

BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL
NEW LOCAL PLAN
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

June 2019



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Over the coming decades, Blaby District will undergo change. The population will increase, commuting patterns will change, and businesses will expand and move. In order to help to ensure that the District of Blaby remains a great place to live, work and visit, we are now updating our Local Plan.
- 1.2 Blaby District Council (The Council) is seeking to engage with individuals and organisations, who have an interest in the District, to get involved in shaping the plan to ensure that we can secure the best outcomes for the next 15 to 20 years and beyond.
- 1.3 Consultation with interested parties will help to better inform where new growth is located, what services and facilities need to be delivered and /or improved and what valued characteristics of the District need to be safeguarded. By responding to the questions set out within this document, you will assist us in preparing a new Local Plan that reflects the needs and requirements of our communities, service providers and other interested parties.
- 1.4 This document considers a range of planning related issues and potential options. It focuses on the overarching strategic matters and does not go into site specific issues. It will also help to deliver the following priorities for the District, as identified within the Blaby Plan 2018-2021 (the current corporate plan):
 - Live – Strong, healthy, safe, sustainable communities where the most vulnerable are supported.
 - Work - A thriving, prosperous, innovative local economy with a skilled and healthy workforce contributing to the local community.
 - Visit – A strong leisure and tourist sector and well maintained and accessible attractions available in the local area encourage visitors to the District.

What is the Local Plan?

- 1.5 All local authorities are required to develop a Local Plan to deliver sustainable development in their area, which should plan ahead over a minimum 15 year period. Part of the Local Plan's role is to identify and deliver a wide range of built development (e.g. schools, houses, retail, employment etc.) to meet the needs of both existing and future communities.
- 1.6 The Local Plan is the primary way in which local communities can shape the future growth and development of the District. Once the final version of the Local Plan is adopted it will be used to direct and shape the growth of the District, and used to assess planning applications. It will also be used to protect built and natural assets and will help to reinforce local features, character and identity.

- 1.7 The current Blaby District Local Plan comprises of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted in February 2013) and Delivery Development Plan Document (adopted in February 2019). Combined the two documents set out the spatial plan for the District up to 2029, along with any Neighbourhood Plans.

Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?

- 1.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It also sets a framework for local plans to be prepared and outlines how sustainable development can be promoted at a local level.
- 1.9 The NPPF requires policies in local plans to be reviewed at least once every five years. This process ensures that local plans remain as up to date as possible, by taking into account changing circumstances, which may affect their area.
- 1.10 The current Local Plan is being reviewed for the following reasons:
- To ensure that the Local Plan is up to date and looks ahead at least 15 years;
 - To take account of new circumstances, such as updated population and household projections;
 - The need to take account of and plan for the wider issues across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area;
 - To take account of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (and associated Statements of Common Ground); and
 - To take account of revised national planning policy.
- 1.11 The review of the Local Plan will ensure that an effective planning policy framework is in place to help guide and shape future development in a sustainable manner. It will enable continued protection of the District's natural and built assets and help to guard against piecemeal development.
- 1.12 Fundamental to the review of the Local Plan is the involvement of local residents, community groups, businesses, stakeholders and other interested parties. It is therefore crucial that the views of the wider community are sought from the outset.

Timetable for the new Local Plan

- 1.13 The production of the new Local Plan is expected to take 2 to 3 years. It will involve a number of stages, including further periods of public consultation, before being submitted for examination by an independent planning inspector. A summary of the proposed timescales for preparing the new Local Plan are outlined below:



- 1.14 The Council's latest Local Development Scheme (LDS) (February 2019) sets out the full Local Plan timetable.

Relationship with other plans and policies

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 1.15 The Local Plan must be prepared so it is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national planning legislation. In order for it to be found 'sound' at examination (by an independent planning inspector) it must be:
- Positively prepared* – providing a strategy which, as minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - Justified* – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - Effective* – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - Consistent with national policy* – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.

- 1.16 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The PPG is a web-based resource which sets out the Government's planning guidance on various topics. This will be used to help provide further detail within the Local Plan.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

- 1.17 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) 2018 was jointly prepared by the seven District and Borough Councils in Leicestershire, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership to set out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester and Leicestershire up to 2050. It is a non-statutory strategic plan that provides a framework to guide individual Local Plans.

- 1.18 The SGP focuses on four key matters: delivering new housing, supporting the economy, identifying essential infrastructure, and protecting the environment and built heritage. It considers the scale of growth in terms of housing and employment land based on the evidence set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2017.

- 1.19 The SGP recognises that significant new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester and Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services. It proposes:

- Focusing growth in areas close to existing employment clusters and opportunities and new infrastructure proposals;
- Focusing growth in major strategic locations and to reduce the amount that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas;
- Five key growth areas are identified. Those relevant to Blaby District are: Leicester: Our Central City, the A46 Priority Growth Corridor and the A5 Improvement Corridor; and
- Delivery of the strategic growth areas will be as 21st century garden towns, villages and suburbs. New housing and employment will be planned together with new and improved roads, public transport, schools, health services, local shops and open space.

Blaby District Growth Plan

- 1.20 The Blaby District Growth Plan (2019) sets out the District Council's ambition for existing and new communities in the context of delivering new housing growth. It includes six fundamental key principles for designing and delivering new development:

- Infrastructure led;
- Integrated and self sustaining;
- Active and healthy;
- Well designed;
- Well connected; and
- Accessible for employment, business and skills.

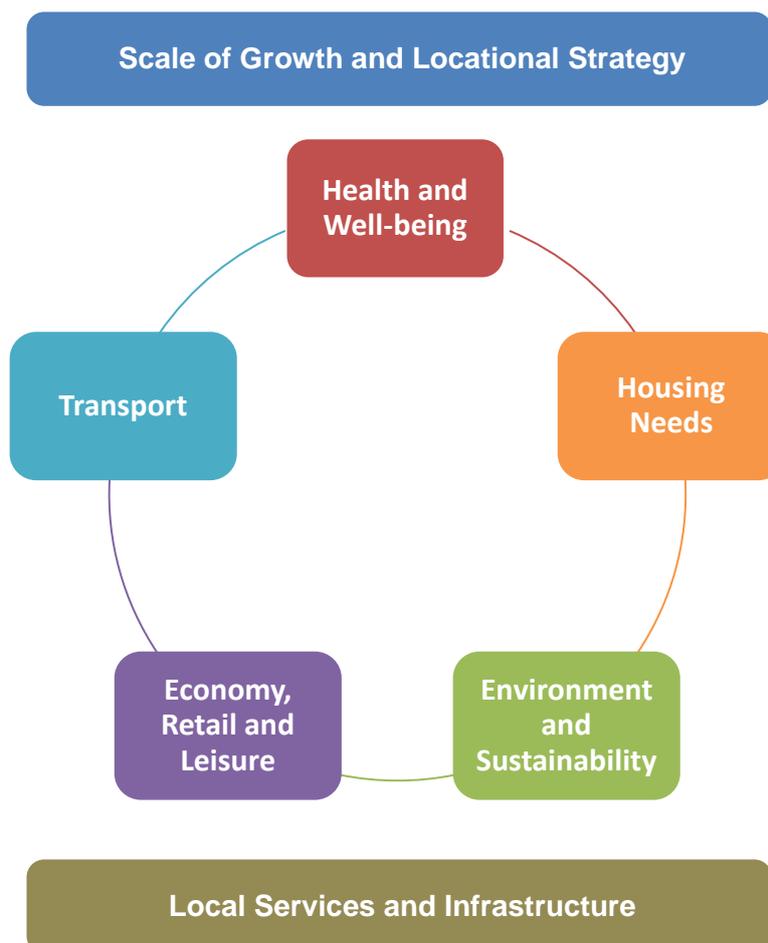
- 1.21 The Blaby District Growth Plan is the link between the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and the Local Plan. It is not a statutory plan but provides a strong framework for the new Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.22 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Neighbourhood planning provides tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs.
- 1.23 All Neighbourhood Plans need to be produced in broad conformity with the strategic policies set out within the District Council's Local Plan.
- 1.24 Whilst a number of Neighbourhood Planning Groups are engaged in the process and progressing well, currently only Blaby Parish has a 'made' plan which forms part of the Development Plan for the District.

