special character of the District's natural and built environment will be protected and enhanced.

Blaby District will have a prosperous urban and rural economy, where adequate provision is made for the employment needs of its residents and those who work in the District.

The mix of housing will better reflect the population of the District including an appropriate balance of house types, sizes and tenures and there will be greater provision of affordable homes to meet identified needs.

Greater community facilities (including public open space and sports provision) will be provided to meet the needs of the population and access to the Countryside will be encouraged close to urban areas through a series of Green Wedges.

Residents and visitors to the District will have a greater range of transport options to access services and facilities, where higher priority is given to walking, cycling and public transport than to the car.

There will be a comprehensive network of Green Infrastructure where habitats will be protected and a variety of species will be encouraged to thrive.

New and existing houses and commercial property will be more energy efficient, with waste production minimised. Opportunities for large and small scale renewable energy will be maximised.

Blaby Town Centre will be a more attractive, diverse, and viable town centre which will be complemented by a network of other retail centres providing a wide retail offer.

The Principal Urban Area of Leicester will be the focus for new housing and commercial development in the District, with lesser scale development located in the better served settlements that have a good range of services and facilities (including public transport to 'higher order' centres).

3.0 Spatial Portrait

Location and character

- 3.1 The District of Blaby is located in the County of Leicestershire to the south west of the City of Leicester. It covers an area of 13,047 hectares (50 sq miles). Whilst the town of Blaby has the only 'town centre' within the District, there is no 'principal' town. The District comprises twenty-five towns and villages of varying sizes ranging in population from 32 (Wigston Parva) to 15,123 (Braunstone Town).
- 3.2 The northernmost part of the District is predominantly urban in character and has five settlements which adjoin the City boundary. A number of large villages exist south of the City boundary which have a good functional relationship with the City and offer a wide range of services and facilities. The south of the District is more rural comprising a series of villages which have stronger links with Hinckley.

Population

- 3.3 The population of the District of Blaby was 92,900 (2007 mid-year estimates). The population increased by 9.1% between the 1991 and 2001 censuses (the second highest proportional population increase in the county and higher than the average for the East Midlands region (5.5%) and more than double the National average (4.4%)). The number of households in the District has risen by 15% since the 1991 census. Population projections produced by the Office of National Statistics and Government Actuarial Department forecast further significant increases in population – it is anticipated that these population forecasts will be reflected in an increase in household formation.
- 3.4 The population profile of the District (based on 2007 mid-year estimates) indicates that some 17,500 people (20% of the population) are under 16 years of age, and that 18,600 (20% of the population) are aged 65 or over. The over 65 population is expected to grow to 23,600 (or 22% of total population) by 2026.
- 3.5 The largest ethnic group in the District is White British (94.3%). 95% of the population were born within the United Kingdom. Only some 5.7% of the population were from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. The largest concentrations of BME groups are in the Parishes abutting the City of Leicester, these are mainly 'Indian' communities many of whom had previous generations in more Central areas of Leicester.

- 3.6 The District has an 'average' level of educational attainment with 17.2% of the population having a level 4/5 qualification. The percentage of people who have no qualifications is lower than the county, region and national averages. Unemployment in the District has historically been one of the lowest in Leicestershire and consistently lower than the national average (although recent economic conditions have seen unemployment rise from 1% in April 2008 to 2.7% in April 2009)(source: nomis). Blaby District has the second highest income level in Leicestershire and is higher than the county and regional averages.
- 3.7 Quality of health is not a significant problem within the District. The majority of people stating that their health is either good or fairly good in the 2001 census. The percentage of people that have a limiting long term illness is 15%, lower than for the county, region and nation. The District however, does have issues with obesity and low levels of take up of exercise.

Housing

- 3.8 The dominant type of housing in the District of Blaby is Semi-Detached (48.4%), this is above the regional and national average (36.3% and 31.6% respectively). The District has a relatively low number of terraced properties - 9.7% (the lowest percentage in Leicester and Leicestershire, and well below the percentage for the region (21.3%) and nationally (25.8%).
- 3.9 The average property price in the District of Blaby in 2006/7 was in excess of £175,000 according to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, with entry level properties mostly above £130,000.

Crime levels

- 3.10 The District has comparatively low levels of crime (35.5 crimes committed annually per 1,000 population compared to 42.8 in Leicestershire and 60.7 nationally). Overall levels of crime have fallen by 2% from the year 2003/04 to 2004/05 (Source: Leicestershire Constabulary, CIS).

Transport and Communications

- 3.11 The District of Blaby is well linked to major road communications. Both the M1 and M69 run through the District and intersect at junction 21 of the M1. Junctions on the M1 make the District attractive to business and commerce and provide a location with easy road access to London, Birmingham and the North of England. East Midlands, Birmingham and Coventry airports are within 45 minutes drive. The strong trunk road network also makes nearby centres attractive to in and out-commuters. The District has only one passenger railway station at Narborough which has an hourly service to Birmingham / Leicester (journey times to Leicester are some 12 minutes).
- 3.12 The area around Junction 21 of the M1 experiences severe traffic congestion at peak hours and, as a result of this, air and noise pollution is an issue in this area. Five air quality management areas have been designated, based on vehicular emissions, two of which are in the M1 corridor.

- 3.13 Dependence on the car is an issue in the District. Whilst the percentage of people who travel to work by car is similar to the Leicestershire average, this is still a significant number. The numbers of people using public transport increases in those settlements closer to the Urban area of Leicester.

Motorways Retail Area

- 3.14 The District contains Fosse Park, one of the most successful out of town retail parks in the country (in terms of rental values and visitor numbers) attracting approximately 100,000 shoppers each week. The economic success of Fosse Park introduces some challenges in terms of traffic generation / congestion, increased pollution and an impact on other retail centres.

Cultural heritage and natural environment

- 3.15 The District of Blaby has a rich cultural heritage, it contains nine conservation areas, some 200 listed buildings and 16 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. It is however, the only District in Leicestershire that does not have a local museum.
- 3.16 There are also some important areas of natural environment and landscape character. Whilst the District is predominantly low lying there are some important landscape features including granite outcrops at Croft (Croft Hill) and Enderby.
- 3.17 The District contains six Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) of ecological and geological importance, and two areas of ancient woodland. The district also contains a diverse range of protected habitats and species. Key wildlife corridors penetrate the urban area including those around the Grand Union Canal and River Soar / Sence.

Economy

- 3.18 The 2001 Census indicates that the two biggest employment sectors in the District of Blaby are manufacturing and the service sector. Since 2001 manufacturing employment has declined in line with national trends and there has been significant growth in office based service sector employment (particularly in the vicinity of junction 21 of the M1). The District has significantly higher levels of: Banking, Finance and Insurance; and, Public Administration, Education and Health than the average in Leicestershire but has significantly less manufacturing employment (according to the 2003 Annual Business Inquiry). According to the Census the District experienced a net outflow of 8,800 people who travel to work in Leicester each day.
- 3.19 The area around the M1/ M69 motorway intersection contains large scale employment developments (including Grove Park, Meridian Business Park and Carlton Park) and is a desirable location for large employers (with some campus style office developments including the Headquarters of Next and Alliance and Leicester (Santander)). The area around junction 21 is also attractive to some manufacturing and distribution uses.

- 3.20 The percentage of people that travel to work by car (either as a passenger or a driver) is 72%, which is similar to Leicestershire as a whole (71%). The next most popular mode of transport for travelling to and from work is the bus (7%), which is slightly higher than the county average of 5%.

Prosperity and deprivation

- 3.21 The District of Blaby is relatively prosperous. In the 2007 Indices of Deprivation survey, Blaby was ranked 324 out of the 354 local authorities in England (with 354 being the least deprived). Although the District is not a deprived area on the whole, there are some pockets of deprivation within the District.

4.0 Issues, problems and challenges facing the District

- 4.1 The information and data gathered as part of the evidence base, along with Community consultation has identified a number of issues and challenges facing the District. The issues are many and wide ranging and can be divided into social, economic and environmental considerations.

Social

- 4.2 The District of Blaby has low levels of deprivation (it is ranked 318th least deprived out of 354 English Districts). The District is considered 37th out of 400 as a 'good place to live' (Best place to bring up your children survey) and was 24th in the Halifax 'Quality of life survey. Notwithstanding this, there are small pockets of deprivation in Braunstone Town and Enderby.
- 4.3 The District has a relatively low incidence of 'disability or long term illness'. Notwithstanding this, the national pattern of increasing child and adult obesity is reflected in the District with 24% of adults being obese and a comparatively low number of people who play sport or eat healthily. A recent survey of play and open spaces has indicated that the District is broadly lacking in play and open space facilities.
- 4.4 The District has comparatively low levels of crime (35.5 crimes committed annually per 1,000 population compared to 42.8 in Leicestershire and 60.7 nationally). Particular issues surround crime and alcohol abuse involving young people.
- 4.5 The District does not score favourably in terms of educational attainment with only 55% of 15 year olds achieving 5 A* to C grade GCSEs.
- 4.6 These statistics hide discrepancies across the District with concentrations of ill-health and low educational achievement being in a limited number of Parishes – namely Braunstone Town and parts of Enderby.
- 4.7 The cost of housing in the District has grown at a far greater rate than local incomes. This has resulted in an 'affordability gap' where a large number of people are unable to gain access to 'market housing'. Blaby District has a

relatively high proportion of Owner Occupied homes and relatively small number of 'affordable' social rented homes with low turnover and therefore limited availability. The problem has been increased by an inability to provide sufficient affordable housing from new developments to meet local needs.

- 4.8 Growth in the District's population is expected to continue. The combination of natural growth, internal and (to a lesser extent) international migration and demographic change has resulted in increased pressure for additional housing. The delivery of housing in the District has been dropping from a peak in the late 1990s and early 2000 and has been further reduced as a result of the economic downturn.
- 4.9 The nature of the housing market is constantly changing. An increasing number of older people in the District will change the nature of accommodation required.
- 4.10 The District has a very distinctive mix of housing, there are very few 'entry level properties' in the form of small terraced houses or flats, but there are a large number of semi-detached and detached properties. This has resulted in a housing mix that does not fit the profile of likely future requirements.
- 4.11 Whilst the majority of the District of Blaby is well served by services and facilities (particularly the Urban area and larger towns and villages), parts of the District have reduced access to services and more limited public transport, particularly the more rural southern part of the District.

Economic

- 4.12 The District of Blaby has traditionally had high levels of employment. The rate of unemployment remained low between 2001 and 2008, but increased as a result of the 'credit crunch' in 2008 (consistent with other Leicestershire Districts). The District contains the Headquarters of Alliance and Leicester (now Santander), Next and British Gas (Centrica) along with Leicestershire County Council, and the Headquarters of all emergency services. The focus on financial employment and public administration was considered to be a structural weakness that would make the District vulnerable to any economic decline based around these industries (PACEC).
- 4.13 Demand for employment land has declined as a result of weakening economic conditions, however, prior to the downturn, the District had only a limited choice of available employment sites, with various studies indicating that increased provision was required in the longer term to meet likely demands.
- 4.14 In addition to large employers, some 80% of businesses in the District are micro-businesses employing less than 10 people. These businesses require special consideration both in terms of the provision of premises and business support.
- 4.15 The mean income levels within the District compares well with other Districts, in 2006 the Leicester Shire Economic baseline study indicated that mean income levels were nearly £35,000 (the second highest in Leicestershire).

