



**CABINET – 24 JUNE 2022**

**CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN (2021 TO 2037) -  
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION MATTERS**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND  
TRANSPORT AND THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**PART A**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. In September 2021, the Cabinet considered a report on the Submission Draft Charnwood Local Plan, which, inter-alia, set out officer advice that the County Council should take an in principle supportive approach to the draft Plan on a conditional basis. This included key conditions in respect of highways and transportation matters.
2. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet as to progress made with fulfilling those key conditions, in particular to:
  - provide an update on the latest transport evidence work underpinning the new Charnwood Local Plan (the Plan);
  - set out the position with regard to the identification of a Plan/Borough-wide highways and transportation mitigation package to support planned growth and as to its delivery;
  - set out the latest position reached with Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) and other key partners; and
  - in the light of such to confirm the County Council's position as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) ahead of the Plan's Examination in Public (EiP), which is scheduled to begin on 28 June.

**Recommendations**

3. It is recommended:
  - (a) That the Cabinet notes the transport evidence and in particular the conclusions:

- i. that unless significant changes occur in societal behaviours and expectations, there are significant limitations as to the extent to which the impacts of growth on the County's transportation system can be mitigated in the future;
  - ii. that it will be necessary to accept a proportionate and reasonable deterioration in traffic conditions in the Borough as a result of developments being permitted prior to the overall mitigation package being put in place;
- (b) That the Cabinet notes the work and actions undertaken by officers since September 2021 (detailed in paragraphs 48 to 57), in particular that key highways and transport conditions set out in that report relating to the County Council's in principle supportive approach to the draft Plan have now been fulfilled;
- (c) That the Cabinet notes the wider implications of the work including:
  - i. The further work undertaken reinforces the concerns regarding the significant financial pressures on the County Council's Capital Programme relating to infrastructure required to support housing and economic growth;
  - ii. The expectation is that without new funding the County Council can only commit to constructing new infrastructure upon receipt of funds from developers. Whilst the County Council will always be mindful of its statutory duty to ensure that highway safety is not compromised, there could be adverse impacts of development, such as congestion, if sufficient developer funding is not secured through the planning process;
  - iii. These issues will likely occur in respect of all Local Plans currently in development across Leicestershire;
- (d) That the approach to the delivery of the highways and transportation mitigation package including through the development of area Transport Strategies to support Charnwood Borough Council to secure contributions to deliver infrastructure (detailed in paragraphs 36 to 37) be approved, noting the potential scale of the package's cost (£150m) and the caveats and uncertainties regarding the cost (detailed in paragraphs 41 to 47);
- (e) That the basis for the County Council's position as Local Highway Authority as detailed in paragraph 59 be approved for the purposes of the Examination in Public;
- (f) That the County Council seeks to formalise the commitment to joint working with Charnwood Borough Council identified in paragraph 59;

- (g) That the County Council as the Local Highway Authority offer its support for the draft Local Plan at the Examination in Public subject to (c) and (d) above.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

4. Adoption of the new Plan will replace the existing Charnwood Core Strategy 2011 to 2028 (adopted 2015) and the Saved Policies of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 to 2006 (adopted 2004). The Plan will provide CBC with a plan-led development strategy to 2037. Given the location of Charnwood close to the City of Leicester and close functional connectivity to communities living and working in Blaby, North West Leicestershire, Melton and Hinckley and Bosworth, the content of the emerging Local Plan is particularly important to this area and the wider Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (LLHMA).
5. The EiP is scheduled to start on 28 June and run over three (non-consecutive) weeks. LHA officers will be attending hearing sessions, either in support of CBC or in the Authority's own right, and it is therefore important that the LHA's position is clearly established prior to this.
6. In considering the County Council's position, it is important:
  - to understand the wider context regarding the impacts of future growth on the County's road network;
  - to have up-to-date information regarding the Plan's transport evidence base; and
  - to have a clear understanding of the proposals for mitigating the impacts of growth in the Borough of Charnwood, the impacts of the identified Plan/Borough wide mitigation package and its deliverability.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