2. Scope of the Issues and Options Consultation

- 2.1 This Issues and Options consultation is the first stage in the formulation of the new Local Plan. It accords with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 by notifying residents, community groups, businesses and other interested parties of the subject of the local plan, and inviting comments on what the Local Plan ought to contain.
- 2.2 At this stage we welcome your views on whether or not we have identified the correct issues facing the District and whether any of the potential policy options are the most appropriate for addressing the identified issues. We also welcome views on additional planning issues which have not been covered by this document and any potential options that need to be considered to address them. **Please note that this document is not a draft Plan. We will prepare and consult on a draft Plan at a later date.**
- 2.3 To help structure the consultation, this document is split into the following policy themes:



3. Scale of Growth and Locational Strategy

Introduction

- 3.1 The current Local Plan sets out a spatial strategy for the District up to 2029. It promotes a strategy of 'urban concentration' and focuses the majority of development within and adjoining the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Leicester. This will largely be delivered in the Sustainable Urban Extension at Lubbethorpe. A lesser amount of development will be delivered in the non-PUA of the District.
- 3.2 Development at Lubbethorpe now is well underway and a significant amount of housing development has also been delivered in the non-PUA since the beginning of the current plan period in 2006.
- 3.3 To be effective the NPPF states that local plans and their policies should be reviewed and updated as necessary, at least once every 5 years. The Council's current Local Plan is now being reviewed to ensure that its spatial strategy and supporting planning policies are appropriate and up to date.
- 3.4 The new Local Plan will cover a specific timescale, known as the 'plan period'. The NPPF tells us that a Local Plan should look forward at least 15 years from the date the Plan is adopted. This means that the end date of the new Local Plan should be at least 2037.

Question 1: What start and end dates do you think are the most appropriate for the new Local Plan?

Where we are now

3.5 Performance against the current Local Plan requirements has been strong. As at 31 March 2019, performance can be summarised as follows:

- 11,180 homes have been built and committed in the District against a minimum plan requirement of 8,740 homes to be delivered by 2029;
- 271 new homes have been completed on the Lubbesthorpe SUE; and
- Approximately 95 hectares of employment land has been granted planning permission or allocated for employment uses against a minimum plan requirement of 68 hectares by 2029.

3.6 A review of the current Local Plan, national requirements and data has identified the following issues which the new Local Plan may need to address:

- a) Issue 1: The population of the District, and wider housing market area, is continuing to grow and new households require housing as a result;**
- b) Issue 2: A suitable amount of additional employment land will need to be provided to ensure that it supports the local economy and future housing growth; and**
- c) Issue 3: The plan must identify sustainable locations for housing, employment and other new development.**

Question 2: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

How are we going to get there?

Housing Growth

- 3.7 Across Leicester and Leicestershire, the local planning authorities are working together to plan for long term housing needs of the Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA). A Strategic Growth Plan looking forward to 2050 has been approved and the local authorities are working on a Statement of Common Ground to agree the distribution of housing to each local authority area.
- 3.8 Leicester City Council has indicated that it will be unable to deliver the entirety of its own housing requirement. A Statement of Common Ground will address this issue in terms of finding agreement on how the unmet needs from the City will be met, once the exact level of their unmet housing need is known.
- 3.9 In advance of this, the following options are presented as being the most up-to-date potential methods for estimating the Council's future housing requirement:

Table 1: Housing Growth Options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing level of housing growth beyond 2029.</p> <p>This method would see the continuation of providing 380 homes per year as set out within the existing Local Plan.</p>
<p>Option B: Use the standard methodology for calculating local housing need.</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework expects local planning authorities to use the national standard method to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for (with other methods only being acceptable in exceptional circumstances). This approach would plan to deliver a minimum requirement of 339 homes per year.</p>
<p>Option C: Use the standard methodology and provide for a share of the unmet need (towards the end of the Plan period).</p> <p>This would reflect the approach set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan. It would plan to deliver a minimum of Blaby District Council's own needs per year to 2031 and then deliver an increased housing requirement per year post 2031, to accommodate an agreed share of Leicester City's unmet needs.</p> <p>(Further work is required to confirm the exact level of unmet need and for the local authorities to agree through a Statement of Common Ground, how that can be accommodated elsewhere).</p>
<p>Question 3: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Employment Growth

- 3.10 The Local Plan Core Strategy identified an outstanding need to find approximately 68 hectares of employment land for the District to 2029. This has now been planned for through a range of consents and site allocations, including Land West of St Johns, Enderby.
- 3.11 Going forward, the amount of employment land required in the future will be informed by various employment land forecasting studies. The most recent is the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2017.
- 3.12 Changing economic circumstances and working practices over the plan period also need to be planned for. The Council therefore intends to update its employment evidence base to help better inform future economic need forecasts.

Table 2: Employment Growth Options

<p>Option A: Plan for the employment requirements specified within the 2017 Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA).</p> <p>The 2017 HEDNA identifies a requirement of around 4 hectares of additional employment land per year for Blaby District between 2011 and 2031. This requirement is based on previous trends and forecasts of future employment growth. It also reflects the requirements contained within the current Local Plan.</p>
<p>Option B: Work with neighbouring authorities to meet the different types of employment requirements across a wider area (and update the joint evidence base where required).</p> <p>The HEDNA acknowledges that policy decisions may in reality influence the future spatial distribution of employment growth and land provision between authorities (within the Functional Economic Market Area).</p> <p>Cross boundary working may allow redistribution of identified requirements based on other factors such as availability of suitable sites or wider Local Authority ambitions to promote certain types of employment growth. Any such agreement would be subject to the Duty to Cooperate process to ensure that an open and clear audit trail can be evidenced.</p>
<p>Option C: Support employment growth above identified needs.</p> <p>This approach would provide employment land above identified needs to increase Blaby District's competitive advantage.</p>
<p>Question 4: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Locational Strategy

- 3.13 As explained in the previous Housing Growth and Employment Growth sections, the level of growth for the District beyond 2029 has not yet been agreed with the other local planning authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire. However, we still need to start to consider where new housing and other development growth will go and how it will be delivered.
- 3.14 The current focus for development is within and adjoining the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Leicester. This includes a significant number of new homes and employment land at the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension. Outside the PUA, development is focused within and adjoining the larger settlements in the centre of the District (Blaby and the larger central villages) with lower levels of growth in the south of the District.
- 3.15 There is ongoing concern about the expansion of existing settlements, in recent years, without the corresponding level of infrastructure to support the growth. As a result, the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and Blaby District Growth Plan promote the delivery of strategic-scale sites where supporting infrastructure is planned for and employment opportunities are included on site. There are however, other options that the Council will consider for the new Local Plan to ensure that housing, employment and other development is directed to sustainable locations. These are set out below. For each option, further work is required to consider whether there is sufficient land, market capacity and opportunity to provide infrastructure to support the option.

