

Harborough Core Spatial Strategy Alternative Options

Leicestershire County Council Response

Comments Relating to the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy

Key themes emerging from the Community Strategy relate to:

- The attractiveness of Market Harborough and Lutterworth town centres;
- Better design and affordability of new development;
- A strong local economy;
- Reducing the effects of through traffic and congestion;
- Additional facilities and services.

The Core Strategy policies should address these key themes on a place basis and linked to implementation, so that there is a clear relationship with the priority outcomes in the Community Strategy.

Theme 1 - Addressing Climate Change

Core Spatial Policy 1 – Improving Energy Efficiency in New Development

1. Comment on the Options

Option 1

It is sufficiently ambitious to meet the Code requirements of Level 3 by 2010, Level 4 by 2013 and Level 6 by 2016. It is appropriate to confirm the timetable in the LDF.

Option 3

This is useful; London has now set a figure of 20% for embedded renewable energy. However, such a policy on its own could detract from the real top priority of focussing on energy efficiency in existing buildings and installations. There should be an audit undertaken of all the ways that the planning system could encourage/remove obstacles from retrofitting energy efficiency measures and coming forward with policies to support such a programme.

Option 4

Supported.

2. Should the national target for the delivery of the Code of Sustainable Homes be brought forward on a local level?

Yes (see above).

All new schools and associated buildings provided by the County Council will be expected to meet BREEAM “very good” status, in terms of design, construction and use, to reduce the carbon footprint.

3. What percentage energy target should be set for new developments as outlined in Option 3?

No comment

4. What level of square metres/number of dwellings should be used as a target for on site energy developments as outlined in Option 3?

No comment

5. What are the most suitable types of green technologies that should be required as part of new developments?

SuDS, sustainable transport, green Infrastructure etc should be added as examples.

6. Are there any further options we should be considering?

The types of green technologies should be left to the builders to determine with the LPA setting the level of the target. Further options could include energy efficiency.

Core Spatial Policy 2 - Facilitating Renewable Energy Generation

7. Comment on the Options

The context for wind generation is the national target of delivering a 34% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2020 and 80% reduction by 2050. This has recently been supplemented by the Government's statements on the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and the Renewable Energy Strategy demonstrating how the country will achieve 15% of its energy use from renewable energy by 2020. At the regional level the context is provided by the Regional Plan which also contains specific sub regional targets for renewable energy generation. The implication is that wind energy will need to play a part of any new renewable energy mix.

A criteria-based policy is more likely to be successful but should be generic for all forms of renewable energy; other forms that could reasonably be expected to come forward in Harborough are anaerobic digestion, wood fuel, hydro power and photovoltaic.

A criteria-based policy may also be most appropriate in bringing positive benefits and providing commercial opportunities for County Council property assets, particularly in respect of wind farm developments.

The option to utilise renewable energy sources is always considered in the design of new County Council buildings.

8. What other types of renewable energy sources should be encouraged in the District?

The policy should set the criteria and should not try to predict what form of renewable energy would be most successful; this would allow the market to bring particular schemes forward. There is an opportunity to use ground heat pumps where demand can be aggregated across

users to reduce the pay back period on the investment and render the investment viable.

9. Should the recommendations of the Planning for Climate Study be taken forward?

Yes.

10. Are there any further options we should be considering?

No comment

Core Spatial Policy 3 - Promoting Sustainable Development

11. Comment on the Options

It is assumed that the options are not mutually exclusive, because in practice the most sustainable forms of development are likely to incorporate a combination. There is therefore no preferred option.

Travel plans will be developed to promote sustainable development and schools sites should be located as centrally as possible to enable this. This will require careful consideration in the design of new communities, ensuring safe pedestrian and cycle access to all schools.

12. What are the most sustainable locations/settlements for development within the District?

The Leicestershire Community Strategy contains priority outcomes to ensure development is more sustainable and better supported by services and infrastructure. This is more likely to be achieved if the majority of development is concentrated in or adjoining existing urban areas, rather than dispersed across a number of smaller settlements.

There is very little evidence on which to make an evaluation. However, census data suggests that **Market Harborough** performs the least worst in terms of levels of journey to work (JTW) by car and offers the best opportunities in terms of access to employment and facilities.