7. The EiP Inspectors (unusually there are two in this case instead of just the normal one) issued a list of questions and set a deadline of 6 June for CBC – and any other parties who might wish to – to submit their responses. This was the same deadline for any parties wishing to submit a Hearing Statement; the LHA has submitted its own Statements, as outlined in Part B of this report.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

8. In September 2021, the Cabinet considered a report setting out the County Council's proposed response to the Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan. That report, a link to which is provided under Background Papers, sets out in some detail the policy framework within which the Plan sits, and also relevant previous decisions made by the Cabinet.

9. That report also set out that the County Council should adopt an 'in principle' supportive approach to the draft Local Plan, based on a commitment by CBC to complete further work between then and the EiP and to certain other conditions, including in respect of highways and transportation matters. This is dealt with in more detail in Part B of this report.
10. In May 2022, the Cabinet noted with concern the increasing pressures on the Capital Programme relating to infrastructure required to support housing and economic growth in the delivery of planned growth. The report set out some of the elements required to manage the financial risk to the County Council.

### **Resource Implications**

11. The Council's four-year capital programme is £515 million and expected to increase further if the A5111 (North West Leicestershire) funding bid is successful. The existing programme has required borrowing to increase from £265m to £410m, which adds to challenge of balancing the budget.
12. Financial challenges are being exacerbated by the high inflation environment that is currently being experienced. The drivers of inflation are having a particularly profound impact upon construction schemes. Restrictions on capital expenditure will be required to mitigate unavoidable cost increases.
13. The Council's financial position, both in relation to capital and revenue funds is grave. As the lowest funded county council in England, the Council has limited capacity to provide capital funding, or forward funding (recovered over a period of time) to support planned growth and therefore the focus must be on maximising developer contributions and delivery rather than the County Council filling viability gaps in highways infrastructure requirements.
14. The Capital Programme includes some of the infrastructure funding for 2, out of 7, district local plans. Without appropriate funding infrastructure relating to further plans cannot be added to the programme. The limited financial resources available will need to be focused on schools, as they are the County Council's statutory responsibility, although this will need to be kept to a minimum. It is therefore critical that Local Plans are prepared with sufficient evidence to secure contributions and delivery for critical infrastructure.
15. Whilst this approach significantly reduces the financial risk faced by the County Council, in the shorter term, it does not remove it entirely. Until such time as Government policy reflects and addresses the challenges faced by local authorities in meeting housing needs whilst ensuring infrastructure is available and appropriate, district councils, as planning authorities are in the best position to manage the developer contribution risk. It is therefore necessary for the district councils to work with the County Council to ensure Local Plans include policies that balance the need to support delivery of growth without exposing the County Council to further financial risk. District councils also need to work with the County Council to direct more funding towards priority infrastructure.

16. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on the content of this report.

**Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

17. This report has been circulated to all Members.

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

18. The Cabinet report in September 2021 explained the process through which a Local Plan is developed and provided an overview of the Submission Draft Plan's content.
19. The Plan allocates land for the development of at least 19,461 dwellings in the period 2021 to 2037 (including a 10% allowance over and above identified need to provide for flexibility and response to unforeseen circumstances). Provision is also made for 81.8 hectares of employment land and a 73-hectare extension to Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP), supporting flexible employment space for the 8,900 jobs needed in Charnwood to 2037.
20. The officer advice given in September 2021 that the County Council should take an in-principle supportive approach to the draft Local Plan, was, in respect of highways and transportation matters, subject to the following key conditions:
  - That the adopted Plan would provide as robust a policy basis as possible for seeking to secure developer contributions towards the delivery of the overall package of highways and transportation measures that will be required to mitigate the impacts of accommodating further growth in Charnwood.
  - That CBC understood that the County Council, as the LHA, would be seeking to influence the Inspectors to recommend modifications to the Plan as was currently drafted.
  - That those modifications were intended to link the identified impacts to a delivery strategy for the Local Plan especially given the reliance on a Section 106 based (developer contributions) strategy to deal with cumulative impacts.
  - That CBC was committed to work with the County Council and partners such as Leicester City Council (LCiC) and National Highways (NH), to undertake additional work identified, particularly to develop and adopt specific Transport Strategies for key areas affected.
21. Work has been ongoing since September 2021 to seek to address these conditions, as set out in this report. The position now reached in respect of each is set out towards the end of this report.
22. Prior to September 2021, officers had been in dialogue with CBC to identify the further transport evidence work required to inform a mitigation package to support the proposed growth, and the joint funding to do this. CBC had confirmed that additional budget had been secured to partially fund this work.