Table 3: Locational Strategy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing policy approach for the locational strategy.</p> <p>The existing policy approach of ‘urban concentration’ directs most development to the Leicester Principal Urban Area (the PUA). A settlement hierarchy is used to determine the level of growth for other areas.</p>
<p>Option B: Extended Leicester PUA focus.</p> <p>This option builds on Option A by proposing to extend the Principal Urban Area of Leicester. Whilst the extent is not defined this could potentially include Enderby, Narborough and Blaby, based on their levels of service provision.</p>
<p>Option C: Spread the distribution of growth.</p> <p>This option gives a wider spread to the distribution of growth across the District. There are different ways to do this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend distribution – based on where growth has taken place recently; • Proportionate share – based on current size of settlements and/or a settlement hierarchy; or • Equal share to each settlement irrespective of size.
<p>Option D: Infrastructure led development at strategic sites / garden villages.</p> <p>This option is consistent with the Strategic Growth Plan and Blaby District Growth Plan. The SGP directs development to major strategic locations to reduce the impact of development on existing towns, villages and rural areas. In so doing, it allows new development to be focused in association with significant new and improved infrastructure, such as the proposed A46 expressway and A5 corridor.</p> <p>It also allows for development in Leicester, other identified key centres and to a lesser degree, development of non-strategic scale sites elsewhere.</p> <p>The SGP is a long term plan to 2050 and some of the major infrastructure proposed is not expected to happen until after the end of the Plan period. However, for this long term plan to be delivered effectively the foundations for this approach will need to be put in place through the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Option E: Single New Standalone Settlement</p> <p>A single new settlement to accommodate the majority of the housing requirement. It is likely that development of this new settlement will extend beyond the plan period.</p>
<p>Question 5: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Strategic Greenfield Designations

- 3.16 The locational strategy of the Local Plan is not just about where new development should be located. It is also about identifying locations that should be protected from development.
- 3.17 The current Local Plan includes Green Wedge, Areas of Separation and Countryside designations. Green Wedges have long been used in Leicestershire as a tool to influence and direct urban development. They are important strategic areas, of which there are six in the District, designated to prevent the merging of settlements, guide development form, provide a green lung into the urban areas and provide a recreation space.
- 3.18 Areas of Separation perform the important function at the localised level of maintaining the character and identity of settlements by preventing their coalescence. Countryside is those areas of the District that are outside settlement boundaries and are not subject to other designations – Green Wedge or Area of Separation.

Table 4: Strategic Greenfield Designations Options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing approach to retain the designations.</p> <p>This option would retain the Green Wedge, Area of Separation and Countryside designations in principle. The detailed boundaries would be reviewed to take account of the new Local Plan site allocations and any other factual updates.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider whether or not to retain the designations.</p> <p>This option would review whether or not to retain the Green Wedge, Area of Separation and Countryside designations in principle. If the designations are retained, the detailed boundaries would be reviewed to take account of the new Local Plan site allocations and any other factual updates.</p>
<p>Question 6: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Other issues relating to scale and location of growth

3.19 The Council recognises that there are a number of other issues that will need to be considered in terms of the locational strategy. These include:

Brownfield sites. National policy gives substantial weight to using suitable brownfield land within settlements for new homes. We will consider opportunities for development of brownfield sites but current evidence shows that there is limited capacity to accommodate significant numbers of new homes on such sites.

Windfalls. The contribution of windfall sites to the housing land supply will be considered but current evidence shows that there is limited capacity to accommodate significant numbers of new homes on such sites within the existing settlement boundaries.

Settlement hierarchy. The existing Local Plan includes a settlement hierarchy to attribute housing requirements by settlement based on their sustainability and capacity for growth. Continuing the current approach would allow us to provide housing targets for neighbourhood planning purposes, i.e. for parish areas.

Setting the scene for longer term growth. The Strategic Growth Plan proposes a strategic sites approach and key infrastructure to support that growth. Whilst, this Local Plan will not plan up to 2050, we will need to consider putting in place the foundations for the long term aspirations of the SGP.

3.20 A 'Call for Sites' was carried out between March and May 2019. This involved asking landowners and site promoters to provide details of sites that they wished to be considered for inclusion as site allocations in the Local Plan. We would welcome information about further sites for us to consider.

Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange

3.21 Blaby District is located in the heart of the East Midlands within the 'Golden Triangle' for logistics. To respond to development pressures, the Leicester and Leicestershire local planning authorities are continuing to work together to consider the supply and demand for large-scale distribution warehousing to respond to increasing occupier demand for such properties¹.

3.22 Notwithstanding the plan-making process, a private developer is preparing a planning application for the proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange to the north of Junction 2 of the M69 motorway. The site is wholly within the Blaby District Council administrative area and involves approximately 178ha of land. It is currently at pre-application stage with the Secretary of State (Infrastructure Planning Unit). A formal

¹ Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study (2015), Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study Update and Refresh (2016) and Wider Market Developments: Implications for Leicester and Leicestershire (2017)

planning application will be submitted to the Government and is expected to be determined by the Secretary of State during 2020 / 2021. The implications of this strategic proposal will need to be taken into account but may not be clear until late in the plan-making process.

4. Health and Well-being

Introduction

- 4.1 Spatial planning has an important role to play in the creation of healthy, safe and inclusive communities. The environment in which people live can have a profound impact on their health and wellbeing (including physical and mental health). In addition to direct health benefits, enhancement of the built and natural environment can have an impact on people's attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of their environment (Public Health England, June 2017).
- 4.2 The design of neighbourhoods impacts how individuals interact with, and navigate through, them. Well designed neighbourhoods can, for example, encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport (e.g. walking and cycling), encourage social interaction (which in turn can foster community cohesion and reduce the fear of crime) and have a positive impact on physical activity levels (resulting in improved physical and mental wellbeing).
- 4.3 The Local Plan has a critical role in helping to shape and deliver places, to ensure that they have a positive impact upon local communities. A fundamental theme running throughout the Local Plan will therefore be the achievement of healthy communities.

Where we are now

- 4.4 The health of the District's residents is generally good. The District performs well against most measurements of health, for example:
- Almost half of the District's population identify themselves as having very good health (2011 Census data).
 - Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average (Blaby District Health Profile 2017, Public Health England).
 - The percentage of children (in Year 6) that are classified as obese is below the national average (Blaby District Health Profile 2017, Public Health England).
 - For the period 2013-2015 excess weight in adults was however, significantly higher than the England average (Blaby District Health Profile 2017, Public Health England).
- 4.5 The Council is also undertaking work to assess how better walk and ride connections can be created throughout the District and also into Leicester City Centre. This work is at an early stage and will be used to help inform the Local Plan as it develops.

