

Scoping Report for the Blaby District Local Plan

Sustainability Appraisal

Scoping Report (Post consultation)

October 2019

Quality information

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1. Introduction

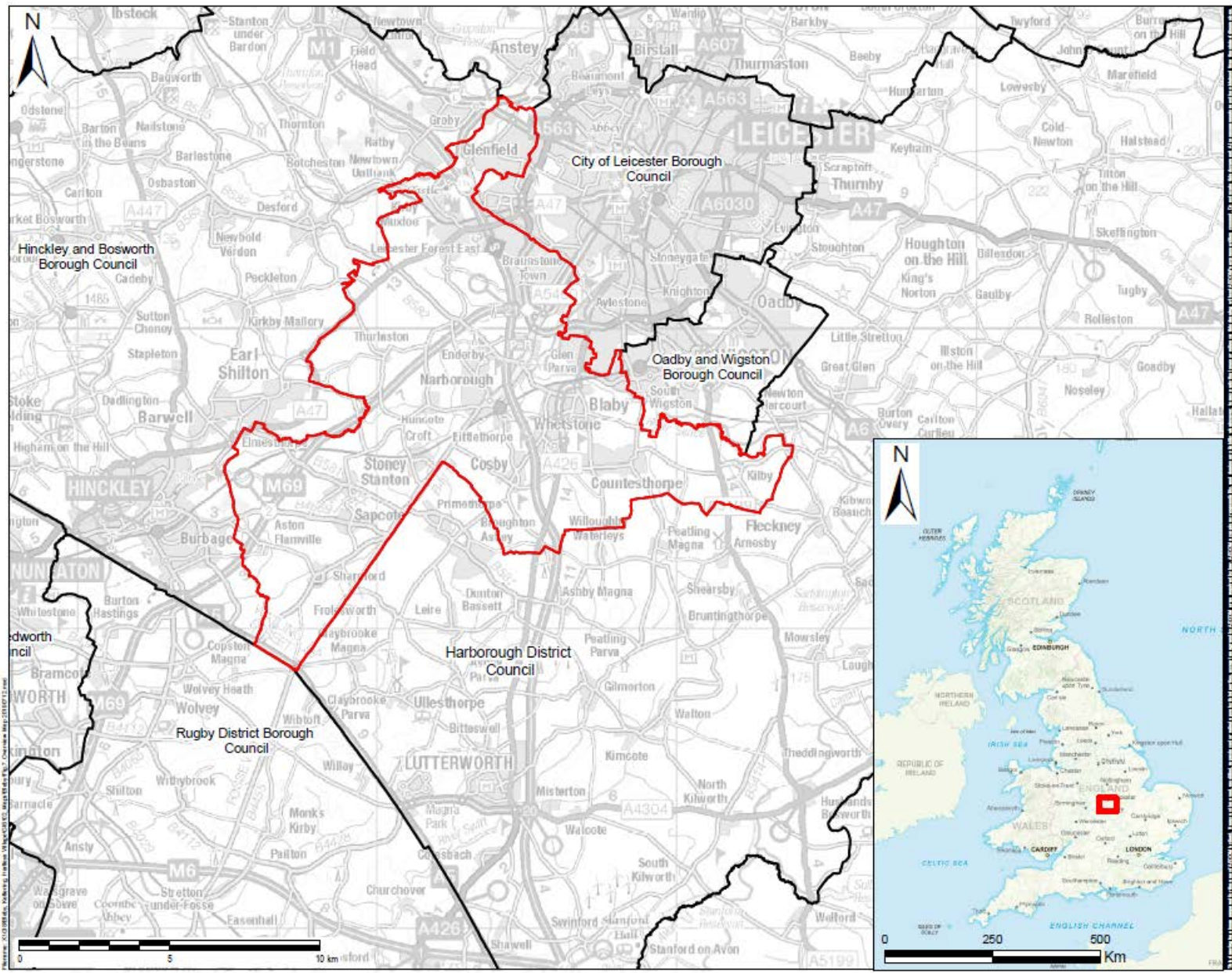
1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of Blaby District Council's emerging new Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Local Plan').
- 1.1.2 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse negative impacts. Through this approach, the SA for the Local Plan seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development. SA of Local Plans is a legal requirement.
- 1.1.3 This document is a Scoping Report, which presents the information gathered at the first stage of the SA process. However, it should be noted that scoping is an ongoing / iterative process, and so updates to the scope will be made as appropriate throughout the plan-making process.

1.2 Blaby District's new Local Plan

- 1.2.1 The Council is in the process of undertaking a review of its current Local Development Plan to ensure that it accords with updated national policy and guidance. It will also need to take account of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and the wider planning issues across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area.
- 1.2.2 The area covered by the new Local Plan is illustrated on Figure 1.1. The map highlights Blaby District's close proximity to the built up south western boundary of the City of Leicester.

Figure 1.1 Blaby District Local Authority area



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BLABY LOCAL PLAN
REVIEW (SA)

Client:
BLABY DISTRICT
COUNCIL

LEGEND
 Blaby District Boundary
 Administrative Boundary



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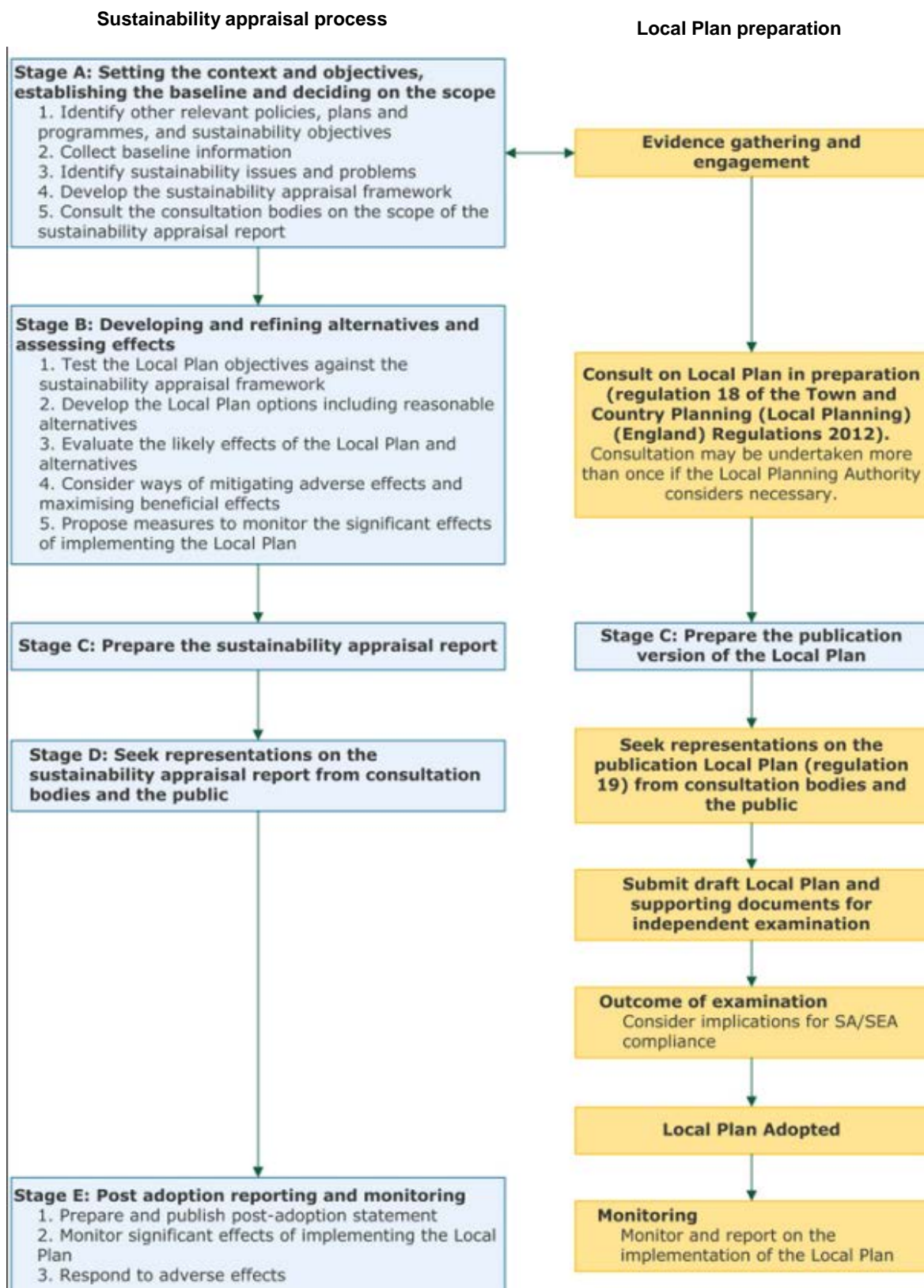
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OVERVIEW MAP

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1.3 SEA / SA explained

- 1.3.1 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the effects of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and recommending enhancements.
- 1.3.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) involves the same process as an SEA, but expands the coverage of topics to include economic and social factors. From this point onwards the combined SA/SEA process will be referred to simply as the SA for clarity.
- 1.3.3 SA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC.
- 1.3.4 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Directive are that:
- 1) When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.
 - 2) A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan that presents an appraisal of the Draft Plan (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives; and
- 1.3.5 This 'Scoping Report' is concerned with bullet point 1 above. It presents a suggested scope for the SA so that the nationally designated statutory bodies (which, in England, are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) and other stakeholders can provide timely feedback.
- 1.3.6 The SA/SEA process as described by the NPPG is outlined in **Figure 1.2**.