The **Thurnby / Houghton** area is less sustainable based on JTW data. We need a better understanding as to where people living in this area do / might want to work before commenting on how effective improvements to public transport and other sustainable modes of travel might be in improving this situation.

Lutterworth, Broughton Astley, Kibworth and **Great Glen** do not perform well in terms of JTW by car.

On this basis, the available evidence supports focusing a significant proportion of development at Market Harborough, with the caveat in the comment below regarding employment provision.

13. How can we reduce the need to travel by car within the District?

The Leicestershire Community Strategy contains priority outcomes to reduce the impact of road traffic, particularly in Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Kibworth.

Again, there is little evidence on which to make an informed comment. However, following the RSS principles, one of the key issues is the relationship between housing and employment.

In **Market Harborough**, there is a reasonable balance between housing and employment, but this could be adversely affected if further housing growth is not matched by appropriate increases in employment opportunities. In turn, this could impact negatively on travel habits in the form of increased car usage.

In **Lutterworth**, however, the scale and nature of employment provision appears not to have kept pace with the level of housing growth.

Broughton Astley, Kibworth, Great Glen and Thurnby / Houghton, lack significant employment and but in most cases have seen considerable housing growth.

The levels of car usage across the district reflect the mismatch between housing and employment, with people having to travel to work outside their home settlement.

14. How can we ensure that rural areas develop in a sustainable manner?

Sustainable development in rural areas is a key priority outcome of the Leicestershire Community Strategy, including affordable homes, business start-ups, growth and diversification and access to services.

Housing development in rural areas should serve an identified local need. In these areas it is difficult and costly to operate public transport, and in many cases the services that currently operate are intended to meet social and accessibility needs as opposed to providing a genuine alternative to the private car. Services therefore might need to be taken to people in those areas where facilities to support business (e.g. broadband) and shops, leisure etc. are lacking.

There might be a case in some circumstances to consider the provision of small employment units in certain rural areas, where this would support local businesses or provide a community 'work from home' facility. This would help to balance housing growth and employment at a local level.

15. Are there any other options we should be considering?

No comment

Theme 2 - Transport Provision

16. General Comment on Theme 2

Public funding for new transport infrastructure is likely to become ever much tighter over the next few years, and the County Infrastructure Assessment already identifies a funding shortfall. Measures to promote and encourage less travel by private car (Smarter Choices) are becoming increasingly important but can only be effective where there

are opportunities to provide realistically attractive alternatives modes of travel to places where people want to go.

Core Spatial Policy 4 – Options for improving transport in Market Harborough

17. Comment on the Options

There is no preferred option. Any further growth will need to be underpinned by 'smarter choice measures', including priority given to the provision of safe routes to schools, and improved integration of public transport as in Option 4. However, park and ride is unlikely to be commercially viable in a town of Market Harborough's size. Some infrastructure improvements in the town centre may also be required, as in Option 3. A choice between Options 1 and 2 in transportation terms will depend on further analysis of the benefits that any infrastructure enhancements might bring in terms of addressing the issues identified by the District's transport assessment and on the practicality, affordability and deliverability of the infrastructure.

18. Are there any other options we should be considering?

No comment

19. What would enable the delivery of transport infrastructure improvements in Market Harborough?

The continued development of a robust evidence base (which may require further modelling work) and early development of an infrastructure plan developed in cooperation with the highway authority, Highways Agency (as appropriate) and developer(s). This should put us in a good position to seek to secure funding to enable delivery, but in the current financial circumstances, cannot guarantee it.

Core Spatial Policy 5 - Options for improving transport in Lutterworth

20. Comment on the Options

The District's transport assessment work demonstrates that in the absence of any improvements, development growth would increase traffic flows through the town centre, which in turn would exacerbate the existing air quality problems.