4.6 A review of the Council's current evidence base and plans / guidance produced by other organisations has helped to identify the following issues which the Local Plan may need to address:

- a) **Issue 4: The District has some of the highest sports participation rates in the County. However, it ranks poorly in terms of both the quality and quantity of facilities;**
- b) **Issue 5: The residents of Blaby District are heavily reliant on private cars to travel to work and leisure. Walk and ride connections between key work, leisure and residential sites could be improved;**
- c) **Issue 6: Obesity is an increasing problem nationally and excess weight in adults within Blaby District is significantly worse than the England average; and**
- d) **Issue 7: Pockets of the District suffer from poor air quality, predominantly from vehicle emissions.**

Question 7: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

Where do we want to be?

- 4.7 National planning policy clearly states that the planning system can play an important role in enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. This can be achieved (in part) through the delivery of mixed use developments which encourage active modes of travel, promote access to a network of high quality open spaces and help tackle locally identified health issues.
- 4.8 Health and wellbeing should be considered at the earliest opportunity in new development proposals. This will help to increase the potential range and long-term benefits to both existing and potential new residents. This approach is also reflected within Principle 3 of the Blaby District Growth Plan, which aims to provide residents with the opportunity to make choices that positively affect their well being.

How are we going to get there?

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 4.9 The existing Local Plan seeks to ensure that all residents within the District have access to sufficient, high quality and accessible open space, sport and recreation. Updated Core Strategy Policy CS15 sets out minimum space standards for provision of facilities within new development (based on the Open Space Audit 2015) and protects existing areas of open space.
- 4.10 To ensure that the Council's evidence is accurate and up to date, a new Open Space Assessment has now been commissioned. This will help to inform the new Local Plan and update the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations and Developers Contributions.
- 4.11 In addition, a Playing Pitch Strategy for the District has been commissioned to assess the current pitch provision in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility. The strategy will also help to identify existing and future requirements for various types of sports pitches and facility enhancements.

Table 5: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing approach and update the evidence base.</p> <p>Currently the Local Plan sets out (in Policy CS15) provision standards per 1000 population for each type of open space. This is a well established approach and would be supported by updated Open Space Assessment evidence. It would also continue to protect open space, sports and recreation facilities from other forms of development (subject to consideration of their use and quality).</p> <p>Future needs would also be derived from the latest Playing Pitch Strategy (or equivalent) for sports related facilities.</p>
<p>Option B: Do not set out specific standards and instead require provision to be delivered in line with the Council's most up-to-date evidence.</p> <p>Instead of setting out development standards per 1000 population within policy, provision of new open space, sport and recreation could be required to be in line with the Council's most up-to-date evidence. This approach would help to future proof the policy throughout the life span of the Local Plan (given that Sport England recommend that open space and playing pitch evidence is updated every 3 years).</p>
<p>Option C: Set out additional development criteria for new provision.</p> <p>To support either Option A or B outlined above, criteria could be developed which sets out design-related requirements. These could include, for example, requirements for new provision to be accessible by sustainable modes of travel, where feasible create links to other areas of green infrastructure or to be well located within a new development to help maximise its potential usage.</p>
<p>Question 8: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Healthy Communities

- 4.12 In recent years, the health and wellbeing agenda within planning policy has grown significantly. The NPPF for example, states that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy places and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 4.13 The current Local Plan covers a number of areas which help to promote healthy communities, for example open space provision and encouraging sustainable modes of transport. However, the health related benefits of such policies are not explicitly stated and the current Local Plan does not include a Strategic Objective specifically relating to enabling / supporting healthy lifestyles.

Table 6: Healthy Communities Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing approach.</p> <p>This would continue the use of the existing Local Plan policies to cover issues such as provision of open space and encouragement of sustainable modes of travel. These policies would have health related benefits; however they may not be clearly referenced within the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider setting out a specific policy which relates to healthy communities.</p> <p>A dedicated policy could be used to set out requirements which specifically aim to improve the health of the District's residents. This could include for example: a requirement for new residential proposals (over a certain number of dwellings) to submit a Health Impact Assessment; a requirement for all major new employment, retail and community facilities proposals to provide a suitable level of covered and secure cycle parking; or place restrictions on the number of hot food takeaways permitted within individual neighbourhood parades and /or within certain distances to schools.</p>
<p>Option C: Consider the use of a specific policy which looks to improve walking and cycling connections.</p> <p>The use of such a policy could promote routes both within new development sites and through into other areas. This would help to improve / tackle a wide range of current issues regarding the health and well being of the District's residents (for example improved air quality, increased activity levels and providing better access to green space).</p>
<p>Question 9: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

5. Housing Need

Introduction

- 5.1 Planning for housing is not only about the overall number of new homes. The NPPF requires planning policies to reflect and plan for the variety of needs of different sectors of the community. This includes, but is not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older persons, people with disabilities, Gypsies and Travellers and people who wish to build their own home.
- 5.2 The Local Plan will therefore need to ensure that it includes a sufficient range of planning policies to ensure that all sectors of the community are able to access suitable accommodation in appropriate and sustainable locations.

Where are we now?

- 5.3 The affordability of housing within the District is a growing issue as house prices are rising faster than incomes. For example, in 2011 the ratio of house prices to earnings was 5.52. This increased to 7.52 in 2017.
- 5.4 Evidence from the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2017 indicates that for market housing the highest demand is for 3 bedroom homes. For affordable housing, the greatest need is for smaller units.
- 5.5 Meeting the housing needs of the older population is also a key issue. Population and household projections for the District show considerable increases are expected in the number of people aged 60 or over, and households headed by people aged 65 or over.
- 5.6 Some of the District's residents also have long-term health problems or disabilities that require specialist housing or adaptations. The Census shows that 16% of all residents have a long-term health problem or disability and that 30% of households include a person with a long-term health problem or disability.
- 5.7 The Council maintains a Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register to inform demand for this type of housing. The Register shows that at May 2019, 48 individuals and 1 association of 2 people were accepted onto the Register.
- 5.8 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2017 identified a small need for accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People in the District. The report also identifies a need for public transit sites across the wider housing market area.

5.9 A review of the Council's current evidence base has helped to identify the following issues which the Local Plan will need to address:

- a) **Issue 8: There is a lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, partly due to house prices increasing faster than incomes;**
- b) **Issue 9: Different sectors of the community have different housing needs in terms of type and size;**
- c) **Issue 10: There is an increasing pressure within the District to provide suitable accommodation for older people (including dementia friendly, life long homes and bungalows); and**
- d) **Issue 11: There is a need to further understand the requirements for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People who meet the definition for planning purposes.**

Question 10: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

Where do we want to be?

5.10 The Local Plan will need to set out robust planning policies which facilitate the delivery of a wide range of housing types. These should reflect the needs of the community, with particular emphasis on those sectors with specific housing needs.