Figure 1.2 SEA process in alignment with the plan preparation process¹



¹ National Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 11-013-20140306 [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580027/sea1_013.pdf

1.4 SA ‘scoping’ explained

- 1.4.1 This Scoping Report is concerned with Stage A of Figure 1.2. Scoping is the first stage of the SA process in which the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA Report is identified. The Planning Practice Guidance states that “a key aim of the scoping stage is to help ensure the SA process is proportionate and relevant to the Local Plan being assessed”. It also states more widely that the SA process “should only focus on what is needed to assess the likely significant effects... It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the Local Plan”.
- 1.4.2 Establishing the scope of the SA presented in this report has involved the following steps:
- 1) Exploring the environmental and socio-economic context for the SA, i.e. reviewing high level messages (e.g. from government departments and agencies in particular) with a view to gaining an understanding of broadly what the SA needs to focus on.
 - 2) Establishing the baseline for the SA, i.e. the current and projected baseline in the area in the absence of the Plan, in order to help identify the plan’s likely significant effects.
 - 3) Identifying particular problems or opportunities (‘issues’) that should be a particular focus of the SA (and those which should not)
 - 4) Developing an SA Framework comprising objectives and appraisal questions on the basis of these issues which can then be used to appraise the draft Plan.

1.5 Structure of this report

- 1.5.1 The outcomes of the scoping exercise (introduced through steps 1–4 above) have been presented under a series of broad sustainability themes, as follows:

Chapter 2 introduces the scoping report structure

Chapter 3 addresses Population and Housing

Chapter 4 addresses Health and Wellbeing

Chapter 5 addresses Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Chapter 6 addresses Cultural heritage, archaeology, conservation and townscape

Chapter 7 addresses Waste and Minerals

Chapter 8 addresses Soil and Landscape

Chapter 9 addresses Environmental Protection

Chapter 10 addresses Climate Change and Flood Risk

Chapter 11 addresses Economy

Chapter 12 addresses Accessibility

- 1.5.2 The selected environmental themes reflect the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive². These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects (drawing from local knowledge and understanding).
- 1.5.3 It is intended that presentation of the scoping information under these sustainability topics will enable the reader to easily locate the information of greatest interest to them.
- 1.5.4 Each SA topic is given a chapter in this report (Chapters 2) setting out the following:
- The policy context
 - The baseline position
 - Future trends
 - Key issues / Conclusions
 - Relevant SA Objectives
- 1.5.5 Chapter 13 consolidates the key sustainability issues arising from the baseline and contextual review; then sets out the proposed SA Appraisal Framework, which draws upon the key issues.

² The SEA Directive is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on *'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'* [our emphasis]

2. Introducing the scope of the SA

The SA Report must include...

- The relationship of the plan with other relevant plans and programmes.
- The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level.
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment.
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. The likely evolution of the current state of the environment without implementation of the plan.

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section sets out the 'scope' of the SA by drawing upon the key messages from relevant plans and programmes, the current baseline position and the projected baseline.

2.1.2 This section sets out a summary of the scope under a range of sustainability topic headings. Section 5 then uses this information to identify key sustainability issues for the plan.

2.2 Policy context

2.2.1 An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing 'sustainability context' messages (e.g. issues, objectives or aspirations) set out within relevant published plans, policies, strategies and initiatives (PPSIs). Sustainability context messages are important, as they aid the identification of the 'key sustainability issues' that should be a focus of the SA. Key messages from this review are summarised below under what has been considered the most relevant 'sustainability topic'.

2.2.2 Of particular importance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF³). The NPPF, read as a whole, constitutes 'the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

2.2.3 The NPPF also reflects international and European legislation that planning has a role in implementing. The framework is therefore heavily represented in the contextual review.

2.3 The baseline position

2.3.1 Another important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing the situation now for a range of sustainability issues. Doing so helps to enable identification of those key sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for the appraisal of significant effects.

2.3.2 Just as it is important for the scope of SA to be informed by an understanding of current baseline conditions, it is also important to ensure that thought is given to how baseline conditions might 'evolve' in the future under the no plan / business as usual scenario. Doing so helps to enable identification of those key sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of the appraisal, and also helps to provide 'benchmarks' for appraisal significant effects.

³ CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf> (accessed 08/2012)

3. Population and housing

3.1 Policy context

National

Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** include:

- It is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay;
- To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance;
- Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area;
- The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns. These types of development present good opportunities for achieving high-quality, sustainable development.

Alongside the NPPF, **Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015** states that the Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.

A **House of Commons Written Statement (HCWS324) on Starter Homes 2015** states that LPAs should work in a positive and proactive way with landowners and developers to secure a supply of sites suitable for housing for first- time buyers. In particular, they should look for opportunities to create high quality, well designed starter homes through exception sites on commercial and industrial land that is either under used or unviable in its current or former use, and which has not currently been identified for housing.

The Government's **Housing White Paper – Fixing our broken housing market 2017** is the forerunner to the revised NPPF but there are some issues that are not included but may emerge and that the Council should be aware of. This includes improvements to data about wider interests in land, emissions reduction plans, a review of the Nationally Prescribed Space Standard, utilities planning and delivery, a review of developer contributions and the approach to the timing and pace of delivery of new housing.

Regional

The **Leicester and Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision For Growth Strategic Growth Plan** outlines the long term vision that will address the regions challenges and also bring light to opportunities. It is a non-statutory document but has outlined a time horizon to 2050. The mechanism to achieve this long-term vision will be applied through Local Plans. The Strategic Growth Plan includes:

- recognising Leicester & Leicestershire potential for growth
- accommodating projected housing and employment land needs
- alignment with other relevant planning policies
- identification of the region's economic growth areas

- identification of infrastructure delivery areas and road and rail investment
- identification of environmental and historical areas to protect
- a committed approach to the delivery of the plan

The **Strategic Growth Plan** includes delivering high quality development, within the designated growth areas for dwellings. The notional housing needs and supply reflects the needs across the housing market within Blaby.

The scale of growth in Blaby between the years 2011 – 2031 and 2031 – 2050 are outlined in the following:

Housing	Dwellings per annum 2011 to 2031	Total dwellings 2011 to 2031	Dwellings per annum 2031 to 2050	Total dwellings 2031 to 2050
		370	7,400	924

The notional housing need assumes that for the period 2031 to 2050, 15,500 dwellings will be delivered on strategic sites.

A further 2,060 dwellings will be delivered non-strategic sites (30% of notional OAN) at an average of 110 dwellings per year. These figures for 2031 to 2050 are estimates. The final distribution of housing will be agreed through a Statement of Common Ground that will need to take account of the scale of unmet need from Leicester City and elsewhere if declared.

Leicestershire Rural Framework 2014-2020 prepared by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership addresses the challenges and opportunities of rural communities. One of the priorities is ‘More affordable homes in rural areas’. This priority has emerged due to a shift in age demographics. Suggested trends show that young adults and families are relocating out of rural areas, recognising that people these age groups may prefer different lifestyles and living arrangements. The framework outlines that rural communities can be fragile to changing demographics, thus the delivery of the priority will result in:

- a robust county-wide evidence base of rural affordable housing need
- increased availability of affordable homes where there is a need; and
- more fuel and water efficient housing in rural areas.

Local

The **Blaby Plan 2018-2021’s vision** is that Blaby District is made up of thriving and vibrant communities where people are happy to live work and visit’. The plan strives to achieve a place to live where:

- new and established neighbourhoods are integrated, strong, healthy and safe.
- sustainable communities are able to access services and opportunities.
- inequality is reducing and the most vulnerable in our society are supported.

To achieve this ambition, the Council will design and deliver housing to meet the needs of residents.

The **Blaby District Growth Plan 2019** builds on the Blaby Plan focusing on making Blaby a great place to live in terms of the delivery of housing, infrastructure and jobs. It is an ambitious plan based on planning new communities, on a large scale which are exemplar developments, deliver real innovation, are sustainable, and most importantly are great places to live.

Blaby District Growth Plan is not a statutory plan but a link between the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and the Local Plan.

It provides a strong framework for the Local Plan. A key aspiration is that development does not happen at the expense of existing communities where recent expansion has stretched roads, schools and healthcare. Consider that housing growth is preferable in the form of freestanding new communities and garden villages. It sets out six fundamental non-negotiable principles, each with their own objectives, to achieving the Council's ambition.

Relevant principles include:

- **Infrastructure led** – essential that future growth only takes place where it is accompanied by planned and funded infrastructure for roads, schools, health care open space and other amenities. Work with partners to plan for a secure funding for infrastructure.
- **Integrated and self-sustaining** – must consider how new communities will be self-sustaining and well integrated to reduce commuting times, reduce the carbon footprint and increase well-being. Objectives include: planning for 'whole life' communities, long term stewardship and ownership and large scale development that is zero carbon / energy positive.
- **Active and healthy** – consider health and well-being early in the place making by planning for specialist housing for older people, lifetime homes, natural and public open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and using health impact assessments, the Health and Well-being Strategy and the knowledge of health professionals.
- **Well designed** – to create places where people want to live in terms of appearance and layout, access to open space, preventing crime, responding to the local character of the area. Objectives include: large scale new development following garden village principles, exemplar high quality design, strategic frameworks, masterplans, design briefs and design codes and community involvement.
- **Well connected** – Ensure new development is well connected to the wider area to reduce reliance on car travel and allows access to services and facilities. Objectives include: making walking, cycling and public transport the most attractive modes, integrate with existing highway network, using green infrastructure to connect new development to the existing local area.

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes several objectives relating to locating new development. The first is to provide the appropriate quantity and mix of housing to meet the needs of the District's current and future populations and the second is to optimise the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.

- Core Strategy Policy CS1 sets a requirement for 8,740 homes between 2006 and 2029 (380 per annum) and directs most new homes to the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Leicester including a Sustainable Urban Extension at Lubbesthorpe.

Outside the PUA development is focused within and adjoining the larger settlements (Blaby and the Larger Central Villages) in the centre of the District with lower levels of growth in the southern parts (Rural Centre, Medium Central and Smaller Villages) of the District. Core Strategy Policy CS5 distributes the housing requirement to individual and groups of settlements.

Core Strategy Policy CS7 seeks to secure a minimum of 25% affordable housing on sites of 15 or more dwellings and enables the provision of rural exception sites in specific settlements. Policy CS8 seeks an appropriate mix of housing type, tenure and size to meet the needs of existing and future households based on evidence. It also seeks to meet the needs of specific groups including for extra care housing, supported housing and housing

designed to meet wheelchair access standards.