The air quality problems are related to the numbers of HGVs that travel through the town, a substantial proportion of which originate from beyond Lutterworth (including Croft quarry). Work undertaken by the County Council indicates that local improvements would either simply move the problem elsewhere (in the case of the Western Relief Road) or would be extremely expensive (in the case of an eastern 'bypass'). The County Council therefore intends to undertake a wider study of transportation issues and potential solutions in the south west of Leicestershire. Until this work has been undertaken, solutions identified and the deliverability of those solutions understood, and bearing in mind the tests of 'soundness' and 'deliverability', it is probably difficult to make a case for Lutterworth being capable of taking any further significant housing or any employment growth at this time

Bearing the above in mind, Option 1 is not supported because it would have a similar effect to completing the relief road, i.e. move the problem to the west of the town. However, it would minimise the potential negative effects on the County Council's land holding at Leaders Farm.

Option 2 could be an appropriate approach at present. However, it would have a negative effect on the Leaders Farm site if interpreted to include sites allocated within the existing local plan but yet to be developed. However the effect of changing the potential use of the Leaders Farm site from employment to housing would improve the position in respect of the generation of HGV traffic from that accepted in the current local plan.

If Lutterworth were to grow significantly, Option 3 would probably be the most likely to limit the impacts on the town centre. However, the A4304 Southern Bypass poses a significant barrier to any development's integration with the rest of Lutterworth in terms of sustainable modes of travel. It may also provide potential for allocations on other land in the County Council's ownership.

Even though development would not be in Lutterworth itself, Option 4 would still have an impact on the town centre if, reflecting other current travel habits, HGVs from new employment in Broughton Astley continue to travel to/from M1 Junction 20 via the town centre. Option 4 would not therefore necessarily avoid adverse impacts on the air quality situation in Lutterworth.

21. What are your views on abandoning the reservation for a western relief road?

The reservation should be abandoned. The relief road would simply move HGV related problems to residential areas around the edge of the town and thus would not be of benefit overall.

22. What are your views on the provision of an eastern bypass?

Whilst it would likely be of benefit in transportation terms, this would be an expensive scheme and it is unclear at present as to how funding could be found for it.

23. What would enable the delivery of transport infrastructure improvements and the reduction of HGV movements in Lutterworth?

The County Council's south west Leicestershire study will provide an evidence based approach to the identification of infrastructure requirements. This should put us in a good position to seek to secure funding to enable delivery, but in the financial circumstances cannot guarantee it.

24. Are there any other Options we should be considering?

No comment

Theme 3 - Community Infrastructure

25. General Comment on Theme 3

The Leicester and Leicestershire Growth Infrastructure Assessment is a key tool in assessing future requirements.

Green Infrastructure is treated very summarily. Reference should be made to the 6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategy (in preparation) and the work already carried out by Stepping Stones. There should be a commitment to a set of GI proposals within the District, as exemplified by Hinckley and Bosworth's Core Strategy and a cross reference to Theme 11 Environmental Assets.

Core Spatial Policy 6 – Delivering additional Community Infrastructure

26. Comment on the Options

Option 1 would be preferable, because from a transportation perspective a number of smaller, widely distributed sites can be more difficult to provide for than one or two major sites. Whilst larger sites might have a significant impact in one particular area, they can provide the critical mass necessary to deliver infrastructure to off-set those impacts and deliver sustainable transport solutions (including the potential to generate levels of patronage required to support commercially viable public transport), and to support other services and facilities such as education, shops and leisure.

Conversely, whilst the impacts of smaller, dispersed sites as proposed in Option 2 may be limited and capable of being accommodated locally, their combined impacts across a wider area (in this case, for example, trips into Market Harborough) can be significant. But, as there is neither a single development focus nor critical mass, it is difficult to secure the measures required to off-set the impacts, for example because of the remote relationship between the development and the point of combined impact or because a measure would be out of scale with the size of development. Delivery of commercially viable public transport to small, scattered settlements is a particularly difficult challenge.

The Preferred Option will need to be more detailed about where housing growth will be located and ensure that the pattern of development is sustainable and accords with the key policies of the Regional Plan.

27. Are there any additional capacity issues we should be aware of when formulating our policies?

The County Council would expect schools in future to be spatial foci for community infrastructure. This may require an additional land allocation to support extra community provision.

28. What would enable the delivery of wider infrastructure improvements?

No comment

29. Are there any other Options we should be considering?

No comment

30. Given that this is based on a general scenario of future development, does the above listing of transport and community infrastructure under Themes 2 and 3 represent an appropriate Infrastructure List on which to base a future approach to developer contributions?