However whilst that was welcomed and a coordinated, strategy-led approach is considered to offer the best opportunity for seeking to address the impacts of growth, the September report identified risks, namely that:

- given the likely scale and cost of the mitigation package likely to be required, its delivery will have to be phased over the lifetime of the Plan. There is a high degree of probability that traffic conditions in communities across the Borough will deteriorate unless and until the package is fully implemented; and
  - elements of the package are not within the gift of either CBC or the County Council to deliver – notably the likely requirement for improvements to the Strategic Road Network (M1 and A46).
23. Since that report was considered by the Cabinet the Government has published new data on housing affordability ratios which has affected the overall level of housing need across the LLHMA. The indicative housing need figure has risen from 5,520 dwellings per year 2020-2036 to 5,713 (equating to an increase in the total number of dwellings over the 16-year period from circa 84,000 to circa 91,000). This has not had a material effect on the housing numbers set out in the Plan, albeit the Plan does include a ‘trigger policy’ in respect of a review of the Plan once LLHMA partners have confirmed agreement to the apportionment of unmet housing and employment land need.

### **Latest transport evidence work**

24. In line with the position reached with CBC, since September 2021 consultants have been commissioned to continue to develop the Plan’s evidence base.
25. The latest transport evidence work has focused on gaining a greater understanding of the potential Plan/Borough-wide highways and transportation mitigation package and the overall predicted benefits it would bring.

### **Considering the evidence in context**

26. The United Kingdom’s population has grown and will continue to grow. Figures from the Office for National Statistics estimated a 6.9% - 4.3 million increase between 2010 and 2020 and forecast further growth of 2.1 million to the mid-2030s (giving a projected population total of 69.2 million)<sup>1</sup>.
27. Local communities often ‘blame’ new developments for generating additional traffic and clearly the location of development influences the distribution of traffic at a local level. However, the creation of new homes and jobs is a response to an increasing population, and it is the increasing population that generates additional demands for travel. If the UK’s population continues to

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2020basedinterim#toc> accessed on 20 April 2022

increase, so will travel demand. (And not just by individuals, but also, for example, through increased travel by businesses in order to meet the goods and services needs of a growing population.)

28. Considering the growth requirements of Charnwood and the LLHMA as a whole, as well as supporting and related evidence (including work currently being undertaken to inform the development of the County Council's next Local Transport Plan (LTP4)), all points to one fundamental conclusion. The County Council cannot 'prevent' growth, so unless significant changes occur in societal behaviours and expectations, there are significant limitations as to the extent to which the impacts of growth on the County's transportation system can be mitigated in the future. The LLHMA will not be unique in this regard, given that levels of transport congestion are already more acute in other parts of the country, especially in the south east.
29. Significant changes in people's behaviour will be required if the impacts of growth on the County's transportation system (and on carbon levels) are to be lessened significantly; this matter will be addressed in future reports to the Cabinet on the development of the Authority's LTP4.
30. In the meantime, the best opportunity to achieve a level of mitigation is via a Local Plan led approach; Plans that are supported by robust evidence bases and with their post-adoption delivery supported by Transport Strategies that provide a basis for seeking to maximise levels of developer and Government funding towards the delivery of highways and transportation mitigation.