Core Strategy Policy CS9 sets out provision figures for gypsies and travellers and travelling show people. It indicates that provision will be made through site allocations and the development management process taking account of the latest evidence of need. It also includes criteria against which to guide land allocations or to provide a basis for planning application decisions.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes policies SA1 and SA2 which are housing land allocations for 750 and 128 dwellings in total on one large and three small sites. It also includes a number of other policies relating to housing:

- SA4 Broad Locations for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People – seeks to identify broad locations that will be suitable for such accommodation as well as criteria to determine planning applications;
- DM1 Development within Settlement Boundaries – supports development in principle within the settlement boundary where it would not affect local amenity, prejudice the comprehensive development of a wider area or be contrary to other policies in the Local Plan.
- DM10 Self and Custom Build Housing supports proposals for such housing in suitable locations and recognises that the Council will take account of the self-build register in decision making, plan making, housing and regeneration functions.
- DM11 Accessible and Adaptable Housing requires housing development of 20 dwellings or more to provide 5% accessible and adaptable housing (Optional Building Regulations M4(2)) subject to physical constraints or viability.

The aims of the **Blaby Housing Mix and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2013** are to provide guidance to interpret Core Strategy policies CS7 and CS8, to address local imbalances in both the market and affordable housing stock and to optimise the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs.

Blaby District Council's **Housing Strategy 2015** has three priorities:

- Increasing housing supply across the tenures. This covers: new affordable housing, the mix and size of market housing; maximising funding sources, increasing choice and attracting economically active households.
- Providing appropriate housing options and support services for vulnerable households including the young and the ageing population.
- Making the best use of the existing housing stock. This covers: decent warm and healthy homes, bringing empty homes back into use, improving the private rented sector and exploring alternative methods of provision e.g. Forming a local housing company

The **Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2014 – 2019** prepared by Blaby District Council aims to 'Prevent homelessness by ensuring that the residents in our District have access to affordable accommodation and support that is suitable for their individual needs. Its objectives are to:

- Prevent homelessness for single people and couples aged between 16 and 35;
- Increase access to the private rented sector;
- Reduce under occupancy in the social rented sector;
- Build upon effective partnerships;

- Prevent Homelessness through Housing's Offer to Health.

The key aims of the Blaby District Council's **Older Persons Housing Strategy 2011** are to:

- Support older people to remain independent for as long as possible;
- Help those who wish to remain in their own homes access appropriate support;
- Work to improve the supply of appropriate housing for older households;
- Maintain communication links with the older community to ensure we are responding to their needs and aware of their views;
- Keep older people and their families informed about relevant services;
- Adopt strategies which recognise the wider impact of older households in relation to the local housing market.

The strategic aim of the **Private Sector Housing & Empty Homes Strategy 2010** is to improve the supply of decent and affordable homes, and the overall quality of housing in the district. The core aims are to:

- Bring Empty Properties back into use;
- Make homes decent and safe;
- Facilitate a new supply of housing for vulnerable people;
- License and monitor Houses in Multiple Occupation;
- Provide support and security to tenants and landlords;
- Reduce the negative effects of empty and poor quality properties on the neighbourhood and residents, in relation to anti-social behaviour and other crime.

The **Empty Homes Enforcement Strategy 2016** (replaces the empty homes section of the 2010 strategy) has three core aims:

- To bring Empty Properties back into use;
- To reduce the negative effects of empty properties on the neighbourhood and residents in terms of anti-social behaviour and other crime;
- To prioritise empty homes for enforcement action

3.2 The baseline position

Population

- 3.2.1 According to the most recent census the population of Blaby District in 2011 was 93,915. This is an increase of 4.1% from the previous census in 2011 (see **Table 3.1**). The population for Blaby is increasing, as is the case for Leicestershire and England.
- 3.2.2 The most recent (mid-2016) population estimates were published in June 2017 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Population projections indicate that the District's overall population will continue to increase to 110,000 by 2036.

Table 3.1: Population growth, 2001 - 2011 and population projections, 2016 - 2017⁴

Year	Blaby District	Leicestershire	England
2017	98,977	690,212	55,619,430
2016	97,562	680,466	55,268,067
2011	93,915	650,489	53,012,456
2001	90,252	609,579	49,138,831

3.2.3 Blaby's age structure is broadly in line with the regional and national averages for individuals across the 0 – 15 age groups; however has a slightly lower proportion in the 16 – 24 age range. The 45 – 49 age group is also in line with regional and national averages, leaving the 60+ age category of a higher proportion in the Blaby District.

Table 3.2: Age structure, (2011)⁵

Age group	Blaby District	East Midlands	England
0-15	17,581 (18.7%)	462,437 (17.8%)	10,022,836 (18.91%)
16-24	9,641 (10.3%)	322,208 (12.4%)	6,284,760 (11.86%)
25-44	27,524 (25.5%)	655,836 (25.2%)	14,595,152 (27.53%)
45-59	19,503 (20.8%)	538,344 (20.7%)	10,276,902 (19.39%)
60+	23,232 (24.7%)	618,061 (23.8%)	11,832,806 (22.32%)
Totals	93,915	2,596,886	53,012,456

3.2.4 In 2011, almost one quarter of the total population of Blaby was aged 60+ years (See **Table 3.2**). By 2036, the portion of residents 60+ is expected to increase to approximately a third of the total population. This growth will place increased demand on health and social support services in the future along with need for additional facilities for the younger ages 0-14, such as increase in educational facilities.

⁴ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Population Density, 2001 (UV04)

⁵ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Age structure (KS102EW)

3.2.5 Population density across Blaby is higher than the regional and national averages; with almost twice as many people per hectare in Blaby than there are in Leicestershire and England (see **Figure 3.1**). Compared to Leicester City though, most of Blaby has a lower population density.

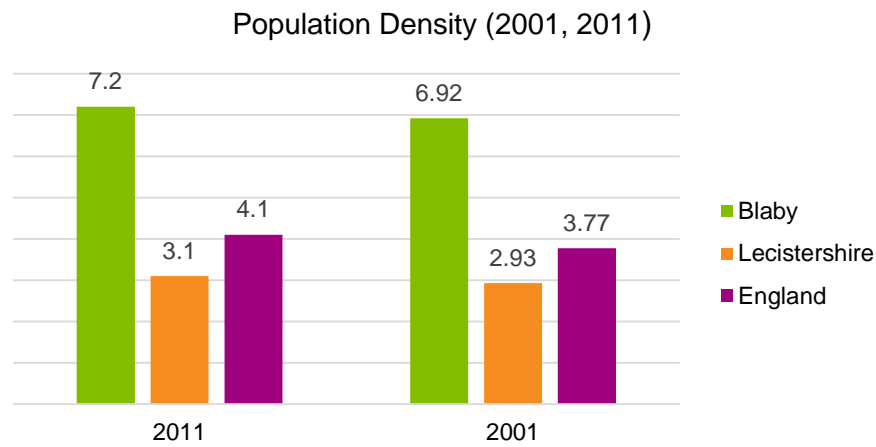


Figure 3.1: Population Density, 2011⁶

3.2.6 The 2011 Census indicates that Blaby has very little ethnic diversity. The District was predominantly comprised of white residents, who accounted for 91% of the local population. This is higher than the average across England (85.4%) in 2011. England accommodates for a greater percentage of black and minority ethnic groups.

3.2.7 This picture is expected to have changed by the time the next Census is undertaken as there is anecdotal evidence of growth in different ethnic groups in the Leicester and Leicestershire areas in the past 8 years.

Table 3.3: Ethnic groups, (2011)⁷

Year	Blaby District	Leicestershire	England
White	91%	91.4%	85.4%
Mixed	1.6%	1.3%	2.3%
Asian	6.1%	6.3%	7.8%
Black/ African/ Caribbean	1%	0.6%	3.5%
Other	0.4%	0.4%	1.0%

⁶ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Population density

⁷ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Ethnic groups (KS201EW)

Housing

- 3.2.8 As of 2011, Blaby residents formed 39,671 households. This figure has been projected to have increased to 46,000 from the ONS 2014-based household projections to 2039⁸. This is a 19% increase in housing over 25 years. Given that the population of Blaby is increasing and ageing, housing typologies and in particular housing affordability will need to be planned for.
- 3.2.9 The current and projected baseline will review housing: tenure, price and affordability, types, delivery and stock. The latest census in 2011 shows that approximately 66.8% of housing was privately owned (i.e. with a mortgage) in the Blaby District, while the remaining were either rented or rent free⁹.

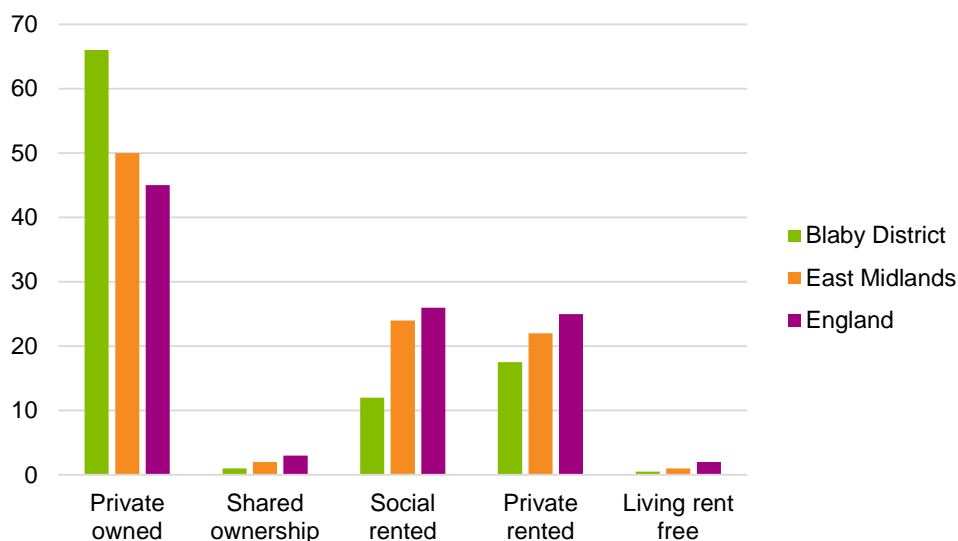


Figure 3.2: Tenure by household¹⁰

- 3.2.10 Housing prices in Blaby, are similar to the average across Leicestershire, however slightly less than the national average.
- 3.2.11 In the years between 2017 – 2018, the average house price in Blaby increased by (5%) which is similar to Leicestershire (6.9%) but slightly greater than the average across England (3.9%) (see **Table 3.4**)