The list of infrastructure provision is very general and requires further refinement and detailed work. The references to the likely education infrastructure which may be required to serve the expected new development should be amended as follows:

Market Harborough - amend secondary school to *secondary schools*;

Lutterworth - amend small to *new primary school*

Broughton Astley, Edge of Leicester, Remaining rural – no change required.

More detailed work is required on education provision and other community infrastructure requirements, for example civic amenity, library facilities, green infrastructure, and non County Council services including health and emergency services. The provision of new housing growth in the District and its location will have a marked impact on where, how and what type of appropriate community infrastructure provision will be needed to support sustainable growth and local communities.

31. Are there any other types of infrastructure provision which should be listed as required in the Core Spatial Strategy?

No comment

Theme 4 - Settlement Hierarchy and Community

Core Spatial Policy 7- A Strategy for Communities across the District

32. Comment on the Options

Option 1

From a transportation perspective Option 1 is supported. Concentrating development in Market Harborough appears most likely to provide sufficient 'critical mass' to offer the best chance of securing the necessary infrastructure.

Option 2

In respect of Option 2, it is unclear what is meant by a 'key centre'. However, the significant levels of employment, facilities and services available in Lutterworth compared with Broughton Astley, which lacks an adequate and sustainable village centre, justifies Broughton Astley being retained as a Rural Centre.

Options 3 and 4

Options 3 and 4 appear broadly sensible, although it should not automatically be assumed that any site in these villages would be sustainable and considered acceptable in transportation terms (e.g. because of its remoteness from public transport).

Option 5

It is difficult to comment on Option 5 without knowing what the other villages might be. No other settlements are obviously suitable for inclusion on the list based on the District's criteria.

Option 6

Option 6 might have some merit, but again there is no evidence in terms of the interactions between settlements.

In the mainly rural areas, whilst the hourly bus network is of local benefit, it does not provide a level of service that is likely to be sufficiently attractive in terms of sustainable development.

33. Are there any other issues relating to the settlement hierarchy we should be considering?

No comment

Theme 5 - Strategic Distribution of Housing

Core Spatial Policy 8 - Meeting Regional Spatial Strategy Housing Requirements

34. Comment on the Options

The transportation evidence base to underpin the choice of option is not yet fully in place. Preliminary comments are given below:

Market Harborough should probably continue to be the focus of most of the development (Options 1, 2 and 5), although there are very difficult transport challenges to be addressed.

There are issues related to the provision of significant housing growth on the **edge of the PUA**, as set out in comments on Policy 11. For this reason there is no justification to significantly exceed the RSS requirement for housing here (Options 3 and 5), notwithstanding the quantity given in the Regional Plan is expressed as a minimum.

A solution has not yet been found to the air quality problems in **Lutterworth** that could 'unlock' the potential for further significant development. Options 1, 2 and 5 would however, have a positive effect on the further promotion of the Leaders Farm site.

Broughton Astley at present appears to lack sufficient employment and other facilities to support sustainable growth.

A focus solely on Lutterworth and Broughton Astley, as in Option 1, would therefore focus too much growth on those settlements.

There might be scope for small scale development in other Rural Centres (**Fleckney, Great Glen** and **Kibworth Beauchamp**) and Local

Centres (**Billesdon** and **Ullesthorpe**), but this would have to be well related to provision of public transport and other facilities.

On balance, whilst no Option is ideal, Option 2 would give the most appropriate balance across the District without focussing too much growth in rural villages.

35. Other than outstanding planning permissions and affordable housing provision, the options presented above do not allow for housing allocations in rural settlements (i.e. below rural centre level). In view of this, are there any other options we should be considering?

There should be a clearly established local need for additional housing in rural areas. In respect of smaller settlements a policy allowing the re-use of existing buildings within the settlement boundaries may be appropriate.

Consideration should also be given to Older Persons Housing Provision, linked in some cases to an existing residential care provision, to provide enhanced support and services for residents.

