



CABINET – 21 JULY 2026

**RESPONSE TO THE BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL REGULATION 19
LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF GROWTH,
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the progress of Blaby District Council's (BDC) Local Plan and to present the County Council's emerging position to its Regulation 19 consultation.
2. The report also sets out the officers' recommended course of action for the County Council, in its role as Local Transport Authority, to undertake its own separate evidence work to support the progress of the Local Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) The proposed timetable for the progression of the Blaby District Council (BDC) Local Plan be noted;
 - b) The County Council's emerging position on BDC's Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, set out in paragraphs 41 to 88 and the Appendix to this report be agreed, noting in particular that the County Council:
 - i. Recognises the significant challenges and pressures that Plan Making Authorities, such as BDC, are facing.
 - ii. Does not raise any fundamental issue with the Plan's spatial strategy, subject to a suitable delivery and contribution strategy, and consideration of viability implications over the plan period being set out with necessary modifications to plan policies for identified strategic sites.
 - iii. In its role as Local Transport Authority, the County Council considers that the Plan in its current form fails to meet the National Planning Policy Framework tests of soundness, insofar as its transport evidence and policy approach to mitigating cumulative transport impacts; and

- c) The Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Lead Members, be authorised to make amendments to the detailed Regulation 19 response, noting that:
 - i. Amendments will take into account officers views of the recently published Whole Plan Viability Assessment and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
 - ii. The formal response (comprising this Cabinet report and updated Appendix) will be submitted to BDC ahead of the consultation period closing on 24 August 2026.
- d) In its role as Local Transport Authority, undertakes its own separate transport evidence work given the County Council's recognition of the importance of the next Blaby Local Plan to the future delivery of strategic growth and infrastructure across south Leicestershire.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 4. The Local Plan process is the main opportunity available to planning authorities and statutory consultees to influence places on a strategic level and ensure the cumulative impacts of growth are planned for.
- 5. The County Council is therefore seeking to influence the content of the Blaby Local Plan in the interests of local communities. This includes ensuring that the Local Plan provides an as robust as possible policy platform for securing the provision of the infrastructure and services that are required to supports its successful delivery.
- 6. In its role as Local Transport Authority (LTA), the County Council undertaking its own separate evidence work will provide the LTA with sufficient evidence to appropriately demonstrate the Plan's transport impacts and associated requirements for mitigation and transport interventions. The intention is that the work would be completed and shared with the district council so as to inform discussions about, and agreement of, a schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the Plan (and to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)) to be submitted alongside the Plan.
- 7. On 25 March 2026, new regulations came into force, which meant that the Duty to Co-operate would no longer apply to new, or emerging Local Plans. Notwithstanding this change, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) still requires "maintaining effective co-operation" across administrative boundaries (paragraphs 26–29). Inspectors are expected to continue to examine plans in line with these policies.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

- 8. BDC has outlined a timetable for the submission of its Local Plan. It is anticipated that following the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation and subject to approval of BDC, the Local Plan would be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by the end of 2026.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. In 2018, the County Council, Leicester City Council, the seven district councils in Leicestershire, and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), approved the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) which provides the long-term vision for planned growth for the area up to 2050. The SGP identifies five key growth areas and most pertinent to Blaby District are 'Leicester: Our Central City', the A46 Priority Growth Corridor and the A5 Improvement Corridor.
10. In October 2019, the Cabinet approved the response to BDC's New Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation at Regulation 18 stage, which is the first formal stage of consultation for the Local Plan.
11. The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities (LLTSTP) was approved by the Cabinet on 20 November 2020. This document has a plan period to 2050, and it was developed by the County Council and City Council alongside the SGP to ensure that the long-term development needs and associated transportation requirements are co-ordinated.
12. In March 2021, the Cabinet approved the response to a further Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation undertaken by BDC, the New Local Plan Options Consultation.
13. In 2021, the Council and its partners (Leicester City Council, the seven district councils and the LLEP), commissioned the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA). The HENA, published in June 2022, provides evidence that across Leicester and Leicestershire, the projected housing need from 2020 to 2036 is 91,400 dwellings and employment land need from 2021 to 2036 is 344 hectares.
14. In December 2021, the County Council became a signatory to a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) relating to South Leicestershire Local Plan Making (November 2021), aligning the gathering of evidence and activity in the development of new local plans for three districts in the south of the County.
15. In September 2022, the Cabinet approved the County Council becoming a signatory to a SoCG relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs (June 2022), setting out how the City Council's identified unmet needs would be accommodated in the County. BDC approved the SoCG at its Council meeting in July 2022.
16. In November 2022, the Cabinet received a paper setting out the financial implications for the County Council of delivering sustainable and inclusive growth and the approach and principles that it is proposed the Council would adopt to address and manage these risks.
17. In October 2024, the Cabinet received a paper on the Strategic Planning Issues associated with the emerging Charnwood Local Plan. This included principles for future engagement of the Local Highways Authority in other local plan