5.11 The Council has a long and successful record of working with developers to ensure that a suitable level of affordable housing is provided within market housing schemes. We aim to build on this proactive approach.

5.12 Building on the work undertaken for the current Local Plan regarding accessible and adaptable homes, we will aim to increase the delivery of such units (subject to viability considerations), and look to increase the number of other specialist house types for the older population.

How are we going to get there?

Affordable Housing

- 5.13 The current Local Plan seeks to secure a minimum of 25% affordable housing on sites of 15 dwellings or more. It also allows rural exception sites for affordable housing in settlements with a population of 3,000 or less where a local need is demonstrated.
- 5.14 The Council is considering a number of options to ensure that a sufficient amount of affordable housing is planned for the District. Each option will require new evidence on affordable housing need and viability to justify the approach.

Table 7: Affordable Housing Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing approach.</p> <p>Continue to seek 25% affordable housing on all sites across the District of 15 dwellings or more; and enable the provision of rural exception sites.</p>
<p>Option B: Modify the policy approach in terms of the threshold for and percentage of affordable housing.</p> <p>The current threshold is 15 dwellings or more. A lower threshold would mean that more sites would be eligible to provide affordable housing. The current percentage is 25%. A higher percentage proportion could increase the amount of affordable housing provided (subject to viability).</p>
<p>Option C: Allocate sites specifically for affordable housing.</p> <p>Allocate sites for affordable housing and for rural exceptions sites. This would require a willing landowner to provide a site at a suitable cost but currently there is funding available from Homes England.</p>
<p>Option D: Provide higher levels of housing overall.</p> <p>A higher level of housing overall would generate more affordable housing at 25%.</p>
<p>Question 11: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Housing Mix

- 5.15 The current Local Plan seeks an appropriate mix of housing types, tenures and sizes on sites of 10 dwellings or more, to meet the needs of existing and future households based on the latest evidence of housing need.
- 5.16 The Council is considering a number of options to ensure that a range of suitable housing is planned for to meet the needs of different sectors of the community. Each option will require new evidence on relevant housing need to justify the approach.

Table 8: Housing Mix Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing policy approach.</p> <p>The existing policy is flexible in that it takes account of the most recent evidence to demonstrate need in terms of housing type, tenure and size.</p>
<p>Option B: Use a prescriptive policy approach.</p> <p>Set out within the policy the requirements for specific types and sizes of housing. For example for people who rent their homes and self and custom build plots.</p>
<p>Option C: Allow the market to determine the mix of type and size of housing.</p> <p>Allowing the market to determine the mix of type and size of housing.</p>
<p>Question 12: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Housing for an ageing population and specialist needs

- 5.17 The current Local Plan seeks to meet the needs of specific groups including extra care housing for the older population, supported housing and housing designed to meet wheelchair access standards. It also requires 5% of housing on large sites to meet accessible and adaptable standards set by the national Building Regulations requirement M4(2). The Council will consider the options to ensure that the needs of the ageing population as well as those with specialist housing needs are planned for.

Table 9: Housing for an ageing population and specialist needs Policy Options

<p>Option A: Maintain the current policy approach.</p> <p>Taking into account current and future demographic changes the existing policy approach is considered to be the minimum action necessary.</p>
<p>Option B: Develop a higher policy requirement for the provision of accessible and adaptable homes.</p> <p>Population trends, both nationally and locally, clearly show that populations are aging. Local policy needs to reflect these trends and plan for them proactively. Higher requirements could be considered to coincide with a more forward looking plan period. Making homes accessible and adaptable for changing and unforeseen circumstances provides families and individuals with the choice of staying in their existing home.</p>
<p>Option C: Include policy requirements for other house types which are suitable for older people and others with specialist needs.</p> <p>Subject to suitable evidence of local need, additional policy requirements could be set out to meet the range of needs for older people and others. This could include bungalows, extra care, registered care and convalescent care and specialist housing for older people as well as people with dementia or mental health difficulties. All additional requirements would be subject to viability testing to ensure that they do not prevent additional development coming forward.</p>
<p>Option D: Consider allocating sites specifically for older persons and other specialist housing.</p> <p>Subject to suitable evidence of local need sites of varying development scales could be allocated to meet specific needs including sites for older persons homes, specialist needs, extra care and registered care.</p>
<p>Question 13: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Planning for Gypsies and Travellers

- 5.18 The current Local Plan sets out provision figures for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People and includes broad locations and criteria against which planning applications for such development will be assessed. No sites are allocated as there is currently a sufficient supply of pitches. The current Local Plan also recognises the need for the new Local Plan to consider making provision for public transit pitches to accommodate a Leicester and Leicestershire-wide need.

Table 10: Planning for Travellers Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing policy approach.</p> <p>The current approach allows the most recent evidence to be used to demonstrate need. It includes broad locations and criteria to set out the approach to determine planning applications. New evidence is required to clarify the number of 'unknown' households in the District and to justify a Leicester and Leicestershire-wide approach to the provision of public transit pitches.</p>
<p>Option B: Allocating sites.</p> <p>Currently there is sufficient provision but if this is no longer the case, we will need to consider identifying sites to allocate.</p>
<p>Question 14: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

6. Environment and Sustainability

Introduction

- 6.1 It is widely acknowledged, both nationally and internationally, that there is a pressing need to reduce the impacts of climate change and to encourage more sustainable ways of living. At the local level, the planning system has a crucial role in helping to facilitate these shifts through the policies contained within Local Plans.
- 6.2 The Local Plan provides a key opportunity to set out an ambitious policy framework to help deliver higher levels of sustainability within new development proposals. It can achieve this by including policies which support appropriate measures to help shape places in ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable and low carbon energy and encourage the reuse of existing resources (including land and buildings).
- 6.3 The above approach is in line with the NPPF, which states that in order to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, planning has overarching economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 6.4 A key element of the environmental objective is for planning to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. The Local Plan therefore has a fundamental role in facilitating the creation of high quality buildings and places which respect and complement the District's built and natural assets.

Where we are now

- 6.5 Blaby District has a range of historic and natural assets. These include:
- Some 200 Listed Buildings;
 - 11 Conservation Areas;
 - 4 biological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 2 geological SSSIs;
 - 2 areas of Ancient Woodland;
 - 70 Local Wildlife Site designations; and
 - Locally important landscape areas (such as Croft Hill).
- 6.6 Over the plan period of the new Local Plan, the District is likely to face pressures to deliver large amounts of development. Whilst housing and wider development requirements have not yet been identified or determined; the following initial key issues have been identified to help ensure that the Local Plan provides a suitable level of protection to the District's valued built and natural assets:

- a) **Issue 12: There is a critical need to help adapt to and mitigate the growing impacts of Climate Change and actively take steps to help promote lower carbon forms of development.**
- b) **Issue 13: New development needs to be appropriately designed so it contributes to, and does not detract from, the local character and distinctiveness of the District.**
- c) **Issue 14: The Council's policy approach towards conserving the District's historic and cultural assets needs to be appropriate and up to date;**
- d) **Issue 15: There is a limited amount of brownfield land suitable for development. Pressure for development may mean loss of currently undeveloped land/countryside; and**
- e) **Issue 16: Additional growth needs to ensure that it is located in the most suitable locations with regards to the District's natural landscapes.**

Question 15: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

Where do we want to be?