Core Spatial Policy 9 - Strategy for Longer Term Development

36. Comment on the Options

This Policy has been drafted in anticipation of higher longer term housing requirements for Harborough District Council emerging through the ongoing Partial Review of the Regional Plan. The County Council has questioned the need for such a review at this time given current economic and housing market conditions and the lack of demographic and other data which take account of the downturn. Later in 2009 the County Council will have the opportunity, as a Section 4(4) Authority, to submit its formal advice to the Regional Assembly on the emerging revised Regional Plan. It would be inappropriate to make detailed comments on Core Spatial Policy 9 ahead of this advice being submitted. However, it is noted that Option 2 of the Policy involves development of a new settlement adjoining Oadby. In the context of the Government's recent Eco-town announcement, and the substantial evidence compiled by the County Council which indicates the unsuitability of Pennbury as a location for a new settlement, the District Council is recommended not to take forward Option 2.

37. Are there any other options which should be considered?

No comment, pending the County Council's consideration of its formal advice on the Regional Plan Review later in 2009.

Theme 6 - Locations of Development

Core Spatial Policy 10 - Development Strategy for Market Harborough

38. Comment on the Options

There is insufficient transportation evidence available at this time to indicate which of the options listed might be the most sustainable and/or deliverable in practice. However, Option 1 raises a concern that

the town's employment and retail offer might be eroded to the detriment of sustainability if housing on brownfield sites replaces industry and shops. Furthermore, a number of smaller sites distributed across a wider geographical area (which also applies to Option 4) could make it difficult to secure the necessary supporting transportation infrastructure (see comments on Theme 3).

Wherever new development takes place the County Council would expect additional school places to be provided.

39. Are there any other broad locations we should be considering?

No comment.

Core Spatial Policy 11- Development Strategy for the Leicester Principal Urban Area

40. Comment on the Options

There is insufficient transportation evidence available at this time to indicate which of the options listed might be the most sustainable and/or deliverable in practice. However, in preparing its advice on the Regional Plan the County Council has previously not identified the south-east edge of the PUA as being capable of taking any major housing development. In transportation terms this area lacks infrastructure, has poor connectivity (including by public transport and road) and the costs of addressing the problems are potentially significant. The more recent work on Pennbury has re-inforced this view.

41. Are there any other broad locations we should be considering?

No comment.

Core Spatial Policy 12 - Development Strategy for other locations

42. Comment on the Options

Any pattern of spatial distribution should be underpinned by transportation evidence that demonstrates its impacts and compares them with alternative approaches.

43. If Strategic Housing Distribution Option 1, 2 or 5 is chosen what should the approach be to locating housing in Lutterworth, Broughton Astley or the Rural Centres of Great Glen, Kibworth Beauchamp and Fleckney?

Allocations should be based on the site's position within the settlement boundary, its relationship with and links to the settlement centre and the need to minimise extensions into open countryside.

44. What distributional split should be considered for these settlements?

In terms of its existing range of facilities, Lutterworth seems best placed to take the majority of growth outside Market Harborough and the PUA.

Theme 7 - Affordable Housing

Core Spatial Policy 13 – Securing Affordable Housing

45. Comment on the Options

In rural areas there should be a clear need for housing to meet a local need. A pattern of development whereby people move from suburban/urban areas to live in more remote areas encourages unsustainable patterns of travel based around the car.

Policies promoting affordable housing and the granting of planning consent for exception sites may provide positive opportunities for the reuse of County Council property assets and provide wider community benefits envisaged by the Sustainable Community Strategy.

46. Are there any approaches to the provision of affordable housing which should be considered?

No comment.

Theme 8 - Gypsy and Traveller provision

Core Spatial Policy 14 - Provide for Gypsy and Traveller Needs

47. Comment on the Options

There are no strategic transportation comments on this theme; specific site suitability will be assessed through either the allocations document or normal development control process.

The educational needs of children of gypsy and traveller families already have the benefit of a dedicated service, where school based provision is not accessed.

48. Are there any other Options we should be considering?

No comment.

49. Should provision for Gypsy and Travellers be concentrated at Market Harborough or distributed more evenly across the District?

No comment.

50. Should provision for Travelling Showpeople be concentrated at Lutterworth or distributed more evenly across the District?

No comment.