processes in light of the County Council's experience of the Local Plan for Charnwood Borough.

18. In December 2024, the Cabinet report on the Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2028/29 referred to the importance of Local Plans being prepared with sufficient evidence to secure contributions and delivery for critical infrastructure and that it is necessary for the district councils to work with the County Council to ensure that their Local Plans include policies that balance the need to support delivery of growth with the financial risk to the County Council.
19. In December 2025, the Cabinet received a report on Strategic Spatial and Transport Planning. This outlined proposals for the preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy and secured approval for the County Council to share initial evidence work, to undertake initial scheme feasibility and development work, outlined how this would be used by the Local Transport Authority (LTA) to input into strategic planning, including to assist the evolution of Local Plans to the submission stage and in bringing forward strategic sites allocated in those Local Plans.
20. In February 2026, the Cabinet approved the County Council becoming a signatory to a SoCG produced by the Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities relating to housing distribution following the NPPF and new Standard Method published in December 2024. BDC became signatories to this SoCG in January 2026.

Resource Implications

21. The County Council has committed significant resources to engaging in, and supporting, a collaborative approach to strategic planning in order to facilitate the delivery of growth within the County and to mitigate the negative impacts of development, to the extent that it is reasonably possible to do. The additional work identified within the report will be delivered using existing resources allocated to strategic spatial and transport planning work, as approved by Cabinet in December 2025 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026.
22. As set out in the report to the Cabinet in December 2025 on Strategic Spatial and Transport Planning, securing the delivery of infrastructure, transport or otherwise (such as education, waste and health), to support the needs of Leicester and Leicestershire's growing population is becoming ever more challenging, particularly where strategic transport and education infrastructure is required to seek to mitigate the cumulative impacts of development sites across a relatively wide area of the County. The County Council seeks to achieve a more coordinated approach to locations for growth and prioritisation of its delivery relative to the prioritisation of investment in the infrastructure and services necessary to support it.
23. As part of seeking to provide necessary infrastructure to support new and existing communities appropriately, the County Council recognises that having up to date, effective Local Plans in place underpinned by appropriate policies

and delivery strategies is the most effective way to fund and deliver infrastructure, maximising the contribution from the development industry and minimising potential negative impacts of unplanned growth. However, there are now a significant number of local plans progressing in overlapping timeframes. The County Council has limited resources to support the planning authorities with Local Plan development and associated examination attendance. It may become necessary to prioritise work in this area as it may not be possible to meet all relevant requests within preferred timescales.

24. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on this report.

Legal Implications

25. The preparation and examination of Local Plans is governed by a statutory framework, associated regulations, and national policy and guidance, including the NPPF. In determining whether a Local Plan is “sound”, the appointed Inspector(s) will consider, amongst other matters, whether the Plan has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
26. The County Council’s proposed response to BDC’s Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation has been prepared having regard to this legislative and policy framework and reflects the County Council’s role as the LTA and its wider statutory responsibilities, including in respect of education and infrastructure planning.
27. The County Council must ensure that its representations are robust, evidence-based and consistent with the statutory tests and relevant national policy, noting that it will ultimately be for the Inspector(s) at Examination in Public (EiP) to determine the soundness of the Plan.
28. There is a risk that, if the Local Plan is found unsound at EiP, this may have implications for the delivery of development and associated infrastructure within the area. The County Council’s response is intended to ensure that its statutory responsibilities and interests are appropriately represented in that process.
29. The Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer has been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

30. This report will be circulated to all Members.

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PART B

Background

31. The Local Plan for Blaby District was adopted by BDC in February 2019, covering the period to 2029. A local authority seeks to keep its Local Plan up to date, otherwise it is at risk of unsustainable and un-planned development.
32. The preparation of new Local Plans involves various stages of consultation. This consultation from BDC is known as a 'Regulation 19' consultation. It commenced on 8 July 2026 and will close on 24 August 2026.
33. This consultation builds on previous rounds of publication to develop the new Local Plan, in which the Council has responded to, these being:
 - a) Regulation 18 – Issues and Options (July-September 2019).
 - b) Regulation 18 – Options (January-March 2021).
34. In the County Council's response to the most recent Regulation 18 consultation in 2021, it set out that the new emerging Local Plan for Blaby District would require significant infrastructure investment and there would be a significant financial challenge to the County Council in its ability to meet the costs for essential infrastructure.