- 6.7 Protection of the natural environment and appreciation of its wider associated benefits is growing both nationally and internationally. For example the Government's recent consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain (December 2018) comments that:

'Nowhere do the state of the natural world and the actions of government meet more regularly and more critically than in the planning system'.

- 6.8 At a local level, it is widely recognised that the District's built and natural environment assets are highly valued by residents and community groups. This is reflected in consultation responses received during the production of the current Local Plan and also the work being undertaken by various Neighbourhood Planning Groups within the District.
- 6.9 Providing a robust level of protection to the built and natural environment, along with ensuring that new development is appropriate to its surroundings, will help to balance the economic, social and environmental objectives of the NPPF and help to ensure that growth in the District is sustainable.

How are we going to get there?

Design

- 6.10 National policy states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning process should achieve. Far from being just about appearance and layout, good design encompasses a wide range of considerations.
- 6.11 Core Strategy Policy CS2 Design of New Development aims to secure a high quality environment through setting out factors which all new development proposals should consider. Delivery DPD Policies DM1 Development within the Settlement Boundaries and DM2 Development in the Countryside provide additional development criteria to assess development proposals against.
- 6.12 Principle 4 of the Blaby District Growth Plan states that good design is essential in the creation of places where people want to live and can be part of the local community. The following range of potential policy options have been identified to help meet both national and local ambitions regarding design.

Table 11: Design Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing approach.</p> <p>The existing Local Plan promotes the delivery of good design through various policies. The most notable of which being Core Strategy Policy CS2 and Delivery DPD Policies DM1 and DM2. The submission of a masterplan is also a requirement for the site specific policies which allocate land for residential and employment allocations.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider setting out a more detailed approach to design policy.</p> <p>Going beyond the current Local Plan approach, additional design requirements could be set out for specific policy areas (for example sustainable design) or additional design criteria could be developed for large scale proposals (for example of proposals for 100 dwellings or more).</p>
<p>Option C: Consider the use of a design specific Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>To support either Option A or B outlined above, an SPD could be used to provide additional design guidance for a wide range of design related issues or focus on specific topics such as residential amenity.</p> <p>An SPD could also be used to set out more detailed design related guidance for large scale development proposals (for example setting out how community facilities and/or open space should be best incorporated into a development).</p>
<p>Question 16: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Historic Environment

- 6.13 National policy requires Local Plan's to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. This should include consideration of wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.
- 6.14 Core Strategy Policy CS20 sets out the Council's overarching policy approach to the conservation of heritage assets and the wider historic environment. This is supported by Delivery DPD Policy DM12, which details how applications potentially impacting heritage assets will be considered.
- 6.15 The Local Plan also provides detailed Conservation Area boundaries for 10 settlements and the Grand Union Canal. A review of the District's conservation areas was last undertaken as part of the Blaby District Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment in 2008. This was undertaken to gain an understanding of the aspects of the settlements that are considered to be of local value to the community.

Table 12: Historic Environment Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing approach.</p> <p>Delivery DPD Policy DM12 Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets aims to offer a level of protection to heritage assets proportionate to the asset's level of importance. This builds on Core Strategy Policy CS20 Historic Environment and Culture's overarching positive approach to the conservation of heritage assets and the wider historic environment.</p> <p>Delivery DPD Policy DM12 was refined as part of the examination process of the DPD in 2018; and was subsequently adopted in February 2019. The current policy approach is therefore considered to reflect current national policy and guidance.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider setting out a more detailed approach.</p> <p>Additional information could be gathered to see whether any specific areas or individual assets are worthy of protection for heritage reasons. Subject to evidence an additional heritage policy could be developed which builds on the existing District wide policy.</p>
<p>Question 17: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Natural Environment

- 6.16 National guidance states that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural environment. This should be achieved, in part, by protecting valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- 6.17 In December 2018, the Government consulted on whether mandatory requirements should be introduced to the planning system so that development must deliver biodiversity net gain. This would strengthen the current wording of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that wherever possible, development should help to improve local environmental conditions. Whilst the results of the above consultation have not yet been published, it shows the growing level of importance being given to the protection of biodiversity and habitats.
- 6.18 The existing Local Plan contains a range of policies which cover various aspects of the natural environment. These include specific policies which aim to protect and enhance the District's countryside, green infrastructure, landscapes and ecological assets. Going forward however, current evidence suggests that there are limited opportunities to use brownfield sites to meet the development needs of the District. It is therefore likely that some greenfield land may need to be considered for development; with resulting impacts on the natural environment.

Table 13: Natural Environment Policy Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing policy approach.</p> <p>The existing Local Plan contains a range of policies which cover various aspects of the natural environment. These are considered if and when development proposals on greenfield sites come forward.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider mapping all components of local wildlife-rich and wider ecological networks.</p> <p>The existing policy approach could be strengthened by mapping all designated sites of importance for biodiversity and wildlife corridors that connect them. This would help to identify potential opportunities to create new linkages between existing assets.</p>
<p>Question 18: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Climate Change and Flooding

- 6.19 Spatial planning has an important part to play in mitigating the negative effects of, and adapting to, climate change. Local Plans should set out a strong policy steer to set out what measures can be realistically taken at a local level. This will need to support the national transition to a low / zero carbon future and contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 6.20 Core Strategy Policy CS21 aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the District by: focusing development in the most sustainable locations, encouraging the use of renewable and low carbon energy and seeking sustainable design principles to be incorporated into new development.
- 6.21 Core Strategy Policy CS22 sets out the Council's approach to ensuring that all development minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to flooding, taking into account climate change. This is achieved through directing development to locations at the lowest risk of flooding, using Sustainable Drainage Systems and minimising surface water run-off.

Table 14: Climate Change Policy Options

<p>Option A: Update current policy to enhance sustainable design principles and the efficient use of natural resources.</p> <p>This will ensure that any changes to national policy and guidance and local and regional evidence etc. can be taken into account and reflected within policy.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider setting a requirement for sites (of a certain size) to provide a percentage of their energy requirements through onsite renewable / low carbon energy generation sources.</p> <p>Decentralised energy supply systems (such as combined heat and power) could help to reduce the ongoing carbon footprint of strategic sites.</p>
<p>Option C: Consider the use of a Supplementary Planning Document to provide more detailed guidance for sustainable development/design.</p> <p>This would help to support the Local Plan's overarching sustainability objectives by providing applicants with information on sustainable design and what the Council expects to be delivered.</p>
<p>Question 19: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

7. Economy, retail and leisure

Introduction

- 7.1 The NPPF identifies building a strong and competitive economy as a key objective for the planning system. To help achieve this, Local Plans are required to ensure that a sufficient level of land is available for an appropriate range of economic uses to support growth and innovation.
- 7.2 Local Plans should also identify a range of suitable sites within town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses.