- 4.16 Whilst the number of 'Managerial and Professional' residents in the District is broadly comparable with the Leicestershire average, the level of attainment of NVQ4 or above is some 15% below the County average. The need to provide highly skilled well paid jobs in the District is therefore a key issue, and has close links with the need to improve skill levels so that higher quality jobs can be accessed by the Local Community.
- 4.17 The District has good links to the National Motorway network and is therefore a desirable location for a wide range of employers, including manufacturing and distribution but also large scale office based employers (such as those found at Carlton Park and Grove Park). It is a key issue for the District to meet the wide ranging employment needs of the District's population and encourage highly skilled well paid employment without undermining attempts to regenerate the core of Leicester City which is seeking to increase its office based employment offer.
- 4.18 One of the key obstacles affecting the economic success of the District is its transport network. Some of the District's key employment and retail facilities are located close to junction 21 of the M1. The road network around junction 21 experiences severe congestion, particularly at peak times from traffic entering the City of Leicester from the motorway network, and those accessing the large employment and retail facilities at Grove Park and the Motorways Retail Area. Proposals to provide a direct link from the M1 to the M69 using a new 'flyover' is uncertain (and is unlikely to occur before 2018 at best), and the focus of further development to the west of Leicester may add to congestion already experienced.
- 4.19 Transport alternatives are limited with only one train station within the District at Narborough. Whilst bus services are frequent, particularly those serving the City of Leicester, they are often not direct routes and take longer than car or train journeys for similar length trips. Cycle routes within the District are not comprehensive, and very few are off road.
- 4.20 The town of Blaby is the only 'town centre' within the District. The centre is ranked only 2,046 in the UK shopping Index. It is located only some 2 miles from Fosse Park (a major out of town retail facility and is only some 4 miles from Leicester City Centre). A recent retail study has indicated that there is considerable concern that Blaby town centre will become increasingly uncompetitive (and to lose its place in the retail hierarchy) unless the attractiveness of retail offer and quality of shopping and commercial experience is improved.
- 4.21 Fosse Park and the Motorways Retail Area (MRA) are located on the northern boundary of the District. It is a highly successful out of town retail park, and is the highest ranked centre in the District (355th in the UK index). Whilst the MRA is commercially successful, it has an impact on surrounding centres and is mainly accessed by car borne custom, thus increasing traffic problems in the vicinity of junction 21.

Environmental

- 4.22 The District of Blaby is made up some 25 towns and villages, each of these settlements are distinct and residents are protective of their identity and character. The villages maintain their independence by a series of strategic gaps between them. It is a key issue to maintain their independence and character whilst seeking to accommodate the development requirements of the District.
- 4.23 The design quality of new developments in the District (particularly housing) has been inadequate. Many schemes have failed to take sufficient account of local character instead using off the peg house types with inappropriate materials and ignoring key urban design principles. Many developments have also failed to provide the level of services and facilities that are required. It is a key issue for the District to try and maximise design quality, whilst balancing the requirement for other infrastructure provision in a volatile housing market.
- 4.24 The District is crossed by a number of key watercourses including the Rivers Soar, Sence and Rothley Brook. Whilst there are only limited number of flooding related incidences within the District, the increased requirements for development (much of which will be adjacent to these water courses) will mean that there is potential for direct flooding of new development or 'downstream' impacts. It is a key issue to avoid locating development in hazardous areas or increasing problems elsewhere as a result of development.
- 4.25 The District currently has 6 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) where pollution levels are considered to be an environmental problem. The majority of AQMAs are focussed around the M1 / M69 and A46. It will be key issue to try and balance the need for growth with the impact that this will have on transport movements, particularly private cars. There is a strong reliance on cars within the District, with 72% of people travelling to work by car (2001 census) – this figure is reduced in those Parishes which abut the City. High volumes of vehicle movements are recorded on key routes into the City of Leicester (including the B4114, A47 and A426) and around junction 21 of the M1, in addition high volumes of Heavy Goods Vehicle movements are recorded on the B4114 through Sharnford.

5.0 Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy

Social Objectives

- i) **To provide the appropriate quantity and mix of housing to meet the needs of the District's current and future populations;**

Improved access to housing is a key element of the Leicestershire and Blaby Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS), the Council's Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy. The Regional Plan (2009) indicates a need for a step change in the quantity and rate of delivery of housing within the District.

- ii) **To optimise the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.**

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) identifies that there is a considerable shortfall of affordable housing which is not met by current provision, it is a key spatial planning objective to contribute towards meeting these needs.

- iii) **To deliver the infrastructure, services and facilities required to meet the needs of the population of the District of Blaby including those arising from growth and to make services accessible to all.**

Access to services is a key part of the Leicestershire and Blaby's SCS. The East Midlands Regional Plan sets out the requirements for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to work with partners to deliver the infrastructure required. The Council works closely with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other organisations to help secure effective delivery of services.

- iv) **To maximise sport and recreation opportunities.**

The Blaby SCS encourages people to be 'as healthy as they can be'. The provision of play, open spaces, sports and recreation facilities will help to achieve this objective. A recent study of play and open spaces (in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17) has indicated widespread shortfalls of facilities. Redressing this through spatial planning policies and working with partners is therefore a key objective.

Environmental Objectives

- v) **To improve the design quality of all new developments in the District including the need to design out crime.**

Recent research by CABI has indicated that the quality of new design in the East Midlands had been unsatisfactory. 'Off the peg' design solutions, poor urban design and architectural quality have been common in the District of Blaby.

Whilst crime levels are generally low in the District, the Council's SCS identifies 'crime and anti-social behaviour' as a key issue. It is a key spatial objective to uplift design quality and seek to design out crime.

- vi) **To protect the important areas of the District's natural environment (species and habitats), landscape and geology and to improve bio-diversity, wildlife habitats and corridors through the design of new developments and the management of existing areas by working with partners.**

A phase 1 habitat survey has indicated that the District of Blaby has a rich but dispersed pattern of important species, habitats (including two areas of ancient woodland) and sites of geological importance. Whilst these areas are numerous, there is a lack of important bio-diversity within the District when compared to neighbouring Authorities.

- vii) **To balance the need to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the District with the need for growth.**

Blaby District has a number of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas as well as some distinctive areas of townscape. The District has the least number of Conservation Areas within Leicestershire but has a number of important heritage sites that are in close proximity to potential locations for new development – it is important that the cultural heritage of the District is balanced against the need for new development. Mechanisms to deliver public art will be explored.

- viii) **To minimise energy use and use of valuable resources and to encourage renewable energy production in suitable locations.**

One of the key measures of the Leicestershire SCS is 'a more effective response to climate change'. Blaby District Council has produced a Strategy that sets out how it can help to reduce carbon emissions and contribute towards addressing climate change. The Regional Plan encourages Development Plans to include policies to promote and encourage the delivery of indicative targets for renewable energy. Resources such as water, land and minerals should be balance against the development needs of the District.

- ix) **To minimise the risk of flooding (and other hazards) to property, infrastructure and people.**

The Leicestershire SCS seeks to ensure a high resilience to the effects of Climate Change. The Rivers Soar, Sence and Rothley / Thurlaston Brook run through the District in areas facing development pressure. It is therefore a key objective to ensure that people and property are not adversely affected by flooding and other hazards where this is under the control of the Council.

Economic objectives

- x) **To provide the appropriate quantity, quality and mix of employment opportunities to meet the needs of the District's current and future populations, and to meet strategic employment, education and training needs;**

Achieving a prosperous, innovative and dynamic economy is a key part of the Leicestershire and Blaby Sustainable Community Strategies. The Leicester and Leicestershire Employment Land Study (2008) indicates a need for additional employment opportunities within the District of Blaby to satisfy both local and strategic requirements.

- xi) **To deliver the transport needs of the District and to encourage and develop the use of more sustainable forms of transport (Including walking, cycling and public transport).**

The Leicestershire SCS has several transport related themes including reducing the impact of traffic on communities, improving air quality, and reducing congestion. The 2001 census indicates that the majority of District residents use private cars to travel to work. Encouraging modal shift (to more sustainable modes of transport) for both employment and social use is therefore a key objective.

- xii) **To maintain, and where appropriate improve, the position of retail centres within the retail hierarchy. To make sure that the existing centres, primarily Blaby Town Centre, have opportunities to grow in order to enhance their vitality and viability and to prevent expansion of out of town centres (Including the Motorways Retail Area) where there is a demonstrable negative impact on existing centres and / or there is no need for additional retail facilities.**

Access to services and facilities forms a key part of the Blaby and Leicestershire SCS. Retail services are important to allow the successful functioning of the District. The District of Blaby has: a large and successful out of town retail facility (Motorways Retail Area – including Fosse Park); a town centre (Blaby); and, numerous local retail centres. Seeking to balance the needs of these competing centres whilst maintaining good service levels is a key objective.

6.0 Spatial Strategy

- 6.1 The spatial strategy will set out how the Council intends to address the key issues which have been identified above, and how the Council envisages different parts of the District changing in the context of these issues.

Types of places in the District

- 6.2 The District of Blaby contains a wide range of distinctive areas. The key characteristic of the District is that it is more 'urban' in character to the north of the District particularly where it abuts the City of Leicester. There is a central belt of larger villages which have a wide range of services and a strong functional relationship with Leicester. The south of the District is more rural in nature, where settlements are generally smaller and less well served with services and facilities.
- 6.3 The District has been sub-divided into three distinct areas or 'places' for the purpose of conducting 'Community Forums'. Whilst these 'places' are somewhat arbitrary, and follow administrative boundaries, they broadly reflect the characteristics referred to above.
- 6.4 The 'Northern' area primarily contains the settlements which abut the City of Leicester including Glenfield, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester Forest East and Braunstone Town. These settlements are urban in nature and form part of the 'Principal Urban Area' of Leicester.
- 6.5 The 'Central' area of Blaby includes the settlements of Countesthorpe, Enderby, Whetstone, Blaby, Glen Parva (also part of the Principal Urban area), Narborough, Littlethorpe, Cosby and Kilby (and the hamlets of Leicester Forest West and Lubbethorpe).
- 6.6 The 'Southern' area of Blaby includes Thurlaston, Huncote, Croft, Sapcote, Stoney Stanton, Elmesthorpe, Sharnford, Aston Flamville and the small hamlets of Wigston Parva and Potters Marston.

Housing delivery

- 6.7 The strategy for delivering housing will be to focus the majority of development (5,250 dwellings) within and adjacent to the PUA in the northern part of the District. The majority of housing (some 4,500 units) will be delivered on one large strategic site (a 'Sustainable Urban Extension' (SUE)). The SUE will incorporate a mix of uses to provide the services and infrastructure needed to support the new population (and potentially help to support existing communities).
- 6.8 The residual housing requirements (some 2,350 units) will be provided outside the PUA, focussed in the better served villages of the 'Central' area of the District. The reason for this is to allow development in areas with greatest access to key services and facilities and with a good functional relationship with the City of Leicester (including good public transport links with the City Centre) which contains considerable employment, leisure and retail opportunities. In addition,

locating development in these areas is in conformity with the Regional Plan.