Cross-boundary Cooperation

35. On 25 March 2026, new regulations came into force which meant that the 'Duty to Co-operate' would no longer apply to new, or emerging, Local Plans. Notwithstanding this change, the NPPF (December 2024) still requires "maintaining effective co-operation" across administrative boundaries (paragraphs 26–29). Inspectors are expected to continue to examine plans in line with these policies. In this context, SoCGs remain an appropriate method to document cross-boundary strategic matters, record areas of agreement and disagreement, and set out next steps, demonstrating that effective and on-going joint working has taken place. This is particularly important for the County Council due to its responsibilities for highway and education matters, given the scale and criticality of the associated infrastructure dependencies.

Overview of Content of BDC's Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan

36. The Local Plan sets out a strategy covering the period 2025 to 2042 with the delivery of 12,953 new homes which includes a proportion of sites from existing allocations such as New Lubbethorpe. This exceeds the housing requirement of 11,195 (which includes a contribution to Leicester City's unmet need) due to the application of a buffer of around 15%.
37. The Distribution and Locational Strategy sets out that the largest proportion of growth is to be directed to the Principal Urban Area (50%) whilst Larger Villages and Strategic Sites will take 22% and 14% respectively.

38. The Local Plan sets out a minimum of 4,420 dwellings across six strategic sites:
- a) Land North of A47 Hinckley Road, Kirby Muxloe (510 dwellings in plan period).
 - b) Land West of Beggars Lane, Lubbesthorpe (825 dwellings in plan period).
 - c) Land at Carlton Park, Enderby / Narborough (560 dwellings in plan period).
 - d) Land South of Whetstone (756 dwellings in plan period).
39. Two of the proposed strategic sites are new standalone strategic mixed-use communities which will also provide housing and employment beyond the plan period.
- a) Land West of Stoney Stanton (965 dwellings in plan period).
 - b) Whetstone Pastures (800 dwellings in plan period).
40. In terms of employment, the Plan is seeking to plan for the local employment land requirement of 39 hectares, across sites at Land North of Glenfield, Land West of Stoney Stanton, Whetstone Pastures and Land South of Whetstone. The requirement for 30 hectares of strategic B8 warehousing and distribution is to be met by existing commitments, whilst sites at Land West of Stoney Stanton and Whetstone Pastures will be safeguarded to contribute towards sub-regional needs beyond the plan period.

Overarching Comments

41. The County Council recognises the importance of a Plan-led approach. It represents the best opportunity to seek to meet the needs of Leicester and Leicestershire's growing and changing population in a managed way. The County Council therefore continues to commit significant resources to support district councils in the successful development and adoption of Local Plans. This includes to ensure that an appropriate approach, justified by evidence, is identified for mitigating to an acceptable degree the impacts of Plans on the transport network and other infrastructure; to seek to ensure that sustainable growth is delivered in reality; and that there is a robust policy basis for the County Council to seek to secure developer contributions and Government funding towards necessary interventions required to enable growth.
42. The County Council recognises the strategic importance of this Plan for future spatial planning on a strategic scale through Spatial Development Strategies. In that regard, the Plan contains two strategic sites (to the west of Stoney Stanton and at Whetstone Pastures) where delivery will begin in this plan but stretch beyond the proposed Plan's timelines. But it also needs to provide the policy foundation that enables the future delivery of strategic transport infrastructure that will be critical to enabling those strategic sites to come forward over time and to the unlocking of growth more widely across south Leicestershire. Failure to achieve this will see poorly connected piecemeal development of unrelated developments across large areas as well as prejudicing future sustainable growth in Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland.