Table 3.4: Median house price by country, region and local authority district¹¹ 2011 - 2018

Year	Blaby	Leicestershire	England
2018	£215,000	£216,000	£239,000
2017	£204,750	£201,995	£230,000
2016	£193,000	£189,985	£220,000
2011	£155,000	£155,000	£180,000

⁸ ONS (2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2014-based-household-projections-in-england-2014-to-2039>

⁹ ONS (2011) Census 2011 - Tenure – Households, QS405EW

¹⁰ ONS (2011) Census 2011 - Tenure – Households, QS405EW [online] available at:

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000129#section_7_0 (accessed 02 July 2019)

¹¹ ONS (2019), Land Registry, Median house price by country, region and local authority (E10000018), (E07000129), (E92000001), available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian> (accessed 03 July 2019)

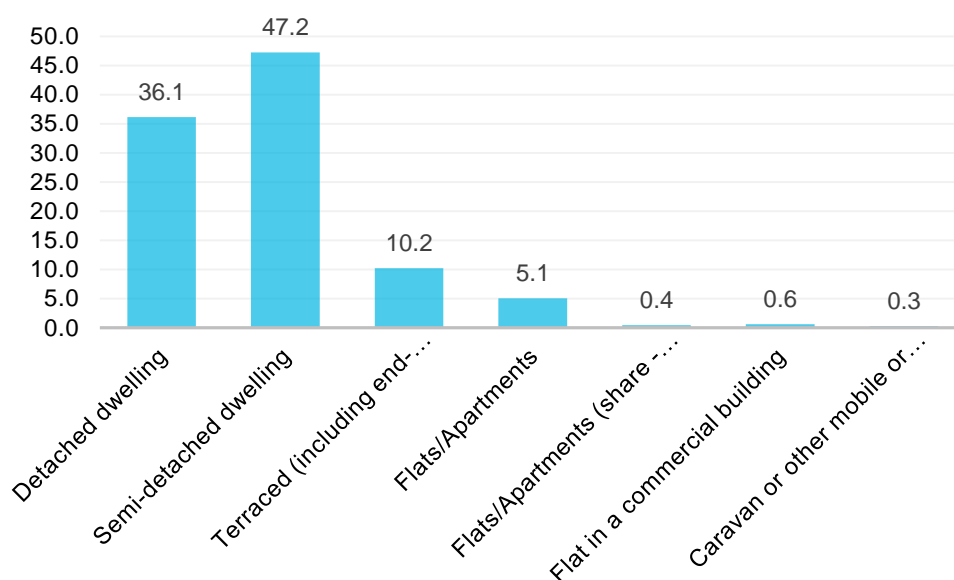
- 3.2.12 In terms of affordability, the ratio of median house price to median gross earnings is increasing (see **Table 3.5**). Since 2001, the median price to median gross annual earnings in Blaby was 3.92. By 2018, this estimate has increased by (90%), similarly to Leicestershire (92%), however far greater than England (77%).

Table 3.5: Ratio of median house price to median gross annual earnings, 2011 - 2018¹²

Year	Blaby	Leicestershire	England
2018	7.46	7.94	8.0
2017	7.69	7.77	7.91
2016	7.48	7.40	7.72
2011	5.82	6.27	6.80
2001	3.92	4.12	4.50

- 3.2.13 Table 3.5 demonstrates that housing affordability within the district and region is decreasing at a greater rate than the average across England.
- 3.2.14 The number of affordable housing completions in Blaby raised from 78 between 2011/12 to 115 in 2017/18. This reflects a 47.4% increase. The percentage of total affordable housing completions was 26.6 in 2016 and this decreased very slightly to 26.3% in 2017/18.¹³
- 3.2.15 In 2011, Blaby housing types consisted of predominately semi-detached (47.2%), detached (36.1%) and terrace housing (10.2%) (See **Figure 3.3**). The remaining 6.4% were flats, shared flats, flats in commercial buildings and caravans/mobile structures.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of housing types in Blaby, 2011¹⁴



¹²ONS (2019), Land Registry, House price to workplace-based earnings ratio by country, region and local authority (E10000018), (E07000129), (E92000001), available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian> (accessed 03 July 2019)

¹³Blaby District Council, Annual Monitoring Report (2017-2018)

¹⁴ONS (2011) Census 2011 - Tenure – Households, QS405EW [online] available at: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000129#section_7_0 (accessed 02 July 2019)

- 3.2.16 Figure 3.2 reflects that majority of housing in Blaby in 2011 was detached/semi-detached dwellings and terraced housing (93.5%) with only a fraction being flats and other housing typologies. This can be a challenge when investigating housing typologies other than single standing dwellings for ageing, growing and BME population.
- 3.2.17 In terms of empty homes, in December 2015, there were 548 empty or vacant properties within District out of a housing stock of 40,961. Of these there are 205 long term empty properties (more than six months). Some LTE fall within exempt categories, leaves 149 that fall within the LTE category or 0.36% of the total housing stock.
- 3.2.18 The net additional homes provided between the year 2006 – 2011 was 1130 (an average of 226 per annum). Over the next five year period 2011-2016 the total completions were 2006 dwellings (an average of 401 dwellings per year).
- 3.2.19 In 2016-2017, there were 743 dwellings completed, and for 2017-2018 a total of 588 homes were completed. This demonstrates that there has been a higher rate of completions in the last 5 years and the trend could be expected to continue (providing a sufficient supply of deliverable land is made available).
- 3.2.20 From 2011-2012, there was a general downward trend in the percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed. (A decrease from 26% in 2011-2012 to 16% in 2016-2017. In 2017-2018 there was a large increase to 31% though.¹⁵
- 3.2.21 The overall number of Long-Term Empty Properties has reduced from 300 in 2010/11 to 149 in 2015.

3.3 Future trends

- 3.3.1 Blaby is likely to continue to grow and age, which is largely consistent with national, regional and local trends.
- 3.3.2 In the absence of a new Local Plan, the existing Core Strategy (CS1) will provide the strategy for growth up to 2029. This directs most new homes (380 per annum) to the Principal Urban Area of Leicester including an SUE at Lubbesthorpe. Outside the PUA development is focussed within and adjoining the larger settlements (Blaby and the Larger Central Villages) in the centre with lower levels of growth in the southern parts (Rural Centre, Medium Central and Smaller Villages) of the District.
- 3.3.3 The Delivery DPD 2019 (Policies SA1 and SA2) supports this strategy by including housing land allocations for 750 and 128 dwellings.
- 3.3.4 Without a new Plan, this pattern of growth would continue to be delivered, but this would not take account of the latest housing projections or the need to consider longer planning horizons.
- 3.3.5 There would still be policies in place to address affordability, housing mix and tenure to meet the needs of existing and future households, but these might not be as responsive to the latest evidence.
- 3.3.6 There would also be policy provisions to deliver accessible and adaptable homes, which means that the condition and suitability of new housing is likely to improve over time regardless of a new Plan being secured.

¹⁵ Blaby District Council 2017- 2018.

3.4 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

- 3.4.1 The population is increasing and ageing, which generates a requirement for specific housing solutions. Population growth in the area will need to be appropriately managed to minimise potential impacts and maximise accessibility to services, facilities and amenities.
- 3.4.2 The number of households is also increasing and is projected to continue to increase. There is a need to secure an updated strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of development to meet the future needs of the population.
- 3.4.3 Housing is increasing within the District, whilst home ownership is decreasing and the average housing cost is increasing, leaving home ownership to be unaffordable for some.
- 3.4.4 The number of dwellings classed as long term empty homes is decreasing.
- 3.4.5 Whilst there are current policies in place that promote sustainable housing provision, a new Local Plan presents the opportunity to respond to the latest evidence, and potentially strengthen the approaches with regards to affordability, accessibility, and adaptable lifetime homes.

3.5 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

- 3.5.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon housing and population. For these reasons, this topic has been ‘**scoped-in**’ for the purposes of the SA process.
- 3.5.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective	Prompts
	Will the needs of specific groups be catered for including the elderly, young, low income, gypsies and travellers?
1. Provide a suitable level of housing to meet overall need within the district; and a range of housing types to meet the needs of different groups.	<p>Will the right mix of homes be delivered?</p> <p>Will homes be high quality, adaptable and accessible?</p> <p>Will there be a sufficient amount of affordable homes that are unrecognisable from market homes?</p>

4. Health and Wellbeing

4.1 Context

Health, facilities and services

National

The **NPPF** identifies the importance of the social role of the planning system, which is defined as 'supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities', with a 'core planning principle' being to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.

The NPPF outlines that high-quality open spaces should be protected, or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.

Regional

Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the District Councils within Leicestershire commissioned a '**Growth Infrastructure Assessment**' which sought to understand the infrastructure implications of growth in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) to 2026 and the associated infrastructure requirements, costs, potential funding and delivery.

The report has not been updated since 2009 and has been largely superseded by Infrastructure studies in the constituent Local Planning Authority areas.

The implications of Strategic Growth associated with the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan will require careful consideration.

Local

The Vision of the Council's **Blaby Plan 2018-2021** is that 'Blaby District is made up of thriving and vibrant communities where people are happy to live work and visit'. The ambitions include a place to live, where:

- New and established neighbourhoods are integrated, strong, healthy and safe.
- Sustainable communities are able to access services and opportunities.
- Inequality is reducing and the most vulnerable in our society are supported.

There is also an ambition of a place to visit, where:

- A wide variety of accessible attractions and facilities encourage visitors to the area.
- Green spaces and historical sites are maintained and developed.
- A strong leisure and tourist sector contributes to the well-being and sustainability of the local community.

To achieve these ambitions, the Council will work with partners to keep communities safe, support residents to live healthy lifestyles, create opportunities for community involvement, promote the area as a place to invest in, promote Blaby District as a destination and develop and support places that people want to visit.

The **Blaby District Growth Plan 2019** builds on the Blaby Plan focusing on making Blaby a great place to live in terms of the delivery of housing, infrastructure and jobs.