- 6.9 It is a key part of the strategy that the wide range of housing needs are met, including Gypsies and Travellers, Older people, people with a disability and people requiring affordable housing. The majority of affordable housing will be focussed in these areas of growth where the strategy will seek the optimum amount of affordable housing (whilst retaining the viability of sites).
- 6.10 The rural (mainly 'southern') areas of the District will accommodate lower levels of growth, with a focus on Stoney Stanton, the best served of the villages in the south of the District. Smaller scale 'affordable' housing developments will be allowed where there is a demonstrable need.

Employment and the economy

- 6.11 The northern and central areas will be the focus for employment growth. The provision of new employment land will be focussed on the Principal Urban Area and large Central villages, these are the areas of greatest growth and have the greatest potential source of employees. A strategic (large scale – some 25 hectares) employment site will need to have strong connections with the strategic road network. Lesser scale employment opportunities will be provided in the larger settlements of the northern and central parts of the District. Rural employment opportunities will primarily be focussed on re-using former agricultural buildings and sites and provision and retention of small scale facilities within and adjacent to 'better served' villages.

Transport

- 6.12 The strategic approach will be to focus new development in areas that are well served by a range of transport alternatives (including public transport, walking and cycling) and are not wholly reliant on private cars. New developments will be designed to give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists over cars – whilst recognising that private transport will continue to play an important role.
- 6.13 Where opportunities exist, the Council will support and work with partners in seeking new public transport infrastructure including providing a new park and ride facility at Glenfield.

Retailing

- 6.14 The retail strategy for the District of Blaby is to focus new retail facilities on Blaby Town centre as part of an overall Masterplan. Site assembly and public realm improvements will be pursued to improve both the quantity and quality of the retail offer in Blaby town centre. Small scale growth of lower order centres will be encouraged where they are of a scale that is appropriate to the existing centre.
- 6.15 Growth of existing out of town retail facilities (mainly located at the Motorway's Retail Area) will be limited to small scale growth. Large scale expansions or other out of town retail or commercial leisure facilities will generally not be encouraged.

Provision of Infrastructure

- 6.16 The provision of infrastructure to support new populations (arising from growth) underpins the strategy. There is likely to be infrastructure requirements arising from all new developments. There will be a particularly strong focus on delivering new infrastructure associated with the SUE. Growth of this scale will require new schools, community facilities, healthcare facilities, play and open spaces, water supply and disposal, waste and transport infrastructure, as well as placing increased pressure on existing emergency services.

Green Infrastructure

- 6.17 The strategy is to improve the network of (all types) of Green Space around the District. The SUE will give an opportunity to link existing Urban areas to open Countryside through Green links (with the potential to create new Green Wedges). Existing Green Wedges, which are located in and adjacent to the northern and central parts of the District, will continue to be protected – although it will be the strategic approach to release less sensitive areas of Green Wedge to meet development requirements.
- 6.18 Where there is a demonstrable lack of Play and Open Space (POS) facilities the Council will seek to secure high quality POS as part of new developments.

Climate change

- 6.19 It is crucial that the strategy recognises the District's contribution towards and implications of climate change. The key method of achieving reduced contributions to global warming is by ensuring that new developments optimise energy efficiency without undermining viability.
- 6.20 Encouragement will be given to large scale renewable / low-carbon energy generation in appropriate locations and in seeking to secure micro-generation / combined heat and power solutions where these are shown to be efficient. Opportunities to provide wind based renewable energy will be pursued north of Enderby.
- 6.21 One of the key impacts of climate change is the increased incidence of flooding. The strategy will be to resist flood sensitive developments in locations that are likely to flood, or where development could increase the potential for flooding downstream. In particular, the River Sence and Soar valleys will be protected from developments that could result in on-site or downstream hazards.

7.0 Spatial Policies

Policy 1 - Locating new development

Most new development in the District of Blaby, including housing and employment, will take place within and adjacent to the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Leicester. Some 7,600 houses will be developed in the District between 2006 and 2026, of which, some 5,250 houses will be provided in and adjacent to the PUA.

Outside of the PUA, development will be focussed on Blaby (the District's only settlement with a town centre) and within and adjacent to those settlements identified in the hierarchy in policy 5 which contain a good range of services and facilities, access to a range of transport modes and which have a good functional relationship with higher order centres (including Leicester and Hinckley). Some 2,350 houses will be developed in the areas outside of the PUA (between 2006 and 2026).

Lower levels of growth will be allowed in the Rural Centre and other villages where the scale of development will reflect the settlement's range of available services and facilities and transport alternatives.

In each settlement, encouragement will be given to prioritising the use of Previously Developed Land (brownfield) and underused land and buildings.

Justification

- 7.1 Some 50% of the District of Blaby's population live in the Principal Urban Area comprising the settlements of Glenfield, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester Forest East, Braunstone Town and Glen Parva. There is a strong functional relationship between these PUA settlements and Leicester City Centre, in terms of its retail, employment and leisure opportunities. In addition, there are several larger villages mainly to the south of the PUA which have a strong functional relationship with the PUA in terms of visits for employment, leisure and retail purposes. Travel to work, census data and other evidence (including the Employment Land and Premises studies) support this.
- 7.1.1 The East Midlands Regional Plan seeks to focus new development in and adjacent to Principal Urban Areas (PUAs), including Leicester. Three-Cities Sub-regional policy 3 seeks to ensure that at least 65% of new housing is located within or adjoining the PUA (at least 5,000 houses of the 7,600 required between 2006 and 2026).
- 7.1.2 The Council's Village Services fact file indicates that settlements within the PUA have: a comparatively greater level of services and facilities; greater frequency of public transport; and a greater likelihood of using public transport than settlements outside of this area.

Delivery

7.1.3 Leicester and Leicestershire HMA Authorities Growth Infrastructure Assessment (2009) and subsequent Infrastructure Plan (Appendix 5 to this report) indicate some of the key infrastructure requirements arising from new development. The majority of new development will be implemented by private developers including provision of market and affordable housing. Other areas of key infrastructure provision including transport, education, community facilities, healthcare and retail facilities will be provided in partnership with other key providers

Policy 2 - Design of New Development

In order to secure a high quality environment, all new development should respect the distinctive local character and should contribute to creating places of a high architectural and urban design quality. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have taken account of local patterns of development, landscape and other features and views and are sympathetic to their surroundings. High quality places (which are safe and socially inclusive) will be required through the application of good design principles including layout, street design, scale, materials, natural surveillance, orientation, and sustainable construction.

New developments must demonstrate through urban design, landscaping (including tree planting), architecture and architectural detailing (as demonstrated through a Design and Access statement) that the development is of innovative design and / or is sympathetic to the distinctive character of the area.

All new housing developments are required to meet the 'silver' standard (scoring 14 or more out of 20 Building for Life criteria), unless it can be demonstrated that this is not possible on the particular site.

Justification

7.2 According to CABE design quality in the East Midlands is of the poorest in the United Kingdom. A strong emphasis in improving design quality at Regional and National levels has not been reflected in developments 'on the ground' locally. Blaby District is no exception, too many 'off the peg' house types, inappropriate urban design and poor architectural detailing have resulted in developments that do not reflect local character or provide a sense of place.

7.2.1 The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment for the District of Blaby identifies the characteristics of individual settlements that make them distinctive. It is important that new developments take account of this character in developing sympathetic schemes.

7.2.2 Paragraph 5 of Planning Policy Statement 1 (2005) advises that "an objective of planning is to ensure high quality development through good and inclusive design".

- 7.2.3 One of the key principles of sustainable development is the promotion of 'high quality inclusive design' not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- 7.2.4 PPS1 (2005) sets out extensive guidance on the issue of design. It sets out a number of matters which are to be considered to ensure that Design is appropriate in its context and takes account of opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 7.2.5 It is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design (PPS 1, para 38).

Policy 3 - Sustainable Urban Extension

Land west of the M1 at Lubbethorpe (as shown on the Proposals Map) is allocated as a mixed-use Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).

The SUE will contain:

- Some 4,500 new homes, 1,350 (30%) of which should be affordable,
- Employment opportunities,
- 3 primary schools and a secondary school,
- Health care facilities,
- Community / Faith facilities,
- Retail provision (circa 3,000 – 4,500 sq m (net)),
- Green space provision (including play and open space and strategic Green Infrastructure – including a new Green Wedge(s)). Opportunities will be explored to provide a 'Community Forest' within the Green Wedges,
- New and improved transport links (including walking, cycling and public transport provision) to key services and facilities including those in Leicester City Centre.

A Masterplan will be prepared (as a Supplementary Planning Document) to set out in more detail the structure and development / design requirements of the SUE. The SUE Masterplan will be prepared on behalf of Blaby District Council but will involve key stakeholders. No development shall be permitted on the land allocated for the SUE until the Masterplan has been completed. Subsequent development shall be in accordance with the Masterplan.

The Masterplan will need to include appropriate measures to mitigate the noise and air quality impacts of traffic using the M1 and M69 motorways.

In addition to the services and facilities identified above, the promoters / developers will be required to assess the feasibility of providing renewable sources of energy (including on and off site power generation) to help meet the energy needs of the SUE and to identify opportunities to effectively manage waste.

The delivery of the SUE's services, facilities, infrastructure, land and buildings will primarily be provided by the developer, in partnership with appropriate service providers (through developer contributions and other funding streams).

In order to meet the housing needs of the District and create a mixed and balanced community, the SUE should provide a range of housing (including a mix of affordable housing tenures) to meet future needs.

Justification

- 7.3 The Regional Plan refers to the need for a "Sustainable Urban Extension to the west of Leicester (as necessary)", in order to deliver the scale of growth that is expected in the District of Blaby up to 2026 and beyond.
- 7.3.1 An urban extension is proposed to the west of Leicester (south of Leicester Forest East) including the development of some 4,500 houses, employment land, retail facilities, schools and community facilities.
- 7.3.2 The SUE will be required to be of high quality design. It must provide key services and facilities within the development to maximise the potential for communities to grow and for transport movements to be minimised. Where journeys off site are required to higher order services, facilities and employment, there must be opportunities for new residents to have access to more sustainable forms of transport including walking, cycling and public transport.
- 7.3.3 It is important that development of the SUE integrates with the existing communities of Leicester Forest East, Enderby and Braunstone Town whilst safeguarding their individual identities. Where possible, facilities and services should be provided to meet the needs of existing as well as new residents.
- 7.3.4 The SUE provides an opportunity for contemporary thinking in sustainable development, using high quality design which incorporates new technologies in the design and construction of buildings, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, maximising renewable and low carbon energy sources, and incorporating effective waste management facilities at the outset.
- 7.3.5 The reason why the SUE has been chosen in this location over other alternatives are:
- The site is capable of delivering the quantity of housing required in the Principal Urban Area along with supporting infrastructure;
 - The site has flexibility to respond to changing housing requirements that may emerge through future versions of the Regional Plan;
 - The site is in the control of one landowner who is willing to develop the land;
 - The site lies close to the proposed Strategic Employment Site and other important employment areas including Grove Park, Meridian Business Park, Carlton Park and The Warrens Industrial Estate;
 - The site lies close to retail (Fosse Park) and Leisure (Meridian) facilities;
 - The site has the potential to provide Public Transport solutions that would encourage reduced journeys by car (particularly to Leicester City Centre) – this is

based on data that indicates that settlements which are closer to the Core of Leicester City have populations with a greater propensity to use public transport;

- It has close proximity to Park and Ride facilities at Meynell's Gorse and Enderby allowing good public transport links into Leicester;
- The site could provide the quantity of development to secure infrastructure, including a secondary school;
- The site has significant potential to provide Green Infrastructure; and
- Development of the site can be achieved without threatening the identity of individual settlements.