43. The County Council further recognises the significant challenges and pressures that Plan Making Authorities, such as BDC, face, given the Government's ambitions for planning reform and Local Plan coverage, and its intention/mission that 1.5 million new homes should be delivered within the lifetime of this Parliament (therefore by 2029). However, such pressures and challenges should not be taken as reasons for supporting any Local Plan regardless.

Comments of the Local Transport Authority (LTA)

44. **Spatial strategy:** Given the strategic importance of this Plan for future spatial planning on a strategic scale through Spatial Development Strategies, the LTA is not raising any fundamental issue with the Plan's spatial strategy, as it is understood that a significant number of allocation sites included in it already have or are close to securing the benefit of planning permission; and also the relatively limited choice of locations where further growth might be allocated in the district.
45. Notwithstanding this, their inclusion is contingent on the delivery of safe and suitable access and any residual cumulative impacts being satisfactorily mitigatable both on an individual and cumulative basis. Whilst only a proportion of the development quantum is indicated to be delivered over the plan period this does not obviate the need to establish these fundamental delivery requirements prior to their spatial allocation within the proposed Plan.
46. Furthermore, it is expected that site policies prescribe strategic sites be brought forward via a single outline or hybrid application and thus will need to tackle the fundamental issues of access and mitigation to gain planning approval and realise delivery.
47. The Plan as drafted therefore presents the real risk of the allocation of strategic sites which are yet to be evidenced as deliverable or the probability of their delivery in an uncoordinated or piecemeal fashion which fails to provide the necessary infrastructure, or secure contributions, which are later identified to be required to support the Plan's spatial distribution. Priority should therefore be placed on evidence and amendments to site policies that best ensure the coordinated and strategically planned delivery of the indicated spatial strategy.
48. **Position with regard to the Plan and the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure.** There are sources of evidence, such as the Strategic Transport Assessment work undertaken in support of the SGP and work looking at the transport impacts of growth across south Leicestershire through the South Leicestershire Joint Transport Evidence (JTE) which points to the need for improved strategic orbital connectivity to the south and east of the City of Leicester. That is to address current issues across the area but also to unlock future sustainable development to meet the area's housing and job needs. The JTE has its genesis in the completion of the South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground, which the Cabinet agreed the County

Council to become a signatory to in December 2021. It covers the districts of Harborough, Oadby and Wigston, Blaby and Hinckley and Bosworth.

49. The scheme identification and development work approved by the Cabinet in December 2025 includes an examination of the options for improving strategic transport orbital connectivity around the east and south of the Leicester Urban Area. Whilst this work will take around a year to complete, at this time the LTA considers that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that improved connectivity to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) (which is managed and maintained by National Highways on behalf of the Department for Transport) will be a key element of achieving improved connectivity.
50. With the recent disappearance from the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) process of the Leicester Western Access (aka M1 Junction 21 area) Pipeline Project there is currently no nationally proposed solution to addressing the existing congestion and safety problems on the M1 and M69 in the district so as to improve SRN connectivity. For clarity, the RIS process is the process by which funding is award by the Government to National Highways for the development and delivery of SRN projects; the process works in blocks of 5 years. The Leicester Western Access Pipeline project was included in RIS2 but no longer appears in the recently published RIS3 2026 to 2031.
51. In that absence the LTA welcomes in principle the incorporation into the Plan's strategic site policies of references to the need to provide south facing slip roads at M69 Junction 2 (near to Stoney Stanton) and for the provision of a new junction on the M1 (a Junction 20a) south of Whetstone. Such improved connectivity to the SRN would help longer distance journeys (existing and newly generated) to access the SRN other than via M1 Junction 21 (where the M69 joins the M1 near to Fosse Park). However, at present:
 - a) Policy S7 (Land West of Stoney Stanton) fails to provide for the safeguarding of the future delivery of the south facing slip roads.
 - b) In respect of Policy S8 (Whetstone Pasture), the concept of a new motorway junction is introduced into the Plan without any preceding context or justificatory explanation (please see also the position with regard to the Plan's transport evidence).
52. Through its Circular 01/2022 Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development, the Department for Transport (understandably) sets a high evidential threshold for the creation of new connections to the SRN, especially '*on those sections of the network designed for high-speed traffic*', such as motorways. It is unknown at this time what National Highways' (on behalf of the Department for Transport) formal position will be on the Plan's inclusion of references to a new M1 Junction 20a and the addition of south facing slip roads at M69 Junction 2, nor whether it considers that the Plan is underpinned by evidence sufficient to demonstrate that there are cases in principle for the creation of these new connections to the SRN.
53. **Position with regard to the development of transport evidence:** The Plan's spatial strategy has, in general terms, been tested as part of the wider south

Leicestershire work. That work has been beneficial in terms of enabling an understanding of the strategic transport infrastructure that will be required to enable growth in the district (and more widely) to come forward. But on its own, this work was never intended to be sufficiently granular to form the basis of a 'transport strategy' to underpin the effective delivery of a Local Plan.