It is an ambitious plan based on planning new communities, on a large scale which are exemplar developments, deliver real innovation, are sustainable, and most importantly are great places to live.

It sets out six fundamental non-negotiable principles, each with their own objectives, to achieving the Council's ambition.

One of those principles is active and healthy and requires health and well-being to be considered early in place making by planning for specialist housing for older people, lifetime homes, natural and public open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and using health impact assessments, the Health and Well-being Strategy and the knowledge of health professionals.

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objective 3:

- To deliver the infrastructure, services and facilities required to meet the needs of the population of the District of Blaby, including those arising from growth, and to make services accessible to all.

Core Strategy Policy 11 'Infrastructure, Services and Facilities to support growth' sets out the policy basis for securing infrastructure arising from new development. It refers to an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (Appendix D to the Core Strategy). The IDP identifies the type of infrastructure required, its cost, who will provide funding and who will deliver it. Policy CS12 sets out the mechanisms for funding growth including financial contributions through planning obligations.

Core Strategy Policy 15 (Updated) seeks to ensure that residents have access to open space and sets standards for different types of open space. The policy also protects existing open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes a requirement for a strategic housing allocation at land north of the A47 (Kirby Muxloe). Policy SA1 requires provision for specific forms of infrastructure including education and healthcare. An updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan is included within section 6 of the Delivery DPD.

The Council's **Greenspaces Strategy 2012** includes the Vision "To provide green spaces that make a positive contribution to the quality and diversity of the local environment and to the health and well-being of our residents. Our green spaces can be used, valued and enjoyed by everyone." The vision will be delivered by, amongst other things:

- Reducing deficiencies in green space across the district through the planning system;
- Prioritising green space sites and identifying sites of strategic importance;
- Prioritising investment and improvements at green space sites;
- Recognising the changing climate and managing sites accordingly.

Amenity issues

National

The NPPG states that Local Plans should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into the account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and

the natural environment by:

- Mitigating and reducing to a minimum potential adverse effects resulting from noise from new development and avoiding noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;
- Identifying tranquil areas and protecting them;
- Limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

The Government's **Noise Policy Statement for England 2010** has a vision to promote good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development. It has 3 policy aims:

- avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;
- mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and
- where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life;

Regional

None identified.

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes policy DM14 Hazardous Sites and Installations, which seeks to keep hazardous sites and installations separate from housing and other vulnerable development.

Community safety

National

The **NPPF** seeks to ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas

With regards to malicious threats and natural hazards, there is a need to take appropriate and proportionate steps to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security

The NPPF also recognises that town and local centres play a part in promoting healthy and safe communities. It promotes mixed-use developments and strong neighbourhood centres to encourage social interaction; high quality public spaces to encourage the active and continual use of public areas which promotes the feeling of safety; and the provision and protection of local shops and facilities to allow communities to meet their day-to-day needs within proximity to where they live which encourages walking and cycling to access these facilities.

Regional

None identified

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objectives which relate to crime prevention through design quality by protecting and supporting the community.

- To improve the design quality of all new developments in the District including the

need to design out crime.

Blaby & Hinckley & Bosworth Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2017 – 2020 was developed to keep neighbourhoods within the District of Blaby and the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth safer.

The partnership suggests that planning policies should aim to create safe and accessible places so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

The **Empty Homes Enforcement Strategy 2016** (replaces the empty homes section of the 2010 strategy) has a core aim to reduce negative effects of empty properties on the neighbourhood and residents in terms of anti-social behaviour and other crime.

4.2 The baseline position (health, facilities and services)

4.2.1 The current social and community infrastructure within the District includes:

- 27 primary schools;
- Three secondary schools with a new secondary school planned for Lubbesthorpe; 12 GP practices;
- 13 libraries and a mobile library;
- 30 community centres;
- 3.06 police personnel per 1,000 population (2017).

4.2.2 The overall health for the district is set out in the 2011 Census (see **Table 4.1**), which identifies that 95.8% of Blaby District resident's considered themselves to be in either fair health, good health, or very good health.

4.2.3 This is roughly the same when compared to regional and national levels of self-reported health. A slightly lower amount of people consider themselves to have 'bad' or 'very bad' health (4.2% combined) compared to the east midlands (5.5%) and England (5.4%).

Table 4.1: Health rating in Blaby District, regional and national,¹⁶

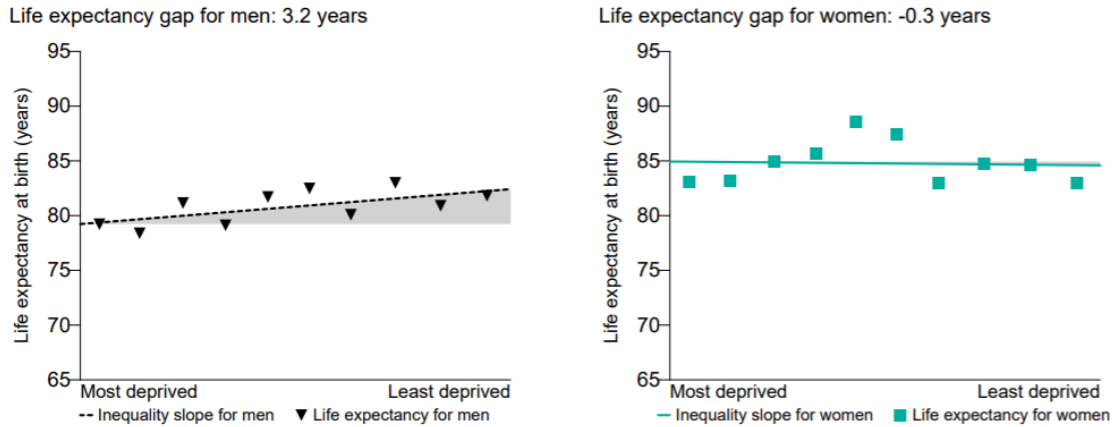
	Blaby District	East Midlands	England
Very good health	47.5%	45.3%	47.2%
Good health	35.8%	35.1%	34.2%
Fair health	12.5%	14.0%	13.1%
Bad health	3.3%	4.3%	4.2%
Very bad health	0.9%	1.2%	1.2%

¹⁶ 9ONS (2011) Census 2011 – Rate of Health

4.2.4 Blaby is one of the 20% least deprived districts within England; however 10% of children live in low income families¹⁷.

4.2.5 Life expectancy for both males and females are higher than the national average. Figure 4.1 shows the life expectancy gap for men and women in Blaby.

Figure 4.1: Life expectancies, inequalities in Blaby, 2017¹⁸



4.2.6 Since 2011, visits to the Blaby Pavillion have increased, however 2014 saw a 36% decrease in visits. Similarly, the Enderby Leisure Centre experienced an increase in visits from 2010 – 2014, and decreased the following year by 36%.

4.2.7 The Greenspaces Strategy (2012) identifies the District Council’s strategic sites that will be prioritised for investment. These are:

- Fosse Meadows (Sharnford)
- Bouskell Park (Blaby)
- Glen Hills Nature Reserve (Glen Parva)
- Crow Mills Way (South Wigston)
- Osiers Nature Reserve (Braunstone)
- Jubilee Park (Enderby)
- Whetstone Way (Whetstone)
- Whistle Way (Narborough / Enderby)
- Countesthorpe Country Park

4.2.8 In 2011, 6.88% of residents in Blaby were “limited a lot” from daily activities which is similar to Leicestershire (7.04%) and slightly lower than England (8.31). Likewise, 8.87% of residents were “limited a little” which is also similar to Leicestershire (9.16%) and England (9.33%).

4.2.9 The percentage of physically active adults in Blaby has fluctuated in the last four years, but remained above 58%. It has been consistently above the England average over this period of time. By 2015, the physically active adults in Blaby were higher than both the Leicestershire and England averages (see Figure 4.2).

¹⁷ Public Health England, Health Profile (2017) available at: <https://www.blabystayinghealthy.co.uk/uploads/blaby-health-profiles-2017.pdf> (accessed 03 July 2019)

¹⁸ Public Health England, Health Profile (2017) available at: <https://www.blabystayinghealthy.co.uk/uploads/blaby-health-profiles-2017.pdf> (accessed 03 July 2019)

Physically active adults

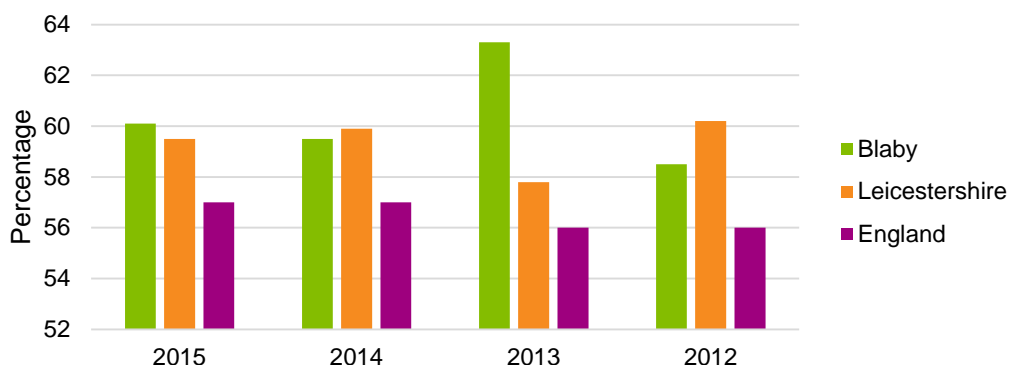


Figure 4.2: Physically active adults across Blaby, Leicestershire and England (2012 – 2015).

- 4.2.10 The percentage of obese children in Blaby in 2016-17 was 15%, similar to Leicestershire (16.1%) and slightly less than England (20%). This number has slightly increased since previous years.
- 4.2.11 There are a far greater percentage of adults who are classified as overweight or obese. This is approximately 54.6% in Blaby, 63.3% in Leicestershire and 61.3% across England.
- 4.2.12 The Open Space Audit 2015 looks at the quantity, quality and accessibility of different types of open space in the District. It identifies the surpluses or deficiencies as set out below.