Theme 9 - Economic and Employment Development

Core Spatial Policy 15 - Enable Economic and Employment Development

51. Comment on the Options

The best opportunity to provide a sustainable pattern of development is generally to co-locate housing and employment or at least ensure that they are in close proximity. The choice of option is therefore fundamentally linked to decisions about housing distribution. More flexible approaches to employment development, as set out in Option 5 will help to promote such a balance.

In relation to the issue of the redevelopment of existing allocations for other uses PPS3 requires their review to ascertain whether they could more appropriately be used for housing. Reuse would only be detrimental in circumstances where demand could be established for the existing allocation. In circumstances where no demand can be established the redevelopment of the site for other uses would be appropriate in mitigating the need to allocate further land outside existing settlement boundaries leaving suitable land undeveloped and liable to fall into neglect.

Policies which encouraged small scale commercial development within rural areas to support the local economy, possibly reusing otherwise redundant buildings would be supported and would enhance opportunities for diversification within the County Council's farms portfolio.

Additional school places will provide both employment opportunities and a pool of skills that has the potential to contribute to future economic development.

52. Are there any other Options we should be considering?

No comment.

53. How might the Core Spatial Strategy deal with the rural economy more specifically?

No comment.

Theme 10 - Town Centres/Shopping

Core Spatial Policy 16 - Improve Town Centres and Shopping

54. Comment on the Options

In many respects, decisions on options for town centre development are linked to housing distribution and therefore it is not possible to express a preference for an option at this time. Wherever there are proposals for both housing and town centre development, in transportation terms it makes greatest sense to master plan them jointly to ensure that opportunities for sustainable patterns of travel are maximised and the impacts of traffic generated by new housing are minimised on the centre.

55. Are there other approaches and/or initiatives that should be considered?

No comment.

Theme 11 - Environmental Assets

Core Spatial Policy 17 - Develop and Protect the Natural and Historic Environment

56. Comment on the Options

The use of the term Green Infrastructure is applied inconsistently and does not seem to be consistent with that set out in the RSS.

No strategic transportation comments on this theme; specific proposals for tourism sites will be assessed through the normal development control process.

Strategic Green Space

In Option 2 it is important that linkages should be into Market Harborough and not just around the edge.

There should be some reference to the Strategic River Corridors Policy in the Regional Plan which specifically mentions the River Welland and therefore needs translating to the local level.

Open Space

School playing fields are potentially available as a community resource where they are appropriately managed and funded. School playing fields also have the potential to increase biodiversity through the creation of habitat areas to support the curriculum.

Biodiversity

Leighfield Forest should be supported as a priority area for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

57. Given that local landscape designations are no longer supported by national or regional policy, how can the Core Spatial Strategy ensure that new development respects local landscape character?

It should refer to the County Council's Landscape and Woodland Strategy and the Historic Landscape Characterisation project.

58. Should historic features and buildings of local significance be given protection through planning policy?

This is required by existing national policy.

59. Should heritage protection be a recurrent theme in all aspects of the Core Spatial Strategy?

This is required by existing national policy.

Theme 12 - Developer Contributions

Core Spatial Policy 18 - Securing appropriate levels of planning obligation from developers

60. Comment on the Options

Leicester & Leicestershire Growth Infrastructure Assessment

In September 2008 Roger Tym and Partners were appointed to undertake a high level infrastructure assessment of the infrastructure required to support the delivery of housing up to 2026 across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA). This work has recently been completed and is referred to as the Leicester and Leicestershire Growth Infrastructure Assessment (L&L GIA). An executive summary is available but the full report is still to be 'signed off' by partners.

The headline findings reveal a large funding gap of £1.3 billion across the HMA. The current economic circumstances have seen a dramatic slow down in private house building, and the consultants have advised that even if the housing market recovers quickly, land values will be negatively affected for a much longer period. This is likely to reduce the ability of the development process to fund infrastructure.