54. In that respect, it is welcomed that the District Council has commissioned its own transport evidence work using consultants it independently appointed. However, the LTA has not been as directly involved by the consultants as has been the usual norm for other Local Plans across the County and the outcome of the work, a 'Blaby Strategic Transport Assessment' (BSTA), was not received until 4 June 2026 (therefore only 11 working days in advance of its publication by the District Council).
55. Having reviewed the BSTA, in general terms, the LTA welcomes and supports the proposed in principle approach to seeking to mitigate the Plan's spatial strategy's transport impacts. That is broadly, through a vision-led approach, firstly to seek to minimise the need to travel outside of a development through the provision of on-site facilities (such as schools or shops); then enabling travel choice by active and sustainable interventions for travel away from a site; and then, lastly, to improve highway capacity to accommodate the residual, cumulative traffic impacts. This approach accords in principle with national planning policy.
56. However, at this advanced stage of the Plan's development, it is the LTA's view that the transport evidence base is not yet sufficiently complete. The BSTA does not appear to include the level of analysis and interpretation of transport modelling results, or the assessment of transport mitigation (including delivery timings) that the LTA would require in order to understand the Plan's likely impact and the likely success of proposed interventions design to mitigate impacts and promote sustainable growth in the area.
57. By way of some key examples, taken on its own, the BSTA does not appear to:
 - a) Demonstrate appropriately the impacts of the Plan's spatial strategy, including by comparison with a future scenario where the Plan and its proposed development do not come forward.
 - b) Demonstrate sufficiently whether the proposed in-principle approach to mitigating the transport impacts of the spatial strategy is appropriate, justified, and capable of mitigating impacts on the transport network to an acceptable degree.
 - c) Provide sufficient evidential justification for the strategic transport requirements associated with Plan policies S7 and S8, which is a particular concern in respect of the Department for Transport's Circular 01/2022 and the high evidential threshold associated with the creation of new or amended connections to the SRN.
 - d) Provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate whether the level of housing proposed to come forward on the Stoney Stanton and Whetstone Pastures strategic sites (a minimum of 965 homes and 800 homes

respectively) would be acceptable in transport terms in advance of the necessary strategic transport infrastructure.

58. The LTA recognises that the evidence base for this Plan is being developed against a National Planning Policy Framework that embeds a vision-led approach to transport planning. The LTA fully supports this approach, and hence it has published the draft Enabling Travel Choice Strategy (ETCS) that sets out, amongst other things, how it expects to see a vision-led approach applied in Leicestershire. However, it should not just be applied at a purely theoretical level. It should be supported by evidence which is specific to the place in question, in this case the District of Blaby, and to the location, scale and nature of the new communities and development sites proposed through the Plan.
59. In that regard, a number of statements and conclusions in the BSTA appear to require a clearer evidential foundation. In particular, further supporting data and a transparent analytical methodology are required to demonstrate why the proposed in-principle approach to mitigating the Plan's transport impacts is appropriate and justified, having regard to the wider evidence about Blaby District, the Plan's spatial strategy and the cumulative impacts of planned growth.
60. Ultimately, it will be for the independently appointed Inspector(s) to determine whether the BSTA is sufficient to demonstrate the Plan's transport impacts and to justify the interventions required to enable its effective delivery. However, on the evidence currently available, the LTA's concern is that the BSTA is insufficient to demonstrate that the Plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in transport terms. This creates a risk that the Plan may be found unsound, insofar as it relates to transport evidence and mitigation. On the evidence currently available, the LTA would not be able to support the adequacy of the BSTA through the Plan's EiP. The LTA therefore reserves the right, in fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities and in the interests of local communities, to pursue these matters through the EiP process, including by appearing in its own right at the hearing sessions if necessary.
61. Notwithstanding the above, officers have initially reviewed some modelling plots contained in an appendices to the BSTA. On the face of it, those plots appear to show that the Plan's spatial strategy will give rise to:
 - a) Impacts relating to the poor performance of the SRN, particularly M1 Junction 21. That is traffic being displaced from the M1 and M69 on to lower order roads through communities such as Enderby. These impacts are consistent with evidence prepared in respect of the refused Development Consent Order (DCO) for a proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange adjacent to M69 Junction 2. In their decision letter on the DCO, the Secretary of State referred to concerns about the impacts of that proposal on M1 Junction 21.
 - b) Traffic being displaced from the A426 and B4114 through communities such as Ashby Magna, Broughton Astley, Croft and Huncote.