Where we are now

- 7.3 Blaby District is an attractive location for business, largely as a result of its strategic location close to the M1 and the advantages of access to the wider Strategic Road Network. The number of jobs within the District is approximately 60,000, with significant levels in the office and storage and distribution sectors.
- 7.4 The District has a range of employment sites from regionally important sites such as Grove Park, Meridian Business Park and Carlton Park to smaller scale sites that meet a local need for smaller units. In total there are 21 key employment sites located across the District.
- 7.5 Fosse Park provides a large number of retail jobs and is currently undergoing significant expansion. There is also an increasing demand from the logistics sector for large scale warehousing units.
- 7.6 Whilst the District is performing strongly in employment and retail terms, the following issues have been identified:
- a) **Issue 17: Some existing employment sites are under pressure for re-development for non-employment uses;**
 - b) **Issue 18: Blaby Town Centre and other retail centres require policy support to ensure that they maintain their vitality and viability.**

Question 20: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

Where do we want to be?

- 7.7 Supporting businesses is a key priority for the Council. Planning can support this process, in the first instance, by ensuring that it has an accurate picture of current and likely future demand for a range of employment uses. Given the District's close proximity to Leicester City, a high level of joint working and cooperation will also be required with neighbouring local authorities to ensure that employment requirements across the sub-region are suitably considered.
- 7.8 Currently the District has a good range of employment premises which cater for small-scale business up to large-scale strategic distribution warehouse units. The District is also home to the (UK) headquarters of a number of large-scale companies. The next Local Plan should seek to ensure that the District remains an attractive location for businesses of all sizes.
- 7.9 Blaby Town Centre is the only 'town centre' within the District and it continues to provide a range of facilities and services to a wide catchment area. The next Local Plan will need to give a good level of consideration of how best to promote and support local retail facilities within both Blaby Town and other local retail areas. This will need to consider the changing wider context of how and where people shop.

How we are going to get there?

Employment Mix

- 7.10 There is a growing recognition nationally that planning policy needs to be strengthened to reflect the growing role and significance of the logistics sector. Locally, demand for strategic warehousing has grown rapidly in recent years. This is largely due to the District being located within the Midlands, in the so-called 'Golden Triangle' of logistics (spanning from Northamptonshire up the M1 to East Midlands Airport to the north and as far west as Tamworth. 90% of the UK population is accessible within a 4 hour drive from this triangle).
- 7.11 Increasing demand from the logistics sector locally is putting pressure on land for smaller-scale employment uses. The current Local Plan sets out various policies to support and protect a mix of employment uses within the District but does not distinguish between B1, B2 and B8 employment use classes.

Table 15: Employment Mix Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing policy approach.</p> <p>Delivery DPD Policy SA5 identifies a wide range of key employment sites within the District to be protected for employment uses. The policy also sets out requirements to be met before they can be considered for changes of use to non-employment uses.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider a policy which distinguishes between different types of employment sites (including strategic-scale B8 uses).</p> <p>Taking a more hierarchical approach, to providing and protecting employment land would, allow for a greater level of appreciation of the varying functions and roles of different types of employment. This would help to identify the specific needs of certain types of employment (for example strategic-scale B8 uses).</p>
<p>Option C: Update evidence base and allocate a range of employment sites to meet (local and regional) demands.</p> <p>Subject to the findings of updated evidence, employment allocations could be considered for specific types of employment. This approach would accord with the growing national emphasis on more detailed planning for the logistics sector and their bespoke requirements. It will also recognise the need for smaller scale employment sites to meet local scale needs.</p>
<p>Question 21: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Retail

- 7.12 Whilst Fosse Park undergoes continued renovation and significant new expansion, the Local Plan will need to ensure that Blaby Town Centre and more localised retail facilities are not overlooked.
- 7.13 Core Strategy Policy CS13 Retailing and other town centre uses, establishes a retail hierarchy for the District and sets out retail floorspace requirements to 2029. Delivery DPD Policy DM5 aims to protect the identified primary retail frontages within Blaby Town Centre for predominately A1 Retail use. Delivery DPD Policy DM6 also identifies 22 neighbourhood parades to be maintained, and where possible enhanced, for day to day small scale retail uses.

Table 16: Retail Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing policy approach and update the Council's evidence base where necessary.</p> <p>The existing approach is well established but requires an updated Retail Study to fully support it. Updating the evidence will also allow an opportunity for recent changes to national policy and guidance and retail trends to be considered.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider amending the existing policy approach to allow for a greater level of flexibility of uses within Blaby Town Centre and Neighbourhood Parades.</p> <p>The current policy approach includes a series of tests to be met before changes of use to non-retail will be considered. Consideration could be given to relaxing or even removing these requirements.</p>
<p>Question 22: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

Leisure and Tourism

- 7.14 Core Strategy Policy CS13 – Retailing and other town centre uses, sets out a sequential test for retail and leisure development proposals. Policy CS18 – Countryside also allows for limited small scale leisure development subject to suitable consideration of its impacts.
- 7.15 Currently there are no identified requirements for Blaby District relating to leisure. The main leisure destination within the District is Meridian Leisure Park (which incorporates a cinema, bowling alley and numerous restaurants). Additional leisure facilities are also currently under construction at Everards Meadows (located near to the Fosse Park retail expansion). When completed this development will be anchored by a new Everards Brewery and beer hall, cycle store, café and links to neighbouring areas of open space.
- 7.16 Further consideration of leisure related requirements can be incorporated within a wider review of the retail evidence base for the District.

Table 17: Leisure and Tourism Options

<p>Option A: Continue with the existing policy approach.</p> <p>The existing approach is well established and focuses development proposals to most sustainable locations within the District.</p>
<p>Option B: Consider the use of a specific tourism related policy</p> <p>This could expand on the current policy approach by promoting certain forms of tourism related development and / or promote certain areas of the District for tourism.</p>
<p>Question 23: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

8. Transport

Introduction

- 8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. In doing so, plans can seek to address any potential transport impacts, encourage more sustainable forms of movement and embrace changing transport technology.
- 8.2 The Local Plan will need to consider the implications of growth and how best to mitigate any adverse transport impacts. The Local Plan can encourage growth in locations that have greater access to more sustainable forms of transport.

Where are we now?

- 8.3 The District contains a heavily trafficked road network which experiences congestion, delays and poor air quality, particularly at peak times. Existing 'hotspots' include junction 21 of the M1 (and its environs) and the radial routes into the City of Leicester (including the A4560, A426, A47 and A50).
- 8.4 The residents of the District are heavily reliant on private vehicles. Retail developments around Fosse Park, Grove Park and other nearby employment centres are likely to attract substantial additional vehicle movements.
- 8.5 The current Local Plan seeks to locate development close to services and facilities and where there is greater transport choice. Adopted policy seeks to prioritise the use of 'sustainable modes' of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport, over private cars. Core Strategy Policy CS10 Transport Infrastructure encourages new developments to consider design solutions and 'softer measures' such as travel plans and travel packs to help encourage modal shift.
- 8.6 In the context of transport impacts and implications associated with growth, the following issues have been identified:
- a) **Issue 19: Some two-thirds of the working population of the District travel to work using a car or van. This is substantially above the national and County average;**
 - b) **Issue 20: There are five Air Quality Management Areas within the District which have mainly been designated as a result of vehicle emissions;**
 - c) **Issue 21: Over-reliance on car use will continue in new developments unless they are located in areas that have a wider choice of transport options to access a wide range of services and facilities; and**

- d) Issue 22: Some junctions and road links within the District are operating at or above capacity, with limited scope for further improvements.**
- e) Issue 23: The Birmingham to Peterborough railway line runs through the District via Narborough Station. The benefits of this connection should be maximised.**

Question 24: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

Where do we want to be?