Delivery

7.3.6 The SUE will encompass a wide range of land uses involving a number of key partners. The following broadly identifies who will deliver the key land uses.

1) Housing. New housing will mainly be delivered by the developer. The provision of affordable housing will be a partnership between the developer and a Registered Social Landlord (or other qualifying organisation) and it is anticipated that the majority of funding and delivery will come through these bodies, although some public funding for affordable housing will be provided through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

2) Schools. The developer will be required to contribute the land for the provision of education facilities (new schools) and a contribution towards the capital costs of completing these. It is anticipated that some 8 hectares will be required for a secondary school and 2 hectares for each primary school (6 hectares in total). The remaining funding required to deliver schools will be sought through public and other funds.

3) Health care facilities. New General Practitioner surgeries will primarily be funded by the GPs, although funding from developers will be sought where necessary. Public funding may be required in exceptional circumstances. It is envisaged that land for Health Care facilities would need to be identified and reserved as part of the development of the Masterplan.

4) Sustainable Transport. The provision of walking and cycling routes which link into the wider networks will be provided within the development. Key walking and cycling networks will be identified through the SUE Masterplan and provision of facilities made at the developers expense. The bus network needed to serve the new development will be mainly funded by the developer following the early stages of development. A phased approach to the provision of public transport will be developed through the SUE Masterplan so that the earliest delivery of Public Transport is balanced against the need to provide a well used service.

5) Employment. New employment will mainly be delivered and funded through the developer. The components of employment within the site will be determined through the SUE Masterplan.

6) Retail facilities. New retail facilities will mainly be delivered and funded through the developer and their partners. The broad location and type of retail facilities within the site will be determined through the SUE Masterplan.

7) Community Facilities. The developer will contribute the land and make a contribution towards the capital costs of new Community facilities. It is envisaged that land for such facilities would need to be identified and reserved as part of the development of the Masterplan.

8) Green Infrastructure. Open space and Green Infrastructure will be provided by the developer as an integral part of the new development. The areas of Green Infrastructure (which includes Public Open Space) will be broadly identified as part of the SUE Masterplan.

Policy 4 - Strategic Employment Site

Land off the Warrens (south of the M69) at Enderby (as shown on the proposals map) is allocated as a Strategic Employment Site (SES).

The SES will provide some 20 hectares of employment land. The type of employment land provided should reflect needs arising from the local and wider population and businesses.

In order to help meet the employment needs of the District, the SES should provide a range of employment opportunities (which should include office and light industry (B1), General Industry (B2) and storage and distribution uses (B8) – as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) (1987) as amended).

The SES should seek to ensure nearby communities (including the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension) are able to gain easy access to the SES by a range of transport modes. A new link across the M69 will be required in order to encourage pedestrian and cycling movements between the SES and the proposed SUE north of the M69.

A Masterplan will be prepared (as a Supplementary Planning Document) to set out in more detail the structure and development / design requirements of the SES and SUE. The Masterplan will be prepared on behalf of Blaby District Council and will involve key stakeholders. No development shall be permitted on the land allocated until the Masterplan has been completed. Subsequent development shall be in accordance with the Masterplan.

Access improvements are required including a new link road from the Warrens to Leicester Lane, Enderby.

Justification

7.4.1 The Leicester and Leicestershire Employment Land Study (LLELS) and the Blaby District Employment Land and Premises Study (BELPS) identify a requirement for a Strategic Employment Site of some 25 hectares within the

District. In addition, the BELPS identifies a further requirement for some 20 hectares of employment land (outside of the SES).

7.4.2 The key requirements of the SES are that they are accessible to potential employees, they have a good functional relationship with the Sustainable Urban Extension, they are attractive to the market, and they have good links with the transport and communication network of the District. In addition, it is important that the location of the SES does not undermine any of the other environmental, social or economic objectives of the Core Strategy.

7.4.3 The location of the SES has been chosen because it has a good functional relationship with the SUE which will allow the opportunity for new residents to walk or cycle to new employment areas. It has good access to the trunk road network particularly when the new link road is provided to Leicester Lane thus improving its attractiveness to the market.

7.4.4 A balance of employment types will be expected. The mix of employment types must reflect the needs of new and existing residents and will be informed by the BELPS and LLELS.

Policy 5 - Settlement hierarchy

In order to focus new development in the most appropriate locations the following hierarchy of settlements will be used to determine the scale and nature of growth. Provision will be made for about the housing requirement figure for each settlement as shown below.

1. Principal Urban Area:

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Glenfield Kirby Muxloe Leicester Forest East Braunstone Town Glen Parva Lubbesthorpe	5,250 (4,500 within a new SUE)

2. Blaby town:

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Blaby	375

3. Land adjacent to Earl Shilton (within Blaby District)

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Land adjacent to Earl Shilton	100

3. Larger Central villages

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Enderby	150
Narborough	200
Whetstone	250
Countesthorpe	300

4. Rural Centre

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Stoney Stanton	275

5. Medium Central villages

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Littlethorpe	150
Huncote	100
Cosby	100
Croft	20
Sapcote	280

6. Smaller villages

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Elmesthorpe	10
Kilby	10
Sharnford	25
Thurlaston	20

7. Hamlets and very small villages

Settlement	Housing requirements (2006 – 2026)
Aston Flamville	1
Leicester Forest West	1
Potters Marston	0
Wigston Parva	0

7.5.1 The settlement hierarchy ranks settlements according to their ability to accommodate additional growth. The hierarchy is based on a number of factors including: size and range of services and facilities; access to areas of employment, education, retailing and leisure (including access to such facilities by public transport); capacity for growth – without undermining other planning objectives. The hierarchy helps decision making that will promote more sustainable communities. The settlement hierarchy seeks to ensure that houses, employment and other developments are in locations with the best range of services and facilities.

7.5.2 A key issue for the Core Strategy is to identify the most appropriate locations for residential and employment growth to meet the requirements of the RSS. The Settlement Hierarchy identifies those villages which, subject to other constraints, would be more suitable for growth. In order to give certainty to the quantity of development suitable in each settlement a target figure is indicated (to inform the scale and distribution of such growth).

7.5.3 The District of Blaby has a number of settlements ranging in size from hamlets to small towns and villages. In order to identify a hierarchy for the Core Strategy, the Council has produced and continues to update a Village Services Fact File

which identifies both the range of services and facilities available within each of the settlements and the frequency and destination of public transport.

- 7.5.4 The position of any settlement within the hierarchy is a reflection of the range of its services and facilities, its size, and its ability to access higher order centres.

Principal Urban Area

- 7.5.5 The East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS) encourages a policy approach of urban concentration with new development being focussed on the Principal Urban Areas. The RSS requires that at least 5,000 houses are provided in and adjacent to the PUA of Leicester between 2006 and 2026 – this includes the settlements of Glenfield, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester Forest East, Braunstone Town and Glen Parva. The majority of new development will be provided within the SUE west of Leicester. Opportunities for large scale growth in suitable locations within and adjacent the PUA are limited according to the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Urban Capacity Study (2006).

Blaby

- 7.5.6 Blaby has the District's only town centre which will be the focus for future retail growth. The town has a wide range of services and facilities including schools, shops, employment and has a good functional relationship with Leicester (including frequent and direct public transport services). Whilst Blaby is a key settlement within the District and should be a focus for future development, the SHLAA indicates that there are only limited opportunities for large scale growth without compromising the Green Wedge and flood plain to the north, west and south of the settlement. New Growth is expected to be delivered on Greenfield sites, with limited development as part of town centre redevelopments.

Land adjacent to Earl Shilton

- 7.5.7 Earl Shilton is defined as part of the urban area of the Sub-Regional Centre of Hinckley in the RSS. Sub-Regional Centres are considered to be suitable locations for additional growth. A small area of land adjacent to the urban area of Earl Shilton is located within Blaby District, but will look to Earl Shilton for its facilities and services.

Larger Central Villages

- 7.5.8 The four villages of Narborough, Whetstone, Enderby and Countesthorpe are the best served of the villages outside of the PUA and Blaby. They all have a good functional relationship with Leicester including frequent bus services into the City Centre. In addition, they have a range of services and facilities that would help to support growth.
- 7.5.9 Narborough has the only passenger rail way station in the District providing links to Leicester City Centre in less than 15 minutes. The village is close to some of the key employment sites within the District and has a wide range of retail, health and education facilities.

7.5.10 Enderby has the highest ranking retail centre in the District of Blaby (other than Fosse Park) according to Management Horizons 'UK Shopping Index', it is home to much of the District's employment opportunities including Grove Park, Carlton Park, the Warrens Industrial Estate and Fosse Park and Motorways's Retail Areas. Enderby has both primary schools and Brockington College secondary schools. Whilst Enderby has a wide range of services and facilities, it has more limited scope for future growth as a result of strategically important areas of Green Wedge and strong defensible boundaries.

7.5.11 Whetstone has a wide range of employment facilities including Cambridge Road Industrial Estate (and nearby employment sites in Blaby). Whetstone has two primary schools. It also has a wide range of services and facilities, however, it has limits on its scope for future growth as a result of strategically important areas of Green Wedge to its east and west and strong defensible boundaries.

Countesthorpe has both primary schools and a secondary school (Countesthorpe Community College) the latter providing a wide range of opportunities to the community. Countesthorpe has a functional retail centre and a wide range of other services and facilities, along with a strong functional relationship with the higher order centres of Blaby and Leicester.

Stoney Stanton

Stoney Stanton is the largest and best served of the villages in the south of the District of Blaby. It contains a range of retail, medical and education facilities and acts as a higher order centre for other nearby villages. The coalescence of Stoney Stanton and Sapcote is undesirable, however, there are opportunities elsewhere to allow limited growth to reinforce its role as a Rural Centre.

Policy 6 - Affordable housing

To meet identified needs, the Council will seek to enable some 30 affordable houses per year up to 2013, rising to 134 houses per year in the period 2013 – 2026, 104 of which per year will be provided as part of the SUE. Affordable housing requirements will continue to be monitored beyond this date to ensure that the optimum provision is achieved.

In order to ensure that affordable housing can be provided on suitable sites without resulting in schemes becoming economically unviable, the Council's target is to secure 30% affordable housing within the proposed SUE and 25% affordable housing on all other developments of 15 or more units. The targets will be reviewed in order to ensure that the optimum number of affordable houses is being achieved.

Pro-rata financial contributions toward affordable housing will be required on smaller sites (below 15 dwellings) subject to viability assessments. The amount involved will be set out in the Affordable Housing SPD and will be reviewed annually.

In order to meet identified local needs some 80% of affordable housing should be social rented and 20% intermediate housing.

A mix of affordable housing types should be provided in order to reflect identified needs. The mix of accommodation should include a large proportion of 2 and 3 bedroom general needs houses (both social rented and intermediate) as well as accommodation to meet the needs of elderly people and downsizing households.

On sites where 100% affordable housing is being provided by a Registered Social Landlord consideration will be given to reducing or removing planning obligations.