- c) Impacts affecting the capacity of key junctions on the district's road network, including M1 Junction 21 and along the B4114 corridor. Whilst the evidence is not presently at a sufficiently developed stage to be definitively conclusive, it is probable that whilst the strategic sites are the biggest contributory factor to the apparent impacts nevertheless it is likely the cumulative traffic impacts from developments across the district are also a contributory factor.
- 62. Without mitigation, such impacts would have implications for the health and wellbeing of affected communities. Additionally, from an asset management perspective the impacts will increase levels of damage to routes that were never designed to be used by such volumes of traffic. Furthermore, the Plan:
 - a) Fails to set out with sufficient clarity a 'transport strategy' for mitigating its transport impacts.
 - b) Nor provides for an appropriate funding mechanism for the delivery of the transport interventions required to enable its effective delivery that risks rendering individual sites being financially unviable when considered in isolation. That is in respect of bearing alone the costs of transport infrastructure required to avoid there being severe residual cumulative highways impact, as per paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024.
- 63. It might be correct to say that some of the impacts described above will occur in any event because of general traffic growth, and further that it might be the case that the Plan's spatial strategy 'just' results in an amplification of those impacts. On the other hand, local communities do not necessarily discriminate between the causal reasons for the impacts of traffic that they experience. Furthermore, in support of Local Transport Plans, a Local Plan should be expected to have a positive role in helping to address transport issues that means the impacts of growth on local communities are minimised to the extent reasonably possible. A local plan should provide for 'good growth'. Failure to address those impacts will negatively affect the experience of new communities and performance of new businesses identified in the Plan.
- 64. **Position with regard to the Plan's underlying 'transport strategy':** The Plan as drafted contains some welcome aspects in terms of seeking to address the transport impacts of proposed allocation sites, including with site allocation policies that reference particular active and sustainable travel interventions.
- 65. Such measures should be beneficial in terms of mitigating the impacts of individual sites. But the Plan should also seek to consider and address its spatial strategy's overall cumulative impacts on the transport system (such as those set out in paragraph 59). In that respect, the Plan contains numerous references to the '*Council's Local Plan Transport Strategy*', but it is unclear as to what that actually is.
- 66. Chapter 10 includes wording on sustainable travel that, along with Policies INF4: Sustainable Travel in New Developments; INF5: Active and Healthy Travel; and INF6: Public Transport, might possibly be considered to be the

essence of the 'Local Plan Transport Strategy' but the Plan at present is nowhere near as clear as the recently adopted Charnwood Local Plan 2021 to 2037 (in particular paragraphs 9.17 to 9.29 and Policy INF2 Development and Delivery of Transport Strategies) in demonstrating a 'transport strategy' that is appropriate and justified in response to suitable evidence about current and future conditions on the transport network. There is a concern that this lack of clarity brings the risk of the Plan being found to be unsound from a transport perspective or that the delivery may be undermined through the development management process.