- 8.7 The Local Plan can strongly influence transport and travel patterns. Minimising the need for journeys using private cars and encouraging more sustainable modes can be achieved through a range of policy approaches and identifying potential allocations in the most sustainable locations.
- 8.8 The plan must be realistic in that there will inevitably be a need for people to travel to seek employment, education, shopping, leisure and other services and facilities. The transport impacts and implications of growth need to be addressed at the earliest opportunity and potential mitigation measures identified where necessary. The Local Plan should seek to provide the necessary growth in a manner that minimises transport impacts.
- 8.9 The Council's future ambitions for growth as set out in the Blaby District Growth Plan identify the need for 'active and healthy' communities and 'well-connected' places. The Council is also currently exploring opportunities to promote and improve walking and cycling connections both within the District and heading north into Leicester City Centre. This work will help to inform the Local Plan as it develops.

How are we going to get there?

- 8.10 Initially, further transport evidence will be required in order to understand the current pressures on transport and where there are capacity constraints. Growth options will be assessed to understand the transport impacts and implications.
- 8.11 The development of new policies and allocations will allow the Council to explore options for delivering necessary growth whilst seeking the most sustainable forms of movement and mitigating any adverse impacts identified.

Table 18: Transport policy options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing policy approach.</p> <p>This would maintain the policy approach of seeking to ‘encourage’ more sustainable transport modes whilst acknowledging that private cars have an important role in transporting people. Where adverse impacts are identified at junctions and links, mitigation solutions will be required by the policy.</p>
<p>Option B: Promote policies that actively encourage sustainable transport.</p> <p>To help shift the emphasis towards more sustainable transport modes consideration could be given to policies which promote for example: the provision of new and improved park and ride facilities, seeking greater financial contributions towards public transport or improving cycling / walking infrastructure in preference to road and junction upgrades.</p>
<p>Option C: Promote policies that actively discourage use of private cars.</p> <p>Options such as: traffic calming measures for all new developments, facilitating the infrastructure for congestion charging / workplace car park charges, and applying maximum car parking provision in new commercial developments, could be considered to help reduce private car use.</p>
<p>Option D. Promote improved technology and traffic management to address congestion, delays and air quality.</p> <p>This assumes that technology, including improved traffic management and use of responsive satellite navigation systems, will be able to accommodate the anticipated levels of traffic on certain routes.</p>
<p>Option E. Allow for development and accept that junctions and links will continue to operate above capacity.</p> <p>This may result in ‘self-regulating’ behaviour where people choose alternatives where routes and junctions become too congested. This approach would place lesser transport constraints on growth but is likely to perpetuate traffic problems on the network.</p>
<p>Question 25: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>

9. Local Services and Infrastructure

Introduction

- 9.1 The NPPF identifies the overarching objectives for delivering sustainable development. In the context of social and economic objectives, encouragement is given to *'coordinating the provision of infrastructure'* and to *'accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being....'*
- 9.2 The Local Plan should consider the implications of growth and ensure that the social and other infrastructure is in place to support the needs of new residents. Large scale growth will have substantial and complex infrastructure requirements. It is therefore vital that the Local Plan adequately plans for this.

Where are we now?

- 9.3 The population of the District is forecast to grow by some 11,100 people between 2018 and 2036². The occupants of new homes have the potential to result in increased demand for social and utilities infrastructure.
- 9.4 In order to be sustainable, and in accordance with the NPPF, new development should seek to deliver the necessary infrastructure to support growth.
- 9.5 In addition to the transport infrastructure, there will be substantial requirements for social infrastructure such as new schools, health facilities and community buildings and also infrastructure associated with 'utilities' such as power, water and telecommunications.
- 9.6 Some schools and health facilities in the District are operating close to, or above, their optimum capacity. Further growth in areas with capacity constraints has the potential for adverse impacts on new and existing communities.
- 9.7 The adopted Local Plan seeks to ensure that all new growth is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure. This is identified in policies associated with allocations and in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

² Based on 2016 ONS population projections.

9.8 In the context of infrastructure related growth, the following issues have been identified:

- a) **Issue 24: There are capacity constraints within some services and facilities, such as health facilities and schools. New development to accommodate increases in the population will necessitate increases in capacity for these services and facilities;**
- b) **Issue 25: Infrastructure needs to be provided in a timely and viable manner and have certainty of delivery and ongoing management; and**
- c) **Issue 26: New development needs to have access to all necessary utilities including water, power, and telecommunications (including broadband); and going forward, electric vehicle charging points**

Question 26: Do you agree with the issues identified? Are there any other issues that should be considered?

Where do we want to be?

9.9 The Local Plan will need to identify sites in locations which have the ability to access existing infrastructure (where there is capacity) or provide additional infrastructure through new provision or expansion of existing facilities.

9.10 An appropriate range of supporting infrastructure will need to be available in a timely manner. This will ensure that residents of new development are able to access them immediately and that existing residents are not disadvantaged by increases in population resulting in capacity issues.

9.11 We want the long term management of infrastructure to be certain. The initial identification and ongoing management of schools and health facilities is essential in ensuring sustainable communities. The emergence of 'Academies' and privately run medical practices requires advance dialogue in order to increase levels of certainty.

9.12 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan promotes substantial growth between 2031 and 2050. The plan is underpinned by a desire to "...*plan for, and secure funding for, the essential infrastructure...*". In addition, the Blaby District Growth Plan is infrastructure-led and requires development to be accompanied by planned and funded infrastructure such as roads, schools and health facilities

How are we going to get there?

- 9.13 The Council will engage with its partners from the Local Education Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group / NHS and other infrastructure delivery partners under the Duty to Co-operate process and at the appropriate time with individual site promoters in order to assess the deliverability and ongoing management of infrastructure.
- 9.14 The development of new policies and allocations will allow the Council to explore options for delivering growth, whilst seeking the necessary infrastructure. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used in order to identify the type of infrastructure required, its cost, delivery agency, phasing and funding sources.

Table 19: Infrastructure policy options

<p>Option A: Continue with existing policy approach</p> <p>This approach seeks on-site provision and financial contributions to a wide range of infrastructure where new development requires the provision. It ensures that developments support a wide range of services and facilities (including health, education, policing, libraries and other forms of social infrastructure).</p>
<p>Option B: Prioritise infrastructure based on viability</p> <p>This would help to prioritise scarce financial resources towards key infrastructure to be agreed as the Local Plan progresses. This could prioritise certain types of infrastructure.</p>
<p>Option C: Only allow development where there is demonstrable capacity or certainty of delivery of infrastructure such as schools / health services etc.</p> <p>This approach would result in an infrastructure-led approach where development sites are chosen on the basis of existing or potential supply of infrastructure.</p>
<p>Question 27: Which of the above option(s) do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options to consider?</p>