Summary of Plan/Borough-wide highways and transportation mitigation package and predicted overall benefits

31. The principal basis of the mitigation package is firstly to seek to reduce overall levels of carborne trips through maximising sustainable travel opportunities, and then to seek to focus remaining traffic on the highest class and/or 'best' routes available. In more detail, the proposed approach to mitigation has centred on the development and testing (modelling) of a package of measures that focuses on:
  - *Enhancing sustainable measures across the Borough.* The particular focus is on Loughborough and Shepshed, and areas boarding the northern edge of Leicester where there is a greater potential to offer genuine alternatives to the car over relatively short journey lengths; conversely outside such areas, for example inter-urban journeys, it will be much more challenging to develop viable and attractive active travel and/or passenger transport alternatives to private car usage.
  - *Targeted improvements to the Major Road Network (MRN).* This includes the Authority's second priority corridor, the A6/A6004 (as agreed by the Cabinet in April).
  - *Targeted improvements to the Strategic Road Network (SRN).* These are most likely to be relatively localised improvements.



32. The Plan cannot rely for its delivery on the Government's Road Investment Strategy Pipeline Projects – M1 Leicester Western Access and M1 Leicestershire North Extra Capacity – currently being investigated by NH, given their likely scale and uncertainties over any timeframe for delivery, albeit the latest evidence shows that these schemes will, if ultimately delivered, bring further benefits in terms of supporting growth. Officers will therefore continue to work through Midlands Connect (the region's Sub-National Transport Body) to seek to ensure that they remain regional priorities for investment for delivery as early as practicably possible.
33. It is important to note that conceptual and representative proposals have been identified by the consultants solely for the purposes of modelling work and broad costing of the mitigation package. No definitive schemes have been identified at this time.
34. The headline conclusions from the latest evidence are that, as modelled, the mitigation package has predicted benefits in terms of achieving:
- some overall reductions in levels of traffic across the Borough's road network as compared to the no-mitigation scenario; and
  - a better balance of trips across the Borough's road network, i.e. greater levels of use of the high class/'better' MRN and SRN routes and less use of less appropriate routes<sup>2</sup> e.g. rural routes across the Charnwood Forest, as compared to the no-mitigation scenario.
35. Notwithstanding these benefits, across the lifetime of the Plan (to 2037) the latest evidence work shows that it is not possible to fully mitigate the impacts of the Borough's growth on the road network (which is not surprising given the wider LLHMA context). Increased delays and congestion on the Borough's road network are inevitable and unavoidable unless and until societal behaviours and expectations change significantly.

### **Delivery of the highways and transportation mitigation package in practice**

36. It is proposed that the ongoing refinement and delivery of the package should be pursued through the development of Transport Strategies in partnership with CBC, and NH and LCiC as highway authorities. (The fundamental principles of this approach reflect experiences and practice with other Local Plans.)

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<sup>2</sup> Seeking to improve less appropriate routes would not be appropriate in any event. It is likely to be as potentially costly to improve them to a more 'acceptable' standard as to improve higher class/'better' routes whilst also causing damage to the condition of less appropriate routes when the authority has insufficient monies to maintain the standard of even the County's most important roads. (The asset maintenance challenge was highlighted in the report to the Cabinet last March for approval of the Highways and Transportation Capital and Works Programmes, a link to which is provided under the Background Papers.)