67. **Position with regard to a funding mechanism to the deliver any 'transport strategy':** At present the Plan lacks any coherent approach to seeking to secure developer contributions towards the delivery of transport measures to address cumulative impacts. This risk is rendering individual sites financially unviable when considered in isolation.
68. Experiences with the Charnwood Local Plan have demonstrated the legality issues involved with seeking to collect Section 106 contributions towards transport measures required to deal with cumulative impacts, even where there is a clear strategy approach supported by clearly worded Plan policies. Essentially such contributions have to be considered against the 'Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) tests' and to be lawful it must be possible to demonstrate that they are:
 - a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
 - b) Directly related to the development.
 - c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
69. The meeting of these tests can be difficult to evidence, especially where a location of cumulative transport impact is remote from the sites that are contributing to that impact.
70. Where evidence demonstrates significant cumulative impacts arising from planned growth, the appropriate delivery mechanism for infrastructure which is critical to the successful delivery of the Plan's growth is a CIL, which should be developed concurrently with a Local Plan.
71. **Position with regard to the Plan's support for the delivery of the Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP4):** The Introduction to the Plan, where it sets the other plans that have informed its development, fails to include reference to the LTP4 and to explain how the Plan will help to support the delivery of the LTP4's core themes and policies.
72. However, it is welcomed that the district council has been proactive in picking up on the draft ETCS. Certain aspects of the Plan pick up on the essence and phraseology of it, and in principle Policy INF4 is particularly welcomed. But there is more that could be done to strengthen the effectiveness of the Plan in supporting the delivery of the ETCS. The LTA would welcome the opportunity to explore with the district council the identification and agreement of proposed Main Modifications in this respect.

Comments on Education Matters

73. Concerns are also raised from an education perspective. For site allocations where education provision contributions have not been specified, text needs to be added to the Plan to reflect the need for financial contributions towards the provision of early years, primary, secondary and special education places to meet the identified need for additional school places, where appropriate.
74. It is considered that the Plan should also refer to a land equalisation mechanism for the two main strategic sites at Whetstone Pastures and Land West of Stoney Stanton. Given the cross-boundary element of the West of Stoney Stanton site, BDC and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council will need to have due regard to secondary provision.

Further comments

75. Alongside the BTSA, the County Council is aware from BDC's website that in June 2026, it has also published, inter-alia, two other very significant documents with which the Authority would normally have expected to have been closely involved with during their development. These are:
 - a) Whole Plan Viability Assessment – WPVA - (March 2026). This provides evidence to inform the production of appropriate policies and growth options and ensure that growth proposed through the emerging Local Plan is financially viable and deliverable.
 - b) Infrastructure Delivery Plan – IDP - (June 2026). This provides an assessment of the infrastructure needed in Blaby District to support the delivery of the emerging new Blaby Local Plan.
76. It has not been possible for officers to review these complex and lengthy documents in the time available prior to finalising this report. However, as an initial observation, the comments in this report and the regulation 19 response should further influence the content of these documents.
77. Officers will review both documents and in consultation with the relevant Lead Members will prepare and submit comments on them as necessary as part of the authority's overall consultation response.
78. Public Health has worked closely with BDC on the policy requirement of Health Impact Assessments alongside applications for some development. Final policy wording for the Health Impact Assessment section in Policy HW1: Healthy Communities was sent in May 2026. Overall, Public Health is pleased to see the inclusion of policy recommendations, although note the removal of requiring a Health Impact Assessment on 'Development in areas of public health concern including areas vulnerable to worsening health inequalities (as indicated in the guidance notes on the Leicestershire County Council webpage)'. It is suggested the wording is included back in the policy.

79. Heritage matters are generally considered to be adequately reflected throughout the Local Plan and will enable appropriate consideration of sites through the planning process.
80. It is considered that some aspects of policy wording around flood risk should be strengthened, including around the ability to enforce easements on ordinary watercourses.

Concluding comments and next steps

81. The County Council acknowledges that there are welcome aspects to the Plan as outlined in its key comments.
82. However, it is the County Council's view (including in its position as the LTA) that this is insufficient to outweigh other factors in respect of the current position with regard to the Plan's transport evidence base and the Plan's content from a transport perspective. The County Council considers that the Plan in its current form fails to meet the National Planning Policy Framework tests of soundness insofar of its effectiveness, that is:
 - a) The evidence set out in the BSTA appears:
 - i. To be insufficient to demonstrate appropriately the Plan's transport impacts and to justify the interventions required to enable its effective delivery and to mitigate the impacts of its spatial strategy on the transport network to an acceptable degree;
 - ii. To fail to provide any evidential justification for the strategic transport requirements associated with Plan policies S7 and S8 (this is in respect of Circular 01/2022 and the high evidential threshold it sets with regard to the creation of new connections to the SRN).
 - b) The Plan lacks clarity in demonstrating a 'transport strategy' that is appropriate and justified in response to suitable evidence about current and future current conditions on the district's transport network.
 - c) It lacks any coherent, (likely) lawful policy approach to seeking to secure developer contributions towards transport measures required to address cumulative transport impacts.
83. Furthermore, it is unknown at this time what National Highways' formal position will be on the Plan's inclusion of references to a new M1 Junction 20a and the addition of south facing slip roads at M69 J2. But the transport evidence presently available is not sufficient for the County Council to conclude whether the levels of housing proposed to come forward on the Plan's Stoney Stanton and Whetstone Pastures strategic allocation sites in advance of strategic transport infrastructure would be acceptable in transport terms.
84. Having carefully weighed matters in balance, including resourcing and financial implications, given the County Council's recognition of the importance of the next Blaby Local Plan to the future delivery of strategic growth and infrastructure across south Leicestershire, officers' recommended course of action is that the LTA should undertake its own separate evidence work.