In rural settlements (below 3,000 population) planning permission will be granted for affordable housing on 'rural exceptions sites' where there is a demonstrable local need. Such housing shall remain 'affordable' to continue to meet local need. The villages of Cosby, Croft, Elmesthorpe, Huncote, Kilby, Littlethorpe, Sapcote, Sharnford, Stoney Stanton and Thurlaston are suitable locations for rural exceptions schemes. Other settlements will be considered where a demonstrable need exists. Provision may also be made where groups of villages can demonstrate a combined local need.

7.6.1 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (December 2008) identified that demand for affordable housing in the District of Blaby was significant. At the time of completion, the SHMA indicated that Blaby District Council required 289 affordable houses per year (equating to some 76% of the overall housing need identified in the East Midlands Regional Plan 2009) to meet identified need. Whilst it is recognised that variations in the affordable housing requirements will be affected by a number of economic and social factors, the requirements are above the level that custom and practice would indicate as being achievable either as a contribution on market sites or delivered through public or housing association schemes. In order to secure a realistic quantity of affordable housing (as required by PPS3) the Council have estimated the numbers that could potentially be delivered on the SUE (30% of the total quantity between 2013 (the likely start date) and 2026 (the end date of the plan). In order to calculate the contribution outside of the SUE, the Council has assumed (based generally on previous delivery rates) that 80% of the 3,100 houses (the residual outside of the SUE) would occur on qualifying sites and that 25% of these would be affordable in accordance with the policy – this equates to some 31 affordable houses per year (620 over the plan period). More detailed guidance will be given in the Affordable Housing SPD. It is clear that the ability to meet the affordable housing target is influenced by the number of affordable houses secured on 'qualifying sites' and prevailing economic conditions.

7.6.2 The tenure split of 80% housing for social rent, and 20% intermediate housing reflects the findings of the SHMA and has been tested by the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment carried out by 3 Dragons in July 2009.

7.6.3 Intermediate housing can be for rent at substantially below market levels, or shared ownership sale (new build Homebuy). Where possible, the Council will

seek a suitable balance of these intermediate tenures and where possible more choice, with affordability a key criterion for this form of provision.

- 7.6.4 The size of affordable housing should reflect the needs identified in the SHMA. This indicates the main needs as being for 2 and 3 bed general needs and downsizing properties with no additional requirements for 1 bed properties.
- 7.6.5 The Council commissioned a report by 3 Dragons Consulting in order to identify the viability implications of providing affordable homes. The report identified that the amount of housing need identified in the SHMA is not likely to be capable of being achieved. Where viability is an issue in providing affordable housing, the onus will be on developers to produce a financial assessment showing the maximum amount that could be achieved on the site in light of the 3 Dragons report.
- 7.6.6 On sites where 100% affordable housing is being provided, the Council will consider reducing or removing planning obligations. The Council is intending to produce an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document to consider these issues in more detail.
- 7.6.7 The Council's SHMA confirms that there is a significant 'affordability gap' between household incomes and house prices in many of the rural villages. Many villages are not able to meet affordable housing needs as part of larger schemes. In cases where there is a demonstrable need for affordable housing in rural villages, small scale Rural Exceptions Schemes in suitable locations can help to meet affordable needs. The schemes should meet the needs of 'local people' or those with a strong local connection and houses should be well related to the settlement. The scale of development must not be greater than the need identified and must be capable of being retained as an affordable unit (for local occupation) by means of a legal agreement. Where necessary, the Council will consider allocating 'rural exceptions sites' through its Allocations and Designations document.

Policy 7 - Mix of housing

Residential proposals should meet the housing needs of all sections of the community, including accommodation type (house, flat, bungalow etc); tenure (owner-occupied, rented, intermediate) and size (bedroom numbers). The District will work with partners (including RSLs, developers and others) to try and meet any identified needs.

Large housing sites (10 dwellings and above) should seek to provide a mix of housing in order to meet the needs identified in Strategic Housing Market Assessments (and other sources of evidence).

All housing should be built to 'Lifetime Homes' standards and on large housing sites (10 dwellings and above) 10% of all new housing should be to wheelchair standards.

- 7.7.1 The SHMA (2008) indicated that that the District of Blaby has a housing market that is significantly different to the optimum housing market shape that would be required to meet need up to 2026. The Council's Housing Strategy indicates that there is a difference between the mix of housing required in the private home ownership sector and the social rented sector. The District has significantly fewer small terraced or town houses and significantly more detached and semi-detached houses than the East Midlands / National average. The Blaby Housing Market Assessment 2007 indicated a need for more 2 bedroom market houses to be delivered, and a greater number of 2 and 4 bedroom affordable units.
- 7.7.2 In order to provide the optimum mix of housing for the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area, new developments, particularly within the SUE, will need to provide a range of houses to reflect identified needs. Providing a mix of housing within the SUE will also secure opportunities to create diverse populations that will help to retain street activity at different times of the day, but also allows a range of densities that can be used to create distinctive character areas based on variable densities.
- 7.7.3 The Council will monitor the type and size (bedroom numbers) of new houses to establish how new developments are contributing to meeting the optimum housing needs. In addition, the Council will monitor asking prices, sale prices, trends, empty properties, turnover and tenure.

Delivery

- 7.7.4 The Council will update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment as and when necessary, land for housing will be allocated through the Core Strategy (in the case of the SUE) and otherwise through the Allocations and Designations DPD. Housing provision will mainly be by private developers and Housing Associations following the grant of a planning permission.

Policy 8 - Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers

The Council will seek to identify sites suitable to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Provision will be made for 13 residential pitches (plus 5 transit pitches and 1 plot for show people) between 2007 and 2012. Subsequent requirements will be informed by up to date Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments.

Planning permission for new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be granted where there is an unfulfilled need for accommodation, and if the site is:

- a) within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of the Principal Urban Area, settlements indicated as large villages, medium villages or rural centre in the Settlement hierarchy or other settlements with a range of services and facilities (including education, healthcare and retail services), or where the site is within 3 kilometres of these settlements;**
- b) capable of assimilation into the landscape and does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the built environment or countryside (including Green**

Wedge) by reason of its scale, prominence and layout. Sensitive landscaping and screening will be required to ameliorate any adverse visual impacts. New design should be in accordance with the 'Designing Gypsy & Traveller Sites, Good Practice Guide';

c) capable of being accessed without detriment to highway safety and adequate parking, turning and servicing space is provided;

d) of appropriate scale in relation to the settlement to which it relates;

e) capable of providing satisfactory living conditions for residents without hazards / nuisance caused by (amongst other things) flooding, noise or land contamination;

e) capable of implementation without causing unacceptable nuisance to existing neighbours by virtue of noise and other disturbance caused by movement of vehicles to and from the site.

Notwithstanding the existence of a large concentration of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the District, future development of Gypsy and Traveller sites (where required) will be on a larger number of small sites, as opposed to a small number of larger sites.

7.8.1 The East Midlands Regional Plan and ODPM Circular 01/06 indicate that appropriate provision is required to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling show people. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2007) provides an understanding of these needs, which have subsequently been included in the Regional Plan – with amendments to the timeframe changing the delivery period from 2006 – 2016 to 2007 - 2012.

7.8.2 The Housing Act 2004 advises that Local Authorities should take account of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. ODPM Circular 01/06 proposes that where there is unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the area, LDFs should identify suitable sites. At the time of submitting the Core Strategy, sufficient sites had been provided to meet the needs identified in the 2009 Regional Plan (2007 – 2012). However, it is recognised that the Regional Plan policy has been expressed as a minimum figure and that growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will necessitate provision of further sites, these are not considered to be sufficiently strategic to require allocations in the Core Strategy and will be identified in future Allocations and Designations documents where a need exists.

7.8.3 A criteria based policy has been included to guide the location of future sites which are proposed to meet future or unexpected demand.

Delivery

7.8.4 The Council will update the Accommodation Needs Assessment as and when necessary, land will be allocated accordingly through the Allocations and Designations document. Additional accommodation will mainly be provided by Gypsy / Traveller groups or by private developers following the granting of a planning permission. Where funds become available sites to meet identified needs may be provided by the District or County Council and its partners.

Policy 9 - Transport Infrastructure

The preferred approach of Blaby District Council will be to seek to reduce the need to travel by private car by locating new development so that residents can access services and facilities without reliance on 'private motor vehicles'. In addition, the Council will seek to protect and enhance local services and facilities (including retail and employment) to reduce the need to travel.

Safe, sustainable and accessible transport modes (including walking, cycling and public transport) will be promoted. This will be achieved by providing new routes for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport (as part of new development proposals) and enhancing existing facilities. This will be particularly important in the design and development of the proposed SUE west of Leicester.

Transport design

Priority will be given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users in the design of new schemes, through the allocation of road space. In addition, traffic management measures will be designed to reduce the impact of road traffic.

Walking and Cycling networks

Opportunities to work with partners to provide safe new and improved Cycling and Walking facilities will be explored.

Links between proposed areas of new development (including the SUE west of Leicester) to key services and facilities (including employment, retail, leisure and education) will be provided as part of design and access statements and the Masterplan (in the case of the SUE). New Cycle / pedestrian links should be provided to employment and retail areas at Grove Park, Meridian Business Park, the Warrens Industrial estate, Fosse Park, and Carlton Park and connects to cycle routes into Leicester City Centre.

Improved conditions for cyclists and pedestrians generally across the District will be encouraged, including adequate cycle parking.

Bus service improvements

Public Transport improvements will primarily be based around improving bus services, particularly links with Leicester City Centre and key services and facilities (including employment, retail, leisure, health and education) from the SUE west of Leicester and other settlements within the District.

Blaby District Council will work with key partners (including Leicester City and Leicestershire County Councils) to explore opportunities to provide new 'Park and Ride' facilities within the District. Initial investigations will consider the potential for a new facility at Glenfield.

A new bus terminus is proposed for the Centre of Leicester. The majority of this project will be publicly funded. Opportunities to provide reasonable contributions from developments in and adjacent to the Principal Urban Area (including the SUE) and other settlements with a strong functional relationship with Leicester will be explored, and balanced against other infrastructure requirements.

Rail improvements

Opportunities to improve rail based movement of goods and people will be explored.

Car parking and car use

The Council will seek flexibility in the implementation of parking standards depending on whether developments have access to good public transport and or services / facilities. Where developments are remote from public transport and / or a range of services and facilities, more flexible parking standards will be employed.

The Council will encourage (mainly through Green Travel Plans) car share facilities, car clubs, and use of low emission motor vehicles in order to reduce congestion and pollution. In order to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport, car parking charges will be applied in Blaby, Narborough and other settlements that are likely to attract car-borne movements (where transport alternatives are available).

Sustainable travel

Major employers and other developments that may generate significant traffic generation will be required to submit Green Travel Plans with planning applications. All major developments (including housing developments above 80 units) will require a Transport Assessment. Area wide travel plans that seek to to 'link' places together (such as the concentration of employment sites around junction 21) will be encouraged.

Sustainable Urban Extension

Transport works will be required to ensure the effective operation of the SUE west of Leicester and to provide maximum opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. Improved bus services will be required to link into the wider network accessing Leicester City Core and to nearby areas of employment / retail (including those around junction 21 of the M1).