37. Reflecting the findings of the most recent evidence work and the nature of the mitigation package identified, it is proposed to develop three area Transport Strategies:
- Loughborough and Shepshed
  - North of Leicester
  - The Soar Valley
38. Based on experience of similar strategies and schemes it is possible that the complete mitigation package will cost £150m and, given current market conditions, could rise over the life of the Plan. However, this figure should be treated as being indicative of potential scale and is subject to the caveat about scheme cost uncertainties. As the work is defined further this will inform viability assessments that in turn will support prioritisation of infrastructure delivery over the life of the Plan. As part of this the information currently available indicates an estimated cost in the region of £60m to £70m in total for the MRN and SRN elements of the mitigation package. The remainder of the cost is associated with the delivery of the three local transport strategies identified above which will contain a mix of appropriate measures for that area including walking, cycling, public transport and more local network schemes.
39. The estimate has been subject to peer review and has sought to reflect the LHA's own recent experiences with costs of schemes delivered on the ground. However, in such times of unprecedented global economic shocks and instabilities, there remain great uncertainties around future levels of scheme costs; for example, whilst the estimate makes an allowance for construction cost inflation, it is impossible to predict how accurate that allowance might prove to be several years into the future.
40. It is far less easy to estimate the costs of the sustainable transport elements of the package. Whilst representative sustainable measures have been tested for the purposes of transport modelling, the measures that will be delivered in reality, particularly for passenger transport, will be:
- refined during the development of the three area Transport Strategies;
  - for cycling and walking, also be refined as part of work already being undertaken to develop and deliver Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for Loughborough/Shepshed and the north of Leicester; and
  - informed by other current relevant work including proposals being developed by LCiC as part of its Transforming Cities Fund project, which includes proposals to deliver improved sustainable transport links to jobs, services and facilities in the City and more widely (for example, proposed enhancements to passenger transport services to places such as Anstey as part of its 'Greenlines' bus network).
41. A cost of that scale is beyond what the County Council can afford even prior to the impacts of the pandemic on its budgets and given that it is the lowest

funded county council. Opportunities for one-off Government grant funding may arise, although external funding would be required for any match funding or significant bid development costs.

42. Given the scale of development proposed in the Borough, it is to be expected that a considerable level of developer contributions will also come forward over the lifetime of the Plan. The County Council's proposal is to pool such contributions from developments with this funding being used for priority projects only when the money has been received.
43. The best way to maximise opportunities to secure investment from other sources, both public and private, is to develop appropriate area Transport Strategies.
44. Notwithstanding the comments above, it is important to note two key factors in respect of the mitigation package:
  - The sustainable elements are scalable, e.g. cycling and walking improvements can be made to a particular corridor aligned to growth coming forward and it is not necessary to deliver an entire network all at once.
  - The Plan contains a 'trigger policy' (Policy DS2) in respect of a review of the Plan once LLHMA partners have confirmed agreement to the apportionment of unmet housing and employment land need. Should a full or partial update of the Plan be triggered as a result of this review, the process (as identified by Policy DS2) would likely take place within 5 years of the Plan's adoption. Whilst it is unlikely that such a review would result in Plan proposals being fundamentally changed, nevertheless an update would provide an opportunity to review the mitigation package; its costings in the light of evolving work; and to review the position regarding funding.
45. In practice, therefore, it could be said that the most pertinent consideration is whether it is possible for development to come forward in the early years of the Plan and for measures to be delivered that would help to mitigate its impacts. The flexibility and scalability of the area Strategy approach means that it is plausible to suppose this.
46. However, whilst funding will come forward through and over the lifetime of the Plan towards the delivery of the mitigation package, it is highly improbable that it will be possible to bring forward all necessary mitigation measures in parallel with growth in the Borough and there are no guarantees it will be sufficient in totality. It is recognised that this may lead to increased levels of congestion on the highway network before mitigation measures are in place. But, without resource to invest in forward funding, this will be an inevitable consequence. This is a position that has been accepted both in Leicestershire and nationally.

47. Given the overall LLHMA context set out earlier in this report, it is probable that similar circumstances will arise with other new Local Plans within the LLHMA.