85. Such work would, like the BSTA, reflect the national policy 'vision led' approach, but would also provide the LTA with sufficient evidence to demonstrate appropriately the Plan's transport impacts and to identify and justify the interventions required to enable its effective delivery and to mitigate the impacts of its spatial strategy on the transport network to an acceptable degree. It would further seek to understand and provide evidence to the LTA's satisfaction the relationship between the Plan's growth proposals and the need for interventions on the SRN (either within the current Plan period, or for the delivery of such to be safeguarded within this Plan for delivery beyond its timeframe). The intention is that the work would be completed and shared with the district council so as to inform discussions about and agreement of a schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the Plan (and to the IDP) to be submitted alongside the Plan (which it is currently understood will be towards the end of this calendar year).
86. This is a highly unusual situation, and it is unclear how the Inspector(s) ultimately appointed to assess the Plan through its EiP will respond to it. Nevertheless, it is officers' recommendation that this approach represents the best way to support the adoption of a new Blaby Local Plan that will be effective in seeking to minimise the transport impacts of growth on local communities to the extent reasonably possible.
87. The County Council reserves its position on the stance it will take on the Plan through its EiP hearing sessions dependent on the outcomes of its own proposed transport evidence work and on the outcomes of subsequent discussions with the district council about such outcomes.
88. It is accepted though, that, ultimately, through the Plan's EiP, it will be a matter for an independently appointed Inspector(s) to determine whether the Plan is sound or not.

Equality Implications

89. There are no equality implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

90. There are no human rights implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

Environmental Implications

91. The County Council will continue to work closely with BDC and other partners to minimise the impact of the planned growth on the environmental assets of Leicester and Leicestershire.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

92. The County Council works closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Planning Partnership, which includes BDC, the other six district councils in Leicestershire, Leicester City Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership.
93. On 16 July 2026, the Government announced its decision on local government reorganisation for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The decision provides for the establishment, from 1 April 2028, of two unitary councils for the area. Whilst the existing councils will continue to operate until implementation of the new arrangements, significant transition and implementation work will now be required. The County Council recognises the importance of maintaining constructive and collaborative working with Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council and the district and borough councils during this period to support effective planning and continuity of services for local communities.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 23 November 2018: Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan – Consideration of Revised Plan for Approval

<https://bit.ly/3FbUsNL>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 October 2019: Response to Blaby District Council's New Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

<https://bit.ly/4nXXz0G>

Report to the Cabinet on 20 November 2020: Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities 2020 to 2050

<https://bit.ly/3Uj5oxc>

Report to the Cabinet on 23 March 2021: Response to the Blaby District Council New Local Plan Options Consultation

<https://bit.ly/4v6xUoG>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 June 2021: Urgent action taken by the Chief Executive in relation to the Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground relating to housing and employment land needs (March 2021)

<https://bit.ly/3ueF6S8>

Report to the Cabinet on 23 September 2022: Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs

<https://bit.ly/3EbMySG>

Report to the Cabinet on 25 November 2022: Managing the Risk Relating to the Delivery of Infrastructure to Support Growth

<https://bit.ly/3EN8P9Z>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 October 2024: Strategic Transport Planning Issues Associated with the Emerging Charnwood Local Plan

<https://bit.ly/4h6lZR3>

Report to the Cabinet on 16 December 2025: Strategic Spatial and Transport Planning

<https://bit.ly/4s1h1Lj>

Report to the Cabinet on 3 February 2026: Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground Relating to Housing Distribution

<https://bit.ly/4uWtujG>

Appendix

Draft Response to Blaby Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Local Plan (2025 – 2042) – July 2026

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