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Written Comments to Cabinet

Strategic Spatial and Transport Planning

Cabinet Meeting: Tuesday 16 December 2025 (2.00 pm)

Submitted by: StopTheNewTown.org (STNT)

On behalf of residents of Great Glen, Oadby, Stretton Hall and surrounding communities

Date: 15 December 2025

1. Purpose

These comments respond to the Cabinet report *Strategic Spatial and Transport Planning*, with particular reference to the section “*Proposed Strategic Planning and Transport Planning Work*” (items 52–78, from p.80).

STNT welcomes Leicestershire County Council’s (LCC) move towards a more assertive, long-term strategic spatial and transport role. However, we are concerned that **without explicit safeguards** the proposed work risks being used to legitimise **premature, unsound and infrastructure-deficient development proposals**, most notably those currently being promoted by **Harborough District Council (HDC)** to the south and east of Leicester.

2. Scale of growth and immediate risk

HDC no longer has a five-year housing land supply. The consequence is the rapid emergence of **in excess of 14,000 dwellings** through a combination of speculative applications and plan-led proposals, including:

- the proposed **Strategic Development Area (SDA) on land south of Gartree Road** (4,000 homes) in combination with Oadby & Wigston’s circa 2,000 homes;
- major growth around **Great Glen** (c.450 homes plus a further c.180 homes);
- additional pressures in **Oadby, Kibworth** and nearby settlements with material proposed developments.

Taken cumulatively, this scale of development would place **severe and unsustainable pressure** on:

- the **A6 corridor** and surrounding rural road network;
- flood-sensitive catchments, particularly affecting Great Glen;
- already over-stretched **GPs, schools and community services**;
- neighbouring authorities through cross-boundary traffic and service spill-over.

These impacts are not hypothetical. They align directly with LCC's own transport evidence and with the County Council's decision to object to the Harborough Local Plan at Regulation 19.

3. Consistency with LCC's own transport position

STNT strongly supports LCC's recent and clear conclusion, as Local Transport Authority, that the Harborough Reg 19 proposed Local Plan fails the NPPF tests of **effectiveness** and **consistency with national policy**, particularly in respect of transport.

That position is reinforced by the Cabinet report itself, which acknowledges that:

- there are **no longer straightforward or affordable mitigations** for cumulative transport impacts;
- required strategic transport investment now exceeds what **CIL and realistic public funding** can deliver;
- Local Plans are being advanced **faster than their evidence base can support**.

It is essential that the proposed Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) work **strengthens** rather than **softens** this stance.

4. Obsolete A46 assumptions and strategic realism

A central flaw in current growth proposals is the continued, implicit reliance on a **revived A46 southern/eastern expressway or equivalent orbital route** as a future enabler of development.

This assumption is no longer credible:

- the A46 Expressway was **cancelled in 2020** after Midlands Connect concluded there was no strategic business case;
- **no route has been safeguarded**, and intervening development has made safeguarding unrealistic;
- there is **no £2-3bn funding envelope** within any current or foreseeable national transport programme;
- national policy has shifted decisively away from road-led growth towards demand management and modal shift.

The CPRE submission (attached) relating to Great Glen demonstrates clearly that continued reliance on this cancelled infrastructure concept renders associated growth strategies **undeliverable and unsound**.

Any SDS that implicitly assumes the re-emergence of this scheme risks being fundamentally flawed from the outset.

5. Risk of premature SDA progression

STNT understands that:

- HDC is funding extensive consultant engagement involving **Homes England and Urban&Civic**;
- It is thus not inconceivable the **Gartree Road SDA** may be taken to **formal scoping in early 2026**.

This creates a material governance risk for LCC. Without clear guardrails, there is a danger that:

- early SDS evidence or feasibility work is cited to justify **premature SDA progression**;
- County-led strategic work is portrayed as endorsement of a site that has not been found sound through Examination.
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From both a public finance and reputational perspective, this would expose the County Council to unnecessary risk.

6. Existing SDAs and the case for focus

The Cabinet report rightly emphasises the need to prioritise and coordinate infrastructure investment. In that context, a basic question arises:

Why initiate a new, complex SDA when existing strategic allocations are demonstrably under-delivering?

Examples include:

- **Lutterworth East**, where delivery has been slow and affordable housing commitments materially reduced;
- **Scraptoft North**, now proposed for de-allocation after failing to come forward, contributing directly to HDC's five-year supply failure.

By contrast, alternative spatial strategies, such as those advanced by the **Willoughby Waterleys Residents' Association**, focusing growth along the **Lutterworth–north-west Leicester corridor**, align far more closely with existing infrastructure, employment geography and realistic transport investment pathways.

These were included in STNT's Reg 19 submission to HDC supported by 2370 local residents in May 2025 (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W1ON4ucg9_2mwhCSXuLbC_pOAY2Qr-Ny/view?pli=1).

An SDS that does not rigorously test such alternatives risks repeating the shortcomings of the 2018 Strategic Growth Plan: ambitious in concept, but detached from delivery reality.

7. What STNT asks of Cabinet

STNT respectfully asks Cabinet to ensure that:

1. **SDS work is not used to pre-empt Local Plan Examinations** or to legitimise premature SDA scoping.
2. **Large strategic sites lacking funded, deliverable transport solutions** are not assumed acceptable within the SDS.
3. **Cancelled or obsolete infrastructure assumptions**, notably the A46 Expressway, are formally discounted unless demonstrably deliverable.
4. **Priority is given to making existing SDAs and growth corridors work**, where infrastructure already exists or can realistically be delivered.
5. **Transparency is maintained** regarding any engagement with Homes England, Urban&Civic or HM Treasury, including the evidential basis and intended use of any funding sought.

8. Closing

This is not opposition to housing in principle. It is a call for **realism, sequencing and accountability**.

Handled carefully, the SDS can become a stabilising, corrective framework. Handled incautiously, it risks amplifying the very unsoundness and uncertainty that LCC has rightly identified.

STNT urges Cabinet to ensure the former.

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