### **Position reached with Charnwood Borough and other key partners since September 2021**

#### Key Highways and Transportation Conditions

48. The following paragraphs set out the position reached in respect of the key highways and transportation conditions set out in the September 2021 Cabinet report.
49. Officers have worked closely with CBC, NH and LCiC in seeking to agree Main Modifications (MMs) to the Plan. These reflect the outcomes of the latest evidence work and the position reached with identifying the mitigation package. They relate to
- Chapter 3 - Place Based Policies, including Policies LUA1, LUC1, SUA1 and SC1;
  - Chapter 7 - Climate Change, including Policy CC5; and
  - Chapter 9 - Infrastructure and Delivery, including Policies INF1 and INF2.
50. Officers are content that if these MMs are accepted by the Inspectors and ultimately included in the adopted Plan this will provide a robust basis for seeking to secure developer contributions towards the delivery of the overall package of highways and transportation measures that will be required to mitigate the impacts of accommodating further growth in Charnwood. **This fulfils the first key condition.**
51. CBC will be presenting those MMs to the EiP Inspectors for consideration, with the support of LHA officers and the other parties as necessary or required. **This fulfils the second key condition.**
52. An area Strategy based approach, in particular to deal with cumulative and cross-boundary impacts, is embedded in the MMs; such an approach has proven to be a successful 'delivery strategy', with developer contributions (and Government funding, too) secured towards the delivery of transport infrastructure required to support a Plan's implementation. As per the first key condition, if the MMs form part of the adopted Plan, officers are content that this would go as far as is reasonably possible at this time in **fulfilling the third key condition.**
53. The MMs embed a commitment by CBC, the LHA and other parties as required to undertake additional work post-adoption of the Plan, particularly to develop the area Transport Strategies. Again, if the MMs are included in the Plan as adopted, this would go as far as is reasonably possible at this time in seeking to achieve **fulfilment of the fourth key condition.**

### Transport Statement of Common Ground

54. A Transport Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) was entered into by CBC, the LHA, NH and LCiC in November 2021. Reflecting the position reached in respect of the above, officers have completed a supplemental Transport SoCG. A copy of the original and supplementary SoCG, which includes the agreed MMs in an appendix, are attached as Appendices A and B of this report respectively.

### Hearing Statements

55. Officers have also worked closely with CBC to provide support in responding to questions raised by the EiP Inspectors that are relevant to the position reached and intend to be available to provide support to CBC at relevant hearing sessions as necessary/required. Additionally, officers have submitted a Hearing Statement on behalf of the LHA, a copy of which is included at Appendix C to this report and will be appearing at the EiP in their own right to answer questions from the Inspectors about this Statement as necessary.
56. It has not proven possible to reach agreement with CBC on all aspects of changes that the LHA would want to see made to the Plan. Accordingly, officers have submitted a second Hearing Statement, as attached as Appendix D. Essentially, this proposes MMs to Plan:
- Chapter 2 - Development Strategy: A Strategy for Charnwood's Future Development, including Policy DS3; and
  - Chapter 3 - Place Based Policies, including Policy LUC3.
57. These MMs would seek to ensure the coordinated master-planning of allocation sites that are clustered in geographic areas, for example coordination in terms of site access provision or highways and transportation measures required to directly serve the sites (as opposed to dealing with wider, Plan-level cumulative impacts).

### **Proposed LHA position for the purposes of the EiP**

58. As LHA officers will be attending hearing sessions, it is important that the LHA is able to state its position should it be so asked by the Inspectors or questioned by other EiP participants.
59. Drawing together and summarising the main points set out in this report, it is proposed that the LHA's position should be based on the following as might be necessary in response to questions at the EiP:
- i. It accepts that without significant changes in societal behaviours and expectations there are significant limitations as to the extent to which the impacts of growth on the County's transportation system can be mitigated in the future.