A new link across the M1 will be required to connect the SUE with Meridian Way and Lubbethorpe Way (A563). An improved link across the M69 to the proposed Strategic Employment Site at Enderby will be required, this will form part of the Enderby by-pass.

Pedestrian and cycle links will be maintained and improved to allow journeys between the new SUE and key centres of employment / retail (including

employment and retail facilities around the M1 junction 21 and Leicester City Centre.

Justification

- 7.9.1 The Regional Plan (including the Regional Transport Strategy) and the Local Transport Plan provide the transport framework for the District of Blaby including the capital programmes for future transport schemes and the long-term strategy for the District, including a five year action plan and investment priorities.
- 7.9.2 The key objectives of the Regional Plan and Transport Strategies are: to support development in the PUA and Growth towns; to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel and promoting modal shift. In relation to the Three Cities area, the Regional plan seeks to 'reduce use of the car' in and around Leicester and promote a step change increase in the use of public transport and walking and cycling.
- 7.9.3 Large transport schemes including the proposed Park and Ride at Glenfield have been identified in the Regional Funding Allocation and are considered capable of being delivered during the plan period.
- 7.9.4 At the time of submission of the Core Strategy, there was uncertainty regarding the potential to widen the M1 through the District of Blaby and provide a new direct link from the M1 to M69. Options to provide 'hard shoulder running' are being explored. Blaby District intends to work with partners at the Highways Agency to agree an effective solution that will address some of the congestion, noise and pollution issues arising from junction 21.
- 7.9.5 Sharnford by-pass is identified as a potential scheme in the Regional Transport Strategy, and Blaby Station referred to in the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Transport Plan, however, these schemes do not have any identified sources of funding and are not programmed for implementation. No other large schemes are identified within the District of Blaby. Blaby District will work with its partners at Leicestershire County Council to find solutions to the problems caused by Heavy Goods Vehicle movements in Sharnford.
- 7.9.6 In order to deliver the SUE a number of transport initiatives will be required. Major capital works include a new link across the M1 motorway, junction improvements at Enderby and improvements along the A47 into Leicester are required.
- 7.9.7 There is a well established network of cycle routes across the District. Improvements have recently been made to the cycle routes towards Leicester City Centre along the A47. Notwithstanding this, there are very few car free cycle routes from the west of Leicester into the City Centre. Discussions with Leicester City Council have indicated that there is potential to achieve cycle and pedestrian links from the SUE west of Leicester into the City Centre.

Delivery

- 7.9.8 Transport infrastructure works associated with the SUE will be carried out at the expense of the developer. The provision of a new link across the M1 linking the new development to Lubbethorpe Way will be required at a trigger point to be determined by the SUE Masterplan (supplementary planning document). The Highways Agency have not indicated any objection to the proposed new link across the M1 but would prefer works to be carried out at the same time as a new M1/ M69 link to avoid unnecessary additional disruption to traffic on the motorway.
- 7.9.9 The proposed SUE does not have any direct public transport links to key services and facilities. The only established public transport routes are along the A47 into the centre of Leicester. Any large scale development would require developer subsidy to encourage the establishment of new routes.
- 7.9.10 A pedestrian and cycle link is proposed to link the proposed SUE with the proposed Strategic Employment Site. There is currently a bridleway bridge link across the M69 from Lubbethorpe to the proposed SES. This link is suitable for pedestrian and cycle traffic and could accommodate public transport.

Policy 10 - Services and Facilities to support growth

New developments will be expected to contribute to additional infrastructure and community needs generated by the development. Blaby District Council and its partners will seek to ensure that growth within the District is matched by commensurate provision of services and facilities to meet the needs of the community particularly in areas of relative deprivation.

The SUE west of Leicester will require provision of a new secondary school, and 2 to 3 primary schools (depending upon the scale of development). In addition, education, health, library and other public facilities will be required in order to sustain new residents and the wider population. Through the SUE Masterplan, the Council will seek to encourage co-location of education, health, library and other public facilities at the SUE where opportunities arise.

- 7.10.1 The projected growth within Blaby District needs to be supported by adequate infrastructure. The provision of services and facilities (including community facilities) are essential for the quality of life of residents. Strategic Infrastructure needs have been identified by the Council and its partners and included in the infrastructure delivery plan (Appendix 5). More detailed requirements for infrastructure for the SUE will be identified in the SUE Masterplan (Supplementary Planning Document) and on individual sites as part of the process of determining planning applications. The principles of securing developer contributions are considered in Policy 11. It is acknowledged that the mechanism of securing infrastructure provision (mainly through the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy) is currently under review by Central Government and this policy will apply under any subsequent legislation.

7.10.2 The type of infrastructure required to support new development includes: education provision (including new schools at the SUE and contributions to improving schools in other locations); transport infrastructure; and utilities (including water, sewage, gas, electricity, and telecommunications). Following discussions with the Water Authority (Severn Trent) it is apparent that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate foul drainage arising from growth west of Leicester at the Wanlip sewage works. Whilst there may be some water supply shortfalls anticipated after 2012, it is considered by the Water Authority that this will be addressed by improvements to Derwent reservoir.

7.10.3 Community facilities are essential for the District's population and it is important that these facilities and services are accessible. The Council will continue to work with Partners who deliver infrastructure including the Local Strategic Partnership, the Primary Care Trust, Police and Community Safety teams, and Voluntary Action Blaby District in ensuring the provision of services. A wide range of Community facilities including: community centres and public halls, arts and cultural facilities, policing, fire and ambulance services, youth facilities, libraries, places of worship, and services are provided by the voluntary sector and other partners.

7.10.4 The proposed SUE will require significant infrastructure to ensure that it is 'sustainable'. From discussions with partners it is clear that education facilities (including 3 new primary schools and a secondary school), a community / faith hall, new play and open space provision and potentially a new library will be required.

Delivery

7.10.5 Infrastructure works which are necessary as a result of new developments will generally be expected to be funded by the developer. Infrastructure requirements associated with the SUE will be carried out at the expense of the developer. Opportunities to seek public monies that help to deliver the required infrastructure will continue to be explored. Funding opportunities such as Community Infrastructure Fund and New Growth Point monies will be explored.

7.10.6 The contribution towards education provision on the SUE will comprise the gifting of land to the Education Authority and a contribution towards the capital works required. The provision of a Community Centre will be primarily be funded by the developer. The Council will work with the developer and other partners (including Local Parish Councils) to secure a new building.

Policy 11 - Developer contributions

Where infrastructure requirements arising from growth are identified through robust research and evidence, it is expected that developers will contribute toward their provision (and in some cases maintenance). Contributions can be made by providing the infrastructure (on or off-site) or by making financial contributions towards its provision and / or maintenance.

The Council will, through its policies and masterplans (in the case of the SUE west of Leicester) consider a wide range of sources to meet infrastructure requirements including funds from partners capital programmes and other public funding sources including New Growth Point (NGP) funding and Community Infrastructure Funds (CIF).

7.11.1 New development can make a positive addition to an area, for example, providing new homes and jobs. It can also have an impact on the local community, placing additional pressures on the local infrastructure and facilities such as the local schools and other essential services. It may also have an impact on the highway network.

7.11.2 Blaby District Council will request contributions, whether for the District Council or on behalf of another service provider, stating how the payments will be collected, distributed and monitored. The Core Strategy document does not stand alone and should be read in conjunction with the Council's section 106 strategy, SCS and policies / strategies for individual issues (such as play and open space) and should have regard to the Leicestershire County Council Adopted Statement of Requirements for Developer Contributions.

7.11.3 The Government is currently considering the implementation of fundamental changes to the system of developer contributions including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Blaby District Council will respond to any changes in the developer contributions regime, as and when new legislation, guidance or Regulations are issued.

Delivery

7.11.4 The majority of planning obligations are negotiated between the Local Planning / County Authority and a developer and are then set out in a legal agreement, although in some cases they can be put forward independently by a developer to be considered by the Local Planning Authority (these are called unilateral undertakings).

Policy 12 - Retailing

Blaby Town Centre

Blaby is the District's only town centre and will be the focus for new retail development. Retail, leisure, cultural, tourist, office and mixed-use developments will be encouraged within the town centre where they would be in accordance with the Blaby Town Centre Masterplan and sustain and increase its vitality and viability.

Measures will also be encouraged to improve its accessibility, particularly by public transport, and for improvements to the quality, safety, convenience and attractiveness of the environment.

Fosse Park and out of town centres

New, or significant expansion of existing retail or leisure development outside of established town and village centres, including the Motorways Retail Area and Meridian Leisure, will not be permitted.

New developments, or small scale extensions of existing out of centre retail and leisure uses will be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:

- there is a need for the proposed development;
- there would be no adverse impact on existing centres within or outside the District;
- there are no suitable sites available within or on the edge of existing town or village centres;

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Other centres

Blaby District has a number of village and neighbourhood centres which have an important role in providing shops, services, and employment opportunities for their local communities. Further retail development of these centres will be supported providing that it is appropriate to the role and respects the character of the centres.

It should be of an appropriate scale for the size of the centre and not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of any other existing centre. Retail developments outside of established centres is not usually considered appropriate unless there is a demonstrable need for such a facility and it is proved that it would not have an adverse impact on existing facilities.

Retail developments at the proposed SUE

New retail facilities of an appropriate scale will be allowed to meet the needs of new and existing residents. Retail facilities will be located and designed in accordance with the SUE Masterplan.

Blaby Town Centre

- 7.12.1 The Blaby Town Centre Masterplan has identified that Blaby Town Centre is underperforming and is at risk of losing its place in the retail hierarchy and being detrimentally affected in terms of its vitality and viability if further investment is not secured.
- 7.12.2 Opportunities for new development, public realm improvements, transport and car parking strategy, and events management are all highlighted as important measures to secure the future of the town centre.
- 7.12.3 The District of Blaby retail study examines the roles and performance of all key retail centres in the District. It indicates that Blaby is a “popular and well supported town” at present but is under-represented in some sectors and that provision of more units would allow this imbalance to be redressed.

- 7.12.4 The Blaby District retail study highlights the economic success of Fosse Park as a major 'fashion-led' out of town retail facility. The retail study indicates that Fosse Park does not naturally compete with any of the retail centres within the District of Blaby, but does compete with the central area of Leicester and is a major retail draw for residents of the District.

Fosse Park

- 7.12.5 The Blaby District retail study indicates that there is some retailer demand for new premises at Fosse Park, however, this is not significant and could mostly be met by availability bought about by 'churn' of existing premises.
- 7.12.6 The East Midlands Regional Plan states that "Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should....prevent the development or expansion of additional regional scale out-of town retail and leisure floorspace". Planning Policy Statement 6 (2005) reinforces the 'town centre first focus' by encouraging LPAs to adopt a sequential approach to the location of new retail facilities only allowing out-of-centre developments where there are no alternatives in town centres or on the edge of town centres.
- 7.12.7 Given the Central and Regional Government retail policy (which seeks a focus on existing centres), and the potential impact on the City Centre of Leicester and other centres, it is proposed to limit growth to small scale extensions and mezzanines and limited sub-division that does not undermine the principles underlying the original planning permission which sought to deter 'high street' style development.