Table 4.2: Open Space Surpluses and Deficits

Typology	Standard (per 1000 population)	Quantity	Quality (All aspects of quality at least 'average')	Accessibility
Parks and gardens	0.20 ha (all parishes of 6,000 people or more) Within 16 minutes travel.	Districtwide deficit of 0.06ha. Localised shortfall in 6 of the 9 urban parishes partly offset by surpluses in Blaby, Braunstone and Glenfield.	Specific improvements required at Northfield Park, Franklin Park, Bouskell Park and Narborough Recreation Ground	No significant accessibility shortfall in the district.
Natural greenspace	2.35 ha Within 25 minutes travel	Districtwide surplus of 0.05ha Localised shortfall in 12 of 19 parishes offset by surpluses elsewhere.	Quality improvements needed at various locations	No significant accessibility shortfall in the district.
Informal open space	1.00ha Within 10 minutes travel	Districtwide deficit of 1.45ha. Localised shortfalls in 13 of 19 parishes.	Quality improvements needed at various locations	Some localised accessibility deficiencies.

Table 4.2: Open Space Surpluses and Deficits

Provision for young people	0.06ha of equipped play	Districtwide surplus of 0.14ha	Quality improvements needed at various locations	Some localised accessibility deficiencies.
	Within 13 minutes travel.	Localised shortfall in 9 of 19 parishes.		
Allotments	0.25ha.	Districtwide surplus of 0.05ha	No quality improvements required.	Some localised accessibility deficiencies.
	Within 18 minutes travel.	Shortfall in 12 of 19 parishes.		
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.21ha	Districtwide deficit of 0.12ha	Quality improvements needed at various locations.	No significant accessibility shortfall in the district.
	Within 10 minutes travel.	Shortfall in 6 of 19 parishes offset by surpluses elsewhere.		

4.3 The baseline position (Amenity issues)

Noise

- 4.3.1 The M1 and M69 motorways, the A46 and Birmingham to Peterborough railway line, carrying both passengers and freight across the District. These are examples of potential noise emitters.
- 4.3.2 The trunk road network and railway line are also a source of noise pollution.

Hazardous substances

- 4.3.3 Certain sites and pipelines are designated as major hazards due to the quantities of hazardous substances present. Within the District, there is a major hazard site at Calor Gas, Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton and a major hazard pipeline, the High Pressure Gas Pipeline running between Thurlaston and Kilby.

4.4 The baseline position (community safety)

- 4.4.1 Table 4.2. reflects an increase in total crimes over a four year period. Crime across Blaby, Leicestershire and England have slightly increased over previous years, however in 2017 there was a significant increase in crime in Blaby (+19.1%) Leicestershire (+18.5%) and England (+14%).

Table 4.3. Total crimes across Blaby, Leicestershire and England (2014 – 2018). ¹⁹

Year	Blaby District		Leicestershire		England	
2018	23,633	+5.8%	339,970	+14.4%	19,670,583	+8.6%
2017	22,342	+19.1%	296,929	+18.5%	18,105,372	+14%
2016	18,763	+4.8%	250,431	+5.3%	15,876,896	+8.9%
2015	17,900	+1.3%	237,860	-1.6%	14,574,967	+5.1%
2014	17,658		241,653		13,866,318	

4.4.2 Figure 4.3 outlines Blaby District amongst other similar areas based on the average rate of crimes in the year ending 2018. Overall, Blaby District has a relatively low number of recorded crimes per 1000 people compared to comparator authorities.

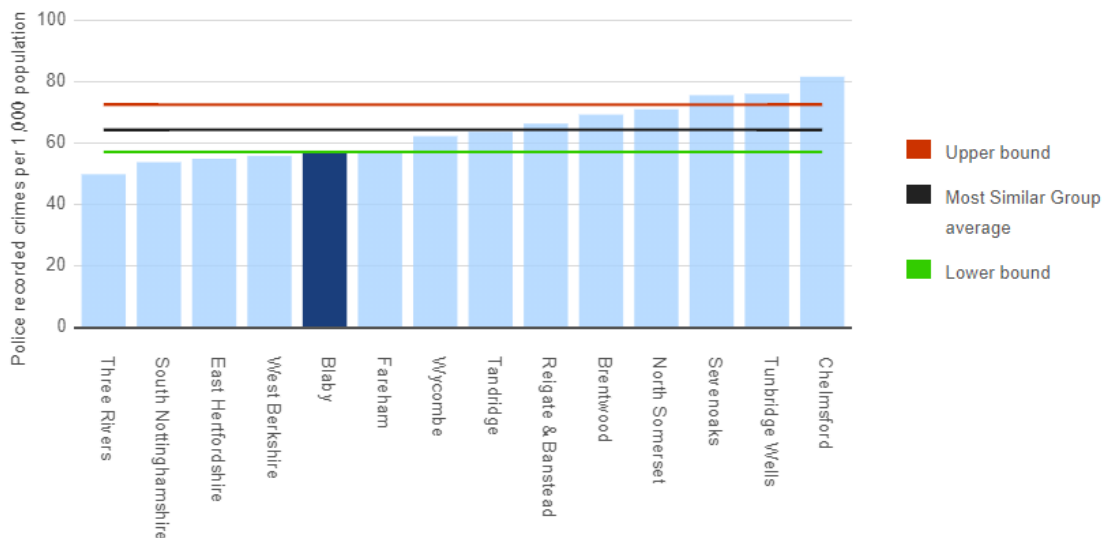


Figure 4.3. Police recorded crimes per 1,000 people in Blaby District in comparison to other similar areas Dec 2018 (Average based on all crimes) ²⁰

4.4.3 Several local policing priorities for the District have been identified. Over the past 24 months there has been a rise in vehicle related crimes (see figure 4.4). Other priorities include minimising under aged drinking and anti-social behaviour through local youth services, engagement activities and additional patrolling ²¹.

¹⁹ ONS (2011) Census 2011 Crime committed, QS405EW,

²⁰ https://www.police.uk/leicestershire/NH21/performance/compare-your-area/vehicle-crime/?section=msg_comparison#msg_comparison

²¹ <https://www.police.uk/leicestershire/NH21/priorities/>

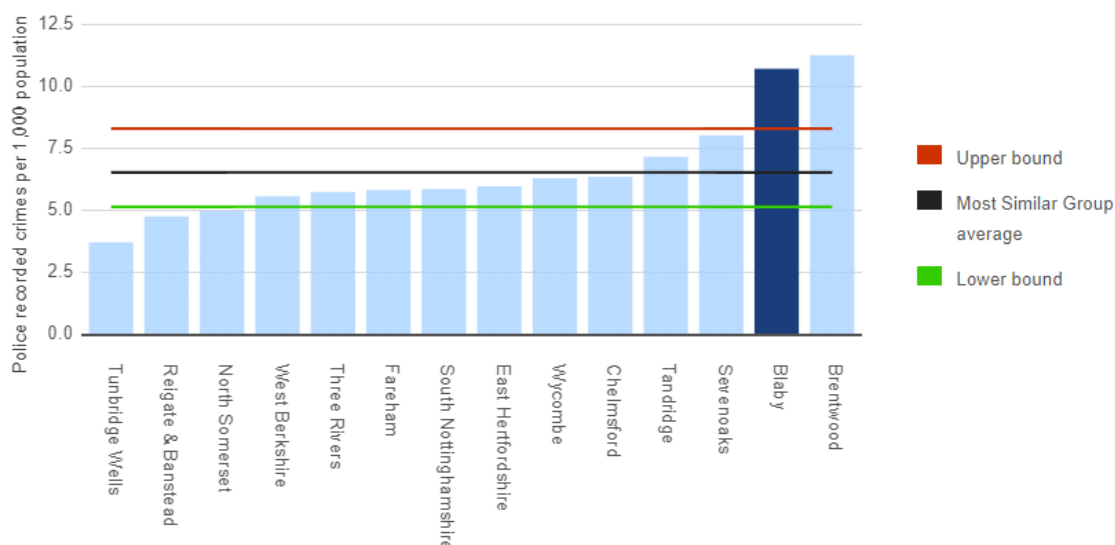


Figure 4.4. Police recorded crimes per 1,000 people in Blaby District in comparison to other similar areas Dec 2018 (Vehicle-related offences)²²

4.5 Future trends

Health, facilities and services

- 4.5.1 An increasing population is likely to put greater pressure on social infrastructure such as schools and health care facilities. Whilst new development would be required to contribute towards improvements, in the absence of a plan ad hoc developments could mean that impacts upon capacity are not properly planned for.
- 4.5.2 It is likely that life expectancy will increase slightly to reflect advances in healthcare practices, and this too could put greater demands on facilities in the longer term, especially if the increase in expectancy isn't matched with a 'healthy life expectancy'.
- 4.5.3 With regards to open space, there are set standards that would continue to be applied. Though there are no major deficits at a district-wide level, it is possible that localised deficiencies would continue to be an issue.
- 4.5.4 In summary, if a new plan were not in place, many of the measures that can be taken to promote healthier lifestyles and provide the necessary facilities could still be implemented. However, the Plan does provide an opportunity to facilitate the implementation of complementary measures and secure measures which developers may not give priority to in their schemes.

Amenity

- 4.5.5 Policy DM14 in the current Plan seeks to keep hazardous sites and installations separate from housing and other vulnerable development. In the absence of a new Plan it is unlikely that there would be major changes to the baseline position in this respect.
- 4.5.6 Planning policies would continue to manage noise pollution in the absence of a new Local Plan.

²² https://www.police.uk/leicestershire/NH21/performance/compare-your-area/vehicle-crime/?section=msg_comparison#msg_comparison

Community safety

- 4.5.7 It is difficult to predict future trends in crime and perceptions of safety.

4.6 Conclusions / Key sustainability issues

Health, facilities and services

- 4.6.1 In summary, the local plan should provide the opportunity to coordinate growth with the delivery of social infrastructure, such as health services to support an aging population. Development should be located so that health, education and community facilities are easily accessible. This includes green space, public open space, primary and secondary schools, general health practitioners and community facilities that promote health and well-being.
- 4.6.2 The ageing population profile within Blaby may also generate changing demands for additional sports and recreation facilities. Ensuring adequate healthcare facilities exist in accessible locations is clearly a key sustainability issue.
- 4.6.3 There is also increasing interest in the role of the planning system in promoting other aspects of health, for example, through the location and distribution of hot food takeaways, and ensuring that new neighbourhoods are conducive to cycling and walking (whether it be through the provision of infrastructure or the nature of the development).