The consultants have recommended a range of positive key actions to address this funding gap, including to:

- Emphasise with partners the role of mainstream funding, and challenge service providers to look for innovative funding packages
- Prioritise strategy and policy decisions, focus on fewer sites
- Focus New Growth Point (NGP) funding on projects with the maximum economic benefit, have fewer, bigger interventions with NGP funding
- Consider using public funds to buy land or provide up-front infrastructure
- Sharpen partnership structures to focus on delivery
- Adopt a clear business planning approach

The above range of recommended actions should guide consideration of the preferred option as part of the other approaches or initiatives to ensure new development helps to pay for its own impacts.

The L&L GIA has pulled together the big picture on infrastructure planning across the HMA, as well as identifying requirements, costs and funding. At the HMA level it has set out the principles and rules of the infrastructure assessment process; identified major issues within each theme and identified potential 'showstoppers'. It needs to be supplemented by finer grain detail, and the consultants have suggested that this should be at the level of each strategic site, which should identify site-specific barriers to progress, and attempt to find ways to resolve them. They also suggested that this work could also deliver project planning timelines and detailed actions.

Given the L&L GIA has recently been completed it is considered timely to revisit the Infrastructure Plan in the Core Strategy in the context of the findings and the recommendations of the L&L GIA, with a view to ensuring it is up to date and key elements and recommended actions in the L&L GIA are reflected in it.

The Housing, Planning and Infrastructure (HPI) Group will consider a report on the L&L GIA and how it will be carried forward shortly.

In view of the above points it is considered that a developer contributions policy needs to address major developer contributions requirements through, for example, master-planning, frontloading, pre-applications enquiries and/or negotiations. It will be important to understand and emphasise that developer contributions must be applied to specific purposes, facilities, infrastructure and services and this should be reflected in a policy in the Core Strategy (CS) and a specific developer contributions SPD.

In preparing the C S the District Council should make provision for a clear, robust and adaptable developer contributions policy in the CS. The policy should make it clear that developers will be required to make contributions to fund infrastructure and services especially to mitigate the impacts of new development on the local community and the environment. In addition, developer contributions will be important in securing the appropriate levels of strategic infrastructure and services to support new growth proposals.

The impact of new development is currently dealt with by applying planning conditions and/or making legal agreements. The Planning Act 2008 will enable local authorities to choose to apply a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Government guidance on the introduction of CIL is anticipated in late 2009 and with its introduction there is also an anticipated review of Circular 05/2005. A developer contributions policy will need to be able to adapt to any fundamental change to the planning system and particular to changes to developer contributions.

In view of the projected growth in Harborough District, it is important the Core Strategy should address the principles and use of planning obligations with a policy in the Core Strategy with a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prepared to provide further guidance on the operational approach to secure developer contributions.

The District Council should take the following matters into account in preparing a developer contributions policy/preferred option in the Core Strategy and the SPD documents:-

- To ensure that all new developments in Harborough District are served by adequate physical and social infrastructure and that such new development is carried out in a manner that secures appropriate developer contributions towards the provision of infrastructure and the mitigation of its environmental impacts;
- Fully engage the infrastructure/service providers in the consultation process during the Core Strategy preparation process and that such processes include an opportunity to address sustainability, feasibility and viability issues where they arise;
- To provide in the Core Strategy clear guidance of the requirements for contributions to be placed on developers for new infrastructure, facilities and services to mitigate the impacts of new development and include reference to the pooling of contributions and phasing of infrastructure contributions where appropriate;
- To ensure that policies in the LDF and Core Strategy develop a consistent and transparent approach to the negotiation, securing and implementation of developer contributions which accords with the County wide developer contributions guidance (the Statement of Requirements for Developer Contributions in Leicestershire (SRDCL)), through the preparation of supplementary planning documents on developer contributions, where appropriate.

- To work in partnership with the County Council in any further developing of a County wide infrastructure plan and a consistent approach to the negotiating, securing and implementation of developer contributions through the LDF/Cores Strategy or a SPD on developer contributions, procedures and processes and protocol as well as through the determination of individual planning applications, where appropriate.

The L&LGIA has identified that highways and transportation are likely to be the largest and most expensive infrastructure element required in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area and the Core Strategy should clearly identify how its provision and funding is linked to new development. The Core Strategy should also identify how new development will make provision and funding for education including new schools, and other services and infrastructure.

61. Are there other approaches and/or initiatives that should be considered to ensure that development helps pay for its own impact?

No comment.