Other retail centres

- 7.12.8 The Blaby District retail study considered vitality and viability Indicators for a number of District and Local centres. The study indicated that the centres were mostly well used and met a local need. Whilst some centres had empty units and some signs of erosion of vitality and viability, on the whole the centres were not seen as under threat. The retail study indicated that: Enderby would benefit from environmental improvements; Glenfield would benefit by linking the core centre (The Square) and the Co-op superstore; Whetstone has some vacant units and would benefit from some redevelopment of vacant sites within its core retail area.
- 7.12.9 Narborough, Countesthorpe, Huncote, Stoney Stanton and Kirby Muxloe were considered to be functioning well.

Sustainable Urban Extension

- 7.12.10 The Blaby District retail study indicated that there was potential to provide additional retail floorspace for convenience goods (in the region of 3,000 to 4,500 sq m) within new developments to the west of Leicester. Development of new large scale retail facilities (superstores) will not be encouraged as part of the Masterplanning SPD. A new District Centre based around the new street

network would provide opportunities to serve the new local community and attract some passing trade in order to assist the viability of new shops.

Delivery

7.12.11 A Masterplan has been prepared for Blaby town centre. The Masterplan examines: the potential for improving the retail offer within the existing centre; enhancing its attractiveness by wide ranging environmental improvements; looking at potential development sites; redevelopment opportunities; and by making the existing centre less 'car dominated' and a more attractive shopping environment for pedestrians. The Masterplan includes a 'making it happen' section which sets out how the potential improvements in Blaby town centre could be achieved. The Masterplan involved discussions with key stakeholders including landowners in order to ensure that they are aware and where possible support the proposals.

7.12.12 Blaby District Council's capital programme includes monies that seek to carry out some environmental improvements. It is envisaged that improving the physical appearance of Blaby town centre will attract the further inward investment required to secure Blaby's retail future and to improve its position in the retail hierarchy.

Policy 13 - Green Infrastructure (GI)

Blaby District Council and its partners will seek to maintain existing, and provide new, 'networks of multi-functional green spaces'. This network will comprise public and privately owned land. Green Infrastructure can include formal open spaces for sport and recreation, green areas that can be used for informal recreation, areas that are valuable for their bio-diversity (flora and fauna and network links), areas that maintain natural and ecological processes (such as floodplains) and other areas that contributes to the health and quality of life of communities.

The growth proposed as part of a Sustainable Urban Extension west of Leicester provides an opportunity to plan for a green infrastructure network, serving the needs of new communities and providing green links (for people and wildlife) from the urban area to the wider countryside.

Opportunities will be explored with partners to improve access to:

- **the River Soar and River Sence corridors and Grand Union Canal.**
- **the Rothley Brook corridor.**
- **the network of Green Wedges that adjoin the urban areas.**

In accordance with the Blaby Town Centre Masterplan opportunities will be explored with partners to improve Bouskell Park (Blaby) as a recreational resource.

Opportunities will be explored to provide a 'Green Gym' at Braunstone Town.

Opportunities will be explored to provide a 'Community Forest' within the Green Wedge south west of Leicester.

Opportunities to incorporate key landscape features such as woodlands, ponds, rivers and streams and the local topography should be used to create high quality design incorporating a wide range of high quality, functional and useful open spaces and links.

It is important that the subsequent maintenance of GI is considered at the earliest opportunities and that the body and resources responsible for any long term maintenance liabilities are identified.

Croft Hill, Fosse Meadows, Aston Firs / Burbage Common (adjacent to Hinckley and Bosworth administrative area), Fosse Way and Disused railway lines (particularly around Countesthorpe) will be retained as important recreation resources.

7.13.1 Green Infrastructure is "a network of multi-functional green-spaces that contribute to the high quality natural and built environment". GI encompasses a wide variety of 'green' space areas including Green Wedges, formal sports pitches and play areas, footpaths and cycle routes that link green-spaces, and open countryside (amongst others).

7.13.2 A wide range of evidence is being gathered to inform the quantitative and qualitative requirements for GI. A Landscape Character Assessment has been completed and 'a (PPG17) Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities assessment and audit' has been completed. In addition, the GI potential of Green Wedges has been considered as part of the 'Stepping Stones' initiative whilst the recreation potential of Green Wedges has been considered as part of the Green Wedge review.

7.13.3 Green Infrastructure is central to the delivery of Sustainable Communities. New developments (particularly the SUE) should incorporate GI in the early stages of development to ensure that opportunities to maximise 'Green linkages' are not lost. It is important that any new SUE achieves a series of links from the urban area to the Countryside, and from the SUE to the key services and facilities within Leicester City Centre and other areas which contain important services and facilities as well as a network of linked open spaces.

7.13.4 The floodplains of the Soar and Sence valleys provide a structured network for access and recreation. The networks of footpaths and cycleways (including those on the many disused railway lines that cross the District and the Grand Union Canal) provide good opportunities to provide linked areas of Green Infrastructure. In addition, GI can encourage improvements to the bio-diversity of the District by providing new habitats, and protecting important existing habitats and species.

7.13.5 Opportunities to incorporate key landscape features such as woodlands, ponds, rivers and streams and the local topography should be used to create

high quality design incorporating a wide range of high quality, functional and useful open spaces and links.

Delivery

- 7.13.6 The provision of new Green Infrastructure will primarily be delivered as part of new developments (including the SUE), this will be at the expense of the developer.
- 7.13.7 Improvements to the Soar and Sence corridors will be funded through New Growth Point monies and will be in accordance with the Soar and Sence Green Wedge Strategy prepared by Stepping Stones.
- 7.13.8 Other opportunities to improve Green Infrastructure will be guided by the emerging Green Infrastructure Plan being prepared by the District Council. Schemes such as the Green Gym at Braunstone Town will be funded by the District Council.
- 7.13.9 Potential for a new Community Forest has been explored by Leicestershire County Council. Funding would primarily be from the District and County Councils and using New Growth Point monies. Whilst no scheme has yet been identified opportunities exist within the SUE and other locations (including east of Blaby) to provide Community Woodlands (and smaller areas of Woodland planting).
- 7.13.10 Several other funding sources are available to support GI, these include: Parish Councils; Stepping Stone capital programme; Leicestershire County Council Shires Grant monies; FLAG (Forward with Leicestershire Aggregates Grant) funding - in areas affected by mineral extraction; Forestry Commission / Woodland Trust (New Woodland creation grants); and, Countryside stewardship (farm subsidy scheme).

Policy 14 - Play and Open Spaces

Blaby District Council and its partners will seek to ensure that all residents have access to sufficient, high quality, accessible green spaces and play areas.

The following standards indicate the desired provision of play and open spaces per 1000 population in the District, where less than 1000 population would be expected on new developments, pro-rata contributions will be sought. The figures in brackets indicate desirable access standards in distance (metres) or time (minutes):

- **Parks and Recreation Grounds** - 0.8 ha (800 m)
- **Outdoor Sports Space** - 1.0 ha (480 m)
- **Children & Young people's Space** - 0.30 ha (Junior 450m / Youth 800m)

- **Informal Open Space** - 0.5 ha (480m)
- **Natural Greenspace** - 1.0 ha (960m)
- **Allotments** - 0.3 ha (480m)
- **Sports Halls** - 1 x 4-court hall per 13,984 Persons (10 minutes drive)
- **Swimming Pools** - 1 x 4- lane (25 metres) per 20,720 persons (10 minutes drive)
- **Small halls/community venues** - 1 per 2,500 persons(10 minutes drive)

Existing formal and informal recreation facilities including playing fields, sports pitches, buildings and other important areas of recreation will be protected where there is clear demand and alternative provision of equivalent quantity, quality and accessibility cannot be achieved.

Justification

- 7.14.1 The Council's SCS and Corporate Plan seek to encourage a District where "All people are as healthy as they can be". The provision of a wide range of open spaces, sports facilities and recreation links will be one factor that contributes to this objective.
- 7.14.2 Not only does the provision of sports and recreation facilities contribute to better health, it is an integral part of community welfare and can contribute to the quality of the environment. Play and Open spaces provide opportunities for sport and exercise to ensure the health and well being of the community; they provide open spaces that add visual amenity to otherwise built up areas; they provide focal points and meeting places for the community; and promote social inclusion.
- 7.14.3 'Play and Open Spaces' can include a wide typology. This is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17.
- 7.14.4 The Council's PPG17 study indicates where there are areas of surplus and deficiency (in relation to the above standards). Several distinct patterns emerge from this evidence, primarily an undersupply of Children's Play space, Natural Green Space, Outdoor sport, and park and recreation ground in the PUA. Blaby is broadly the best served of all settlements within the District.

Delivery

7.14.5 The provision of new POS will primarily be delivered as part of new developments (including the SUE), delivery and maintenance will be at the expense of the developer.

7.14.6 The Parish Council's within Blaby District are primarily responsible for maintenance of existing areas of POS. Whilst no new schemes have been identified in the capital programmes of the Parish Councils, those that emerge as a result of new development will primarily be maintained by Parish Councils. If other maintenance bodies or management organisations are to be used, this should be made clear early in the process.

Policy 15 - Green Wedges

Green Wedges are important strategic gaps between settlements. They will be designated in order to:

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- Prevent the merging of settlements;
- Guide development form;
- Provide a green lung into the urban areas; and
- Provide a recreation resource.

The detailed extent of Green Wedges will be determined through the Allocations and Designations Development Plan Document but will be in the following general locations:

- (a) Between Blaby and Glen Parva (Sence Valley);
- (b) Between Whetstone, Blaby and Countesthorpe;
- (c) Between Whetstone, Enderby, Glen Parva, Braunstone, Blaby, Littlethorpe, Narborough and Cosby (Soar Valley South);
- (d) Between Glenfield, Kirby Muxloe, Kirby Fields and towards Ratby, Groby and Leicester;
- (e) Between Glenfield towards Beaumont Leys, Anstey and Groby; and
- (f) From Elmesthorpe towards Barwell and Earl Shilton.

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The need to retain Green Wedges will be balanced against the need to provide new development (including housing) in the most sustainable locations.

Opportunities to create new Green Wedges will be explored particularly in areas around the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension to the west of Leicester.

Along with its partners the Council will encourage the active management of land that promotes environmental improvements, recreational facilities (other than built development) and improved access within Green Wedges.

Uses that are appropriately located in Green Wedges include: agriculture (including allotments and horticulture – not garden centres); outdoor recreation (where associated buildings are small in scale); and, forestry.

In circumstances where the development would not be harmful to the functions of Green Wedges, the following uses will be allowed: wind turbines (and other renewable energy facilities that are not within buildings); park and ride schemes; transport infrastructure (including new roads) and, mineral extraction.

Justification

7.15.1 The purposes of Green Wedges are set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan. They are not a landscape designation, but seek to influence the form and direction of urban development. The primary functions are to prevent coalescence of distinct settlements and to contribute towards recreation opportunities in areas that are often mainly 'built up'.

7.15.2 In order to meet the development requirements of the District the Council recognises that some areas of existing Green Wedge (as set out in the Council's adopted Local Plan) will need to be reviewed. In order to identify those areas of Green Wedge that could accommodate growth (without undermining the integrity of the Green Wedge and its functions), the Council has undertaken a review of all Green Wedge areas to assess which are most (and least) sensitive to future Green Wedge boundary reviews.

7.15.3 The detailed boundaries of Green Wedges will be formally reviewed through the Allocations and Designations document.