Amenity

- 4.6.4 The impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation needs to be limited and reduced.
- 4.6.5 The trunk road network and railway line are a source of noise pollution.
- 4.6.6 Noise within tranquil areas within the region should be monitored and reduced where possible, to avoid the effects of noise pollution.
- 4.6.7 The major hazards at Calor Gas and High Pressure Gas Pipeline are constraints.

Community safety

- 4.6.8 The local plan should take opportunities to promote safe and cohesive communities. Designing out crime in new development is both a national and local priority.

4.7 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

- 4.7.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon health and wellbeing. For these reasons, this topic has been '**scoped-in**' for the purposes of the SA process.
- 4.7.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

2. Ensure that all groups within the community have good access to high quality local services (including schools, GP practices and open space).

Will new development be located in areas that have capacity (or can be expanded) in schools and health care to accommodate growth?

Will people have good access to natural green space, play spaces, leisure and other forms of recreational space?

Will there be equitable access to services for all members of the community?

Will places be made safe and encourage social interaction?

How will the wellbeing of communities be affected by amenity issues such as noise, light, pollution and loss of recreational land?

3. Support good health and wellbeing for all residents.

Will places be made safe and encourage social interaction?

How will the wellbeing of communities be affected by amenity issues such as noise, light, pollution and loss of recreational land?

5. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.1 Context

European

There are numerous European Directives that provide specific protection for wildlife habitats and species.

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
- Council Directive 2009/147/EC of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds

National

Key messages from the **NPPF** include:

Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible;

- promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.
- take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It adopts a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and aims to create a green economy. It strives to halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020, recognising that green infrastructure is 'one of the most effective tools available' to manage 'environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves'.

Biodiversity 2020 builds on the NEWP and sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade. In relation to planning, it states that the objective should be to: 'guide development to the best locations, encourage greener design and enable development to enhance natural networks.

The EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation (IASR) is a response to the significant and growing problem of invasive alien species. The IASR is important as it helps to control the negative effects on biodiversity. Planning has a role to plan in the prevention, early detection and management of invasive species.

Regional

Leicestershire County Council Environmental Strategy 2018 – 2030 is a regional strategy that builds upon a longstanding commitment to take action to reduce the councils impact on the environment, whilst contributing to climate change initiatives to ensure overall protection and enhancement of the Leicestershire environment.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 is a sub-regional strategic framework aims to provide a bold, visionary and action based GI Strategy to help inspire stakeholder involvement and focus action on the ground where is it most needed and would achieve the most benefit.

As an integral part of the development of sustainable communities, the Brief required a long-term vision and action plan for the planning and delivery of GI across the sub-region that would both assist in attracting future development and the achievement of multi-purpose public benefits for a rapidly expanding population.

The **6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategy** is a response to unprecedented growth within the region. It was developed to support environmental healthy communities and ecosystems and includes the following relevant strategic objective:

- 14. Reverse the decline in biodiversity by countering habitat fragmentation through investment in substantial habitat restoration and creation, informed by biodiversity opportunity mapping methods.

Space for Wildlife - The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 – 2026 (BAP) notes that Leicestershire and Rutland are amongst the poorest counties in the UK for sites of recognised nature conservation value.

The BAP Action Plan sets the following priorities:

- To promote the restoration, management and creation of BAP Priority Habitats
- To promote the creation of new wildlife habitat in the wider countryside
- To survey, monitor and promote favorable management of existing good sites through the Local Wildlife Sites system.

The Soar and Wreake Floodplain is identified as having high value for wildlife because of the quality of existing habitats, the concentration of important sites and the opportunities for habitat creation found within them.

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy** includes strategic objectives:

- To protect the important areas of the District's natural environment (species and habitats), landscape and geology and to improve biodiversity, wildlife habitats and corridors through the design of new developments and the management of existing areas by working with partners.

Policy CS19 Biodiversity and Geodiversity seeks to safeguard and enhance sites of ecological and geological importance taking account of their national, regional or local importance and priority habitats.

Policy CS14 Green Infrastructure seeks to improve and enhance the network including the corridors along the River Soar, River Sence, Grand Union Canal, Rothley Brook and the network of Green Wedges that adjoin the urban edges. It identified a number of other important recreation resources and valuable wildlife habitats at Croft Hill, Fosse Meadows, Aston Firs/Burbage Common, Fosse Way and disused railway lines.

5.2 The baseline position

- 5.2.1 Currently in Blaby, there are no habitat sites protected by European Law located within the District. There are four biological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in (or partly within) the District located at Narborough Bog, Croft Pasture, Croft Hill and Burbage Wood/Aston Firs. There are also 2 geological SSIs located at Croft and Huncote Quarry and Enderby Warren Quarry (see **Table 5.1** and **Figure 5.1**).
- 5.2.2 The above SSSI's sites have been split by Natural England into eleven SSSI units. In 2016, four units were in 'favourable' condition, six units were in 'unfavourable but recovering' condition and one was in 'unfavourable' condition. Aston Firs and Freeholt Wood are identified as Ancient Woodland.

Table 5.1: List of SSSI's within the District ²³

Name	Condition	Hectares
Narborough Bog	Favourable/ Unfavourable Recovering	8.5ha
Croft Huncote Quarry (SSSI)	Favourable	35.0ha
Croft Hill (SSSI)	Favourable	2.0ha
Croft Pasture (SSSI)	Favourable	6.2ha
Burbage Wood & Aston Firs	Unfavourable / Recovering	29.25ha
Enderby Warren Quarry	Unfavourable / No change	1.7ha

²³Natural England (2019), Designated Site View, <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteList.aspx?siteName=&countyCode=26&responsiblePerson=&DesignationType=All>

- 5.2.3 There are 70 areas designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and a range of sites that are identified as potential or candidate LWS. In addition, there are three Local Nature Reserves at Aylestone Meadows, Glen Hills and Burbage Common and Woods.
- 5.2.4 The River Soar, River Sence, the Grand Union Canal, the Rothley Brook and Ivanhoe Railway are identified as strategic wildlife corridors. There are also a number of locally important corridors including the Fosse Way Roman Road, disused railway lines and Green Wedges.
- 5.2.5 There are also areas of habitat inventory, mostly deciduous woodland and improved grassland.
- 5.2.6 The geology of much of the western part of Leicestershire is dominated by the red mudstones of the Triassic aged Mercia Mudstone Group. The outcrop of these rocks gives rise to moderately undulating landscape characterised by mixed pasture and arable agricultural use that has developed on the neutral clay soils. There are also granite outcrops around Croft and Enderby.
- 5.2.7 There a number of Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS). Most sites are disused quarries and gravel pits located in the south and west of the District. Many are filled with water and do or have the potential to offer recreation activities.

5.3 Future trends

- 5.3.1 In the absence of a new Plan, the existing policy framework will be in place, which consists of the NPPF and Policy CS19 Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy CS14 Green Infrastructure. It is therefore reasonable to assume that there will be a degree of protection for these assets. There could also be some enhancement, in the context of the current spatial approach to development.
- 5.3.2 With regards to the condition of wildlife sites, this will be dependent upon management practices as well as plan-making. It is difficult to predict future trends, but it is noted that only half of the SSSIs are identified as being of favourable condition and could be expected to continue as such (presuming appropriate management).
- 5.3.3 The Narborough Bog SSSI is still recovering from an unfavourable condition, as well as the Burbage Wood & Aston Firs. This recovery could continue with appropriate management and conditions.
- 5.3.4 The Enderby Warren Quarry is at an unfavourable condition and is not expected to change without intervention.
- 5.3.5 Climate change could have implications for wildlife if it affects their range and the availability of water and sources of food.

5.4 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

- 5.4.1 The concept of net-biodiversity gain is very important and will need to be ensured in future development. Local Plans have a very important role to play in ensuring that net-gain is secured.
- 5.4.2 The policy context also suggests that development ought to be located in areas that cause the least harm and provide opportunities to strengthen strategic ecological networks.
- 5.4.3 There is only a small number/area of nationally important biodiversity sites (SSSIs) within Blaby. Approximately half of these are in favourable condition. It is important to protect these and improve their condition, where needed.
- 5.4.4 It is also important to identify, protect and improve the wider ecological network, including: ancient woodland, important wildlife corridors such as river, canal and disused railway corridors, local wildlife sites and priority habitats.
- 5.4.5 Green infrastructure can contribute to biodiversity and geodiversity aims and should be supported within the Local Plan.
- 5.4.6 The District has a number of important geological sites some of which have the potential for recreational activity. The key focus for Blaby is to protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats and green space.