- ii. It supports a Plan-led approach. Plans that are supported by robust evidence bases represent the best way to seek to deal with the challenges presented by growth.
  - iii. It recognises the importance to the wider LLHMA of securing successful adoption of the CBC Plan.
  - iv. It supports the highways and transportation mitigation package, accepting that even if fully delivered it would not achieve 100% mitigation of the impacts of growth in the Borough.
  - v. It commits to ongoing work to develop the area Transport Strategies and to develop strategic scheme business cases so as to provide the best basis for seeking to secure Government and developer funding to enable the delivery of the mitigation package.
  - vi. The proposal by the County Council is to pool developer contributions from developments with this funding being used for priority projects only when the money has been received.
  - vii. The LHA will accept a proportionate and reasonable deterioration in traffic conditions in the Borough as a result of developments being permitted prior to the overall mitigation package being put in place.
  - viii. It acknowledges the cooperation given by CBC and other parties in identifying and agreeing Main Modifications to the Plan to address most of the key issues that it raised in response to consultations on the Submission Draft Plan. It supports the Main Modifications proposed by CBC.
  - ix. For the issues that it has not been able to agree with CBC it has proposed its own Main Modifications.
  - x. It acknowledges that the Plan cannot be reliant for its delivery on Road Investment Strategy Pipeline Projects, albeit the latest evidence shows that these schemes would, if delivered, bring further benefits in supporting growth. The LHA will continue to work through Midlands Connect to seek to ensure they remain regional priorities for investment to deliver.
60. Given the fulfilment of the key highways and transportation conditions set out in the September 2021 Cabinet report, the LHA should offer its support to the Plan at the EiP subject to the above.

### **Concluding comments**

61. The ability to be able to afford, either from public or private (developer) sources, the deliverability of infrastructure and service improvements necessary to meet the requirements of a growing population in parallel with growth is only likely to become ever more challenging going forward.

62. In comparison with Local Plans being developed even just 10 or so years ago, it is no longer relatively simple to identify discrete improvements associated with a particular site and that have readily identifiable and relatively certain funding sources. Existing pressures on infrastructure and services mean that even relatively modest impacts of growth can now have disproportionate consequences; in highways and transportation terms, cumulative and cross-boundary impacts are becoming ever more apparent and acute across the LLHMA, both on local road networks (including the MRN) and on the SRN.
63. Whilst the challenges might be daunting, nevertheless a Plan-led approach represents the best way of seeking to address them.
64. In that regard, supporting CBC in seeking to achieve the successful adoption of its new Local Plan is important, not just as to the principle of a Plan-led approach but also in recognition of the importance of achieving this to the LLHMA as a whole. Whilst it is not without its risks to the Authority – it is not, for example, possible to remove all financial risks given the nature of the national planning system – nevertheless the approach being taken seeks to minimise exposure to risks as far as practicable and reasonably possible whilst supporting the Plan’s successful adoption.

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

65. There are no equality and human rights implications arising from the report. CBC is working with the County Council and with other partners in the LLHMA to provide for the homes and jobs required in the future.

### **Environmental Implications**

66. The County Council will continue to work closely with CBC and other partners to minimise the impact of the planned growth on the environmental assets of Leicester and Leicestershire.
67. The impact upon the environment is a key consideration in all planning decisions made within the context of an approved or emerging Local Plan, and the County Council will seek to ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance the environment through biodiversity net gain and sustainable forms of development.

### **Partnership Working and Associated Issues**

68. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Partnership, which includes Leicester City Council, the seven district councils in Leicestershire and the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. A strengthening of partnership working is sought to deal with the transport challenges which require a strategy-led approach with multiple partners, both in Charnwood and the wider area.

## **Background Papers**

Report to the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021: Response to the Charnwood Borough Council Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan (2021-2037) Consultation  
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6446&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022: Environment and Transport Department's 2022/23 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme  
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6774&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22  
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6744&Ver=4>

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Transport Statement of Common Ground November 2021  
Appendix B: Supplemental Transport Statement of Common Ground May 2022  
Appendix C: Hearing Statement of Leicestershire County Council as the Local Highway Authority for Leicestershire, Matter 8 Issues 1 and 2  
Appendix D: Hearing Statement of Leicestershire County Council as the Local Highway Authority for Leicestershire, Matter 6, Issue 4, Question 6.16 (d)