7.15.4 Green Wedges provide potential as an important recreation resource.

Delivery

7.15.5 Improved access and recreation opportunities within Green Wedges are addressed by the 'Stepping Stones' Countryside Management project. This is a partnership of public sector bodies that seek to improve access for all, enhance the environment, improve people's awareness and encourage community participation around Leicester. The Stepping Stones project has a number of 'management strategies' and provides capital funding for projects. New Growth Point monies have been obtained which will be used to improve access and recreation opportunities within the Sence and Soar Valleys and along the line of the Grand Union Canal (all of which cut through the Green Wedge).

Policy 16 - Bio-diversity and geo-diversity

National Policy (primarily set out in Planning Policy Statement 9) sets out the Government Policy in relation to Biodiversity and Geo-diversity. The District of Blaby includes several SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves. Where these are affected directly or indirectly, they will be safeguarded and enhanced. Developments that would have an adverse impact on 'Protected and notable

species' (under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended) will be resisted.

Any proposal which would have an affect on Narborough Bog SSSI, Burbage Wood and Aston Firs (partly in Hinckley and Bosworth), Enderby Quarry and Croft Hill and Croft Meadow will need to demonstrate that there would be no adverse impacts resulting from development. These areas will be safeguarded and enhanced where they could be directly or indirectly affected by development.

There are several non-statutory sites within the District including Local Wildlife Sites and UK and local (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) Bio-diversity Action Plan sites, these will be protected and enhanced (where appropriate). Where development is proposed on areas containing these designated sites, they should be retained with appropriate buffering and mitigation.

Opportunities to improve Biodiversity will be explored as part of the SUE west of Leicester. Potential to improve the bio-diversity of Green corridors (particularly those adjacent to the Lubbesthorpe Brook to the south of the site) and linkages to the open countryside to the west should be explored. The existing hedgerows and fox coverts on the site will provide further opportunities to provide green linkages. Several ponds and water features exist that need to be retained.

The Council will work closely with national and local wildlife organisations, local communities and landowners in order to encourage the creation of new wildlife sites and the identification, restoration, protection and enhancement of existing sites and new priority habitats.

The potential for new 'Local Wildlife Sites' and for linking existing Local Wildlife Sites will be explored north of Countesthorpe, south and east of Blaby, south of Whetstone, south of Leicester Forest East and west of Glenfield.

Bio-diversity, Wildlife and Habitats will continue to be designated and afforded protection where evidence supports this approach. Local Wildlife Sites will be designated in partnership with the Local Wildlife Trust and Leicestershire County Council where they are considered of sufficient merit.

Justification

7.16.1 The Biodiversity policy relates to the biological diversity (or variety of life forms) within the District of Blaby. The District has a number of important areas of bio-diversity (many of which have been identified through the Council's phase 1 habitat survey). The important areas of bio-diversity are often within SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites and UK Bio-diversity Action Plan sites. Notwithstanding these important sites and species, the East Midlands Regional Plan indicates that the East Midlands has a comparative shortfall of important sites. The phase 1 habitat survey has not been carried out across the whole of the District, but has considered strategic areas that are likely to be the preferred locations for development, or which were considered as potential options for SUEs or SESs.

- 7.16.2 The creation of new areas of bio-diversity is encouraged by Planning Policy Statement 9. The development of nature conservation areas, green corridors and other opportunities will be taken to create new habitats.
- 7.16.3 The District has several species and sites that are protected by national legislation. Whilst it is not intended to repeat this legislation it is important that species are not adversely affected by this spatial planning strategy.
- 7.16.4 The Rivers Sence and Soar provide important corridors for the District's biodiversity and it is important that all these areas, (and the green linkages between them), will need to be protected from inappropriate development.

Delivery

- 7.16.5 Management plans that incorporate bio-diversity have been prepared as part of the 'Stepping Stones' Countryside Management project for the Soar and Sence Green Wedge corridors.
- 7.16.6 It will be a key role of the SUE Masterplan to ensure that all existing important areas of bio-diversity are protected and that opportunities to create new areas of bio-diversity are explored. Delivery mechanisms and subsequent management will be a key part of the Masterplan.

Policy 17 - Cultural Environment

National Policy (primarily set out in Planning Policy Statement 15) sets out the Government Policy in relation to the historic environment. Blaby District has a number of important buildings, sites and areas of historic value including Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. These areas will be preserved, protected and where possible enhanced.

Proposals for development on, in, or adjacent to historic sites, areas and buildings will be considered against the need to ensure their preservation and setting and only be acceptable where it would not adversely affect any important historic site, building, area, or its setting or amenity value.

The SUE west of Leicester lies in close proximity to two SAMs. The masterplanning and subsequent development of the SUE must respect the archaeological significance of the SAMs and their setting. There are opportunities to provide access and interpretation of the SAM.

Justification

- 7.17.1 The East Midlands Regional Plan indicates that 'The historic environment should be understood, conserved and enhanced' in order to contribute to the Region's quality of life. The above policy aims to meet this objective by protecting (and where possible enhancing) archaeological sites, historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and other cultural assets.

7.17.2 PPG 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) encourages Local Planning Authorities to protect and preserve historical and cultural assets. Preservation of the built and historic environment needs to be taken into account both in the Local Development Framework and in development control decisions. Blaby District contains a number of important archaeological sites (including 14 Scheduled Ancient Monuments), in addition there are numerous areas of known archaeological interest and the potential for other unexplored areas to contain important archaeological artefacts.

7.17.3 The District of Blaby has nine conservation areas, some 200 listed buildings. Development proposals that affect listed buildings or fall within Conservation areas need to be of very high design quality taking into consideration the principles of good design set out in Policy 2.

Policy 18 - Energy Efficiency and the Design of New development

The Council encourages more sustainable building practice. New Residential Development will be required to meet the 'energy efficiency component' of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) at the following levels:

- **Minimum of Code Level 3 to March 2013**
- **Minimum of Code Level 4 to March 2016**
- **Code level 6 from April 2016 onwards**

Improved energy efficiency on non-domestic developments will be encouraged. None domestic buildings should seek to meet energy improvements in line with the 'Code for Sustainable buildings' or any subsequent or replacement code.

Justification

7.18.1 The Council's 'Planning for Climate Change' study indicates, amongst other things, the financial implications of achieving the code levels for the energy efficiency element of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The prevailing economic conditions at the time of writing the Core Strategy entailed that housing delivery had been stalled and many schemes not considered viable. It is considered that the viability of schemes could be further undermined where the energy efficiency code requirement of the Code for Sustainable Homes were to be accelerated beyond the proposed staged improvements to be introduced through part L of the Building Regulations. Energy efficiency improvement for non domestic buildings should reflect the emerging Code for Sustainable buildings.

7.18.2 The Council's Climate Change Action Plan seeks to encourage policies that move towards 'carbon neutral' developments.

7.18.3 Voluntary codes (such as BREEAM) encourage developers to produce energy efficient products. Where developers seek to follow this approach the Council will encourage achievement of the 'excellent' standard.

Policy 19 - Location of renewable energy facilities

Development that contributes to the provision of 'renewable energy' will be allowed in appropriate locations. Proposals for new renewable energy production facilities should:

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- **Seek to minimise any adverse impact on the landscape; designated historic, built or natural environmental assets; and / or important landscape features;**
- **Seek to minimise any detriment to the amenities of nearby residents.**

Blaby District Council and its partners will seek to identify deliverable renewable energy facilities through its Allocations and Designations Document.

The potential to supply new developments with renewable energy from on and off site facilities will be explored, particularly as part of the SUE Masterplan.

Opportunities to provide combined Heat and Power networks within the SUE and other large scale developments should be explored between partners including landowners, energy providers and developers.

10% of energy provided on new developments should be from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.

The provision of energy from efficient sources of micro-generation systems will be encouraged on all new developments.

Justification

7.19.1 The Council's 'Planning for Climate Change' study examined the potential for renewable energy provision within the District. The study considered the potential for: wind energy; hydro-power; and bio-mass (including energy crops, woodland coppicing and wet bio-mass). In addition, the study looked at small scale energy production including small scale wind energy schemes, photovoltaics, solar water heating and heat pumps.

7.19.2 The study identified that the District of Blaby had only limited potential to provide large scale renewable energy facilities. Potential for a wind energy production to the north-west of Enderby was identified. The study indicated that some 4-6 megawatts of energy could be produced in this location. At the time of writing the Core Strategy there were no proposals or interest in developing the site for wind energy and it is considered that the allocation of the land is not a strategic issue that needs to be addressed in the Core Strategy but could be addressed in the 'Allocations and Designations DPD.

Policy 20 - Flooding and Climate Change related hazards

Proposed development should take account of the impacts of climate change, including: Water conservation and drainage; Flood risk – particularly from the Rivers Sence, Soar and Rothley Brook.

Development will not be permitted in areas of high flood risk (in accordance with PPS25, and the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment).

New developments should incorporate measures to regulate surface water run-off including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and other measures that reduce the loss of surface water quickly to surface water sewers.

Justification

- 7.20.1 The potential effects of climate change in Blaby District include increased likelihood of flooding from the Rivers Sence, Soar, Rothley Brook and other key water courses. Although there are some localised drainage issues, the main risk from flooding in the District is from these watercourses.
- 7.20.2 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and advice from the Environment Agency has been used to identify the strategic flood risk, this will be assessed further at 'site level' when development is proposed. The site level flood risk assessment will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that any flood risks to the development, (or additional downstream risks arising from the proposal) will be successfully managed and that where flood risk management measures are required that they can be funded to ensure that the site can be developed and occupied safely throughout its lifetime.
- 7.20.3 The Council will, in principle, support measures proposed by the Environment Agency, and others to reduce flood risk, including increasing the quality / quantity of the floodplain, defending areas at risk and mitigating the effects of flooding through sustainable drainage and other measures.
- 7.20.4 The levels of growth proposed will inevitably increase demand for water. Imminent improvements to water supply are likely to ensure sufficient water supply to prevent shortages. Notwithstanding this, potential seasonal changes in rainfall (and potential reductions) will necessitate buildings being designed to reduce water use. Opportunities to incorporate SUDS (including swales and basins, green roofs, infiltration trenches, ponds and wetlands, improve permeability of surfaces, and to re-use rain and grey water) will be encouraged.

Policy 21 - Waste

The Council will work with its partners, including Leicestershire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority, in order to research and develop coordinated services and appropriate infrastructure for waste collection, treatment, transfer and disposal.

The Council will seek to encourage the management of waste minimisation.

New developments should seek to:

- **Encourage a hierarchy of waste management giving priority to waste prevention, re-use, recycle/compost, recovery, disposal;**

- **Ensure that the design of new developments and services are flexible enough to allow new technological developments to be accommodated;**
- **Secure waste Management facilities that are close to new areas of development (particularly in relation to the SUE);**
- **Educate residents in waste-related matters and encourage engagement with waste prevention and reuse initiatives;**

Justification

7.21.1 The “Leicestershire Waste Management Strategy” incorporates key high level actions that seek to provide an effective waste management strategy. The policy sets out a hierarchy of dealing with waste which prioritises waste management in the following order: Minimising waste; re-cycling; recovery and finally disposal.

7.21.2 It is a key objective of the Council’s Corporate Plan to “Reduce the total amount of waste and increase recycling and composting rates.”