5.5 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

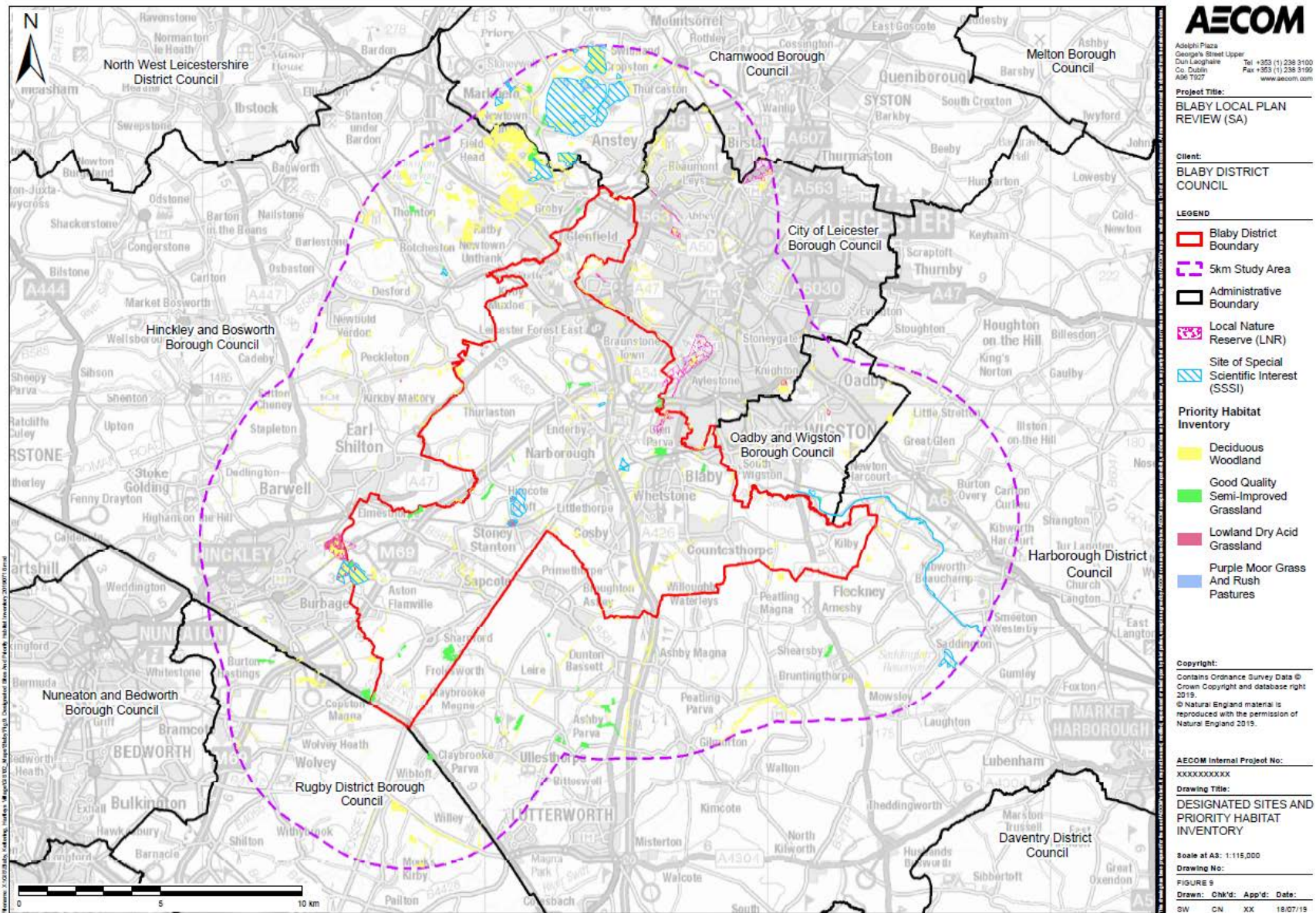
- 5.5.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon biodiversity and geodiversity. For these reasons, this topic has been 'scoped-in' for the purposes of the SA process.
- 5.5.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

SA Objective	Prompts
4. Direct growth away from the most sensitive wildlife habitats, whilst ensuring that ecological networks are strengthened and there is a net gain in biodiversity.	<p>How likely is it that net gain can be achieved on or nearby to development locations?</p> <p>Will effects upon sensitive biodiversity be avoided and mitigated before considering compensation?</p> <p>Will ecological networks be protected and enhanced (in terms of quality and extent)?</p> <p>Is development likely to put recreational pressure upon biodiversity and geodiversity? If so, how can this be managed?</p>

Figure 5.1 Designated habitat sites and priority habitat inventory



6. Cultural Heritage, Archaeology, Conservation and Townscape

6.1 Context

National

The NPPF (2019) states that:

Heritage assets should be recognised as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, taking account of ‘the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits’ of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.

Other key messages from the NPPF include:

- Conserve and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Set out a ‘positive strategy’ for the ‘conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Consider the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- When considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- Significant harm or loss of designated heritage assets will require clear and convincing justification. Where development proposals lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent unless a public benefit outweighs the harm or loss of the asset.

Planning Practice Guidance – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment Department for Communities and Local Government (2018) – This provides advice on conserving and enhancing the historic environment, with some key principles with regards to plan-making and assessment. For example, the SA should ensure that the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is a factor taken into consideration when selecting sites.

Historic England ‘Heritage at Risk’²⁴ list lists every heritage asset currently considered to be at risk in the UK according to local planning authority. Heritage assets are split into a number of categories namely; buildings, places of worship, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected wreck sites and conservation areas.

Regional

“*Working together for the benefit of everyone*” is **Leicestershire County Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Leicestershire County Council, (2017)**. There is a specific objective to ensure that heritage and the natural environment are enjoyed and conserved.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (2018) sets out a key principle of conserving and enhancing environmental assets including built and natural heritage.

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objectives 5, 6 and 7, which are relevant: To conserve the important areas of the District's natural environment (species and habitats), landscape and geology and to improve biodiversity, wildlife habitats and corridors through the design of new developments and the management of existing areas by working with partners.

- To preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the District, recognising its contribution to local distinctiveness and to seek design solutions which preserve and enhance heritage assets where they are impacted by development.

Core Strategy Policy 20 Historic Environment and Culture recognises that there are designated and non-designated heritage assets in the District and these will be preserved, conserved and where possible enhanced. It also sets out how the Council will take a positive approach to the conservation of heritage assets by:

- Conserving and enhancing heritage assets and their setting when considering development proposals;
- Expecting new development to take a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the local area;
- Ensuring development in Conservation Areas is consistent with the special character of those areas;
- Securing the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through uses that are consistent with the heritage asset and its conservation;
- Promoting heritage assets as tourism opportunities.

Also, Policy CS2 Design of New Development indicates that new development should respect distinctive local character including the natural and historic environment.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes policy DM12 Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets which seeks to ensure that heritage assets are suitably considered and where necessary conserved when affected by a development proposal in line with the approach set out in the NPPF. In addition, Policy DM2 Development in the Countryside requires development in the countryside to be in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing landscape, development form and buildings.

6.2 The baseline position

6.2.1 There are several conservation areas in Blaby District:

- Aston Flamville Conservation Area
- Blaby Conservation Area
- Cosby Conservation Area
- Countesthorpe Conservation Area
- Croft Conservation Area
- Enderby Conservation Area
- Glenfield Conservation Area
- Grand Union Canal Conservation Area
- Kirby Fields Conservation Area
- Narborough Conservation Area
- Wigston Parva Conservation Area

- 6.2.2 Conservation Area appraisals have been undertaken for Blaby Conservation Area, Croft Conservation Area and Glenfield Conservation Area.
- 6.2.3 The Blaby Conservation Area appraisal states that a high proportion of local authority housing, in particular sites along Sycamore Street, between Church Street and Wigston Road weakens the local character and context of the surrounding area. Other buildings such as the functional garage workshop detracts from the street scene, affecting the Conservation Area. Provisions for car parking near the Baptist Church are affecting the Conservation area. Other buildings such as Hall Farmhouse hold significant value.
- 6.2.4 The Croft Sites bordering the Conservation Area along Hill Street and Dovecote Road have been granted planning permission for redevelopment. This has a mixed impact on local character and appearance, affecting the historical nature of the site. Another notable site at the eastern end of Dovecote Street is a vacant former chapel. The building detracts amenity from the streetscape but is valuable in history and character.
- 6.2.5 Surrounding the Glenfield Conservation area, several buildings detract from its character. Several large car parking areas detract from the street scene. A particular heritage site, the Old Glebe Farm on Kirby Road may need to be repaired or restored, however the loss of this heritage site would affect character.
- 6.2.6 In addition, there are numerous areas of known archaeological interest and the potential for other unexplored areas to contain archaeological artefacts.
- 6.2.7 One such key undesignated heritage asset is the Fosse Way roman road which crosses the District in a south west direction. There are currently no designated heritage assets defined as being 'at risk'.
- 6.2.8 The Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment 2008 considers settlement character. The assessment describes the character of 22 settlements within the District. It concludes that the settlements in the District are fairly similar in character although there are subtle differences in layout and buildings that provide distinction and a sense of place for each village.
- 6.2.9 There are approximately 200 Listed Buildings within Blaby; 3 of which are Grade I, 9 are Grade II* and 180 are Grade II. These are illustrated on figure 6.1 below. There are also 16 Scheduled Monuments.
- 6.2.10 New development areas within the District have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets. This includes through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted however, that existing historic environment designations and local plan policies will offer a degree of conservation to cultural heritage assets and their settings.

6.3 Future trends

- 6.3.1 In the absence of a new Local Plan, there will be a degree of conservation for heritage assets through national and local policy. In particular, Core Strategy Policy 20 seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting and promote them as tourism opportunities. Policy CS2 also indicates that development should respect distinctive local character including the natural and historic environment.
- 6.3.2 These policies are complemented by several policies in the **Delivery DPD 2019** (DM12 and DM2) which seek to protect assets in line with the NPPF and being mindful of the appearance and character of existing landscapes, form and buildings.

6.3.3 In this respect, the future baseline is unlikely to change significantly. However, in the absence of a new Plan, new development could become more ad-hoc, and despite policy measures, there could be incremental growth in settlements that lead to small changes in their character and form. There would also be less consideration of strategic matters and how the historic environment would be affected by longer term growth.

6.4 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

6.4.1 Protect and enhance the District’s designated and non-designated heritage assets and the wider historic built and natural environment features.

6.4.2 Maintain the current status of there being no heritage assets ‘at risk’

6.4.3 Maintain the local character and distinctiveness of the District’s towns and villages, taking account of historic and cultural assets and their setting.

6.4.4 Heritage assets and the historic environment have an economic, social and environmental benefit. This extends to include buildings, places, landscape, forms of development and agriculture, biodiversity and geodiversity that are recognised as important. Heritage assets are irreplaceable and should be conserved and where possible enhanced.

6.4.5 Future development in Blaby should strive to make a positive contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place. The local plan should consider viability and sustainable future of heritage assets.

6.4.6 Heritage assets should be promoted as tourism opportunities and made accessible for the enjoyment of the public.

6.5 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

6.5.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon Cultural Heritage, Archaeology, Conservation and Townscape. For these reasons, this topic has been ‘**scoped-in**’ for the purposes of the SA process

6.5.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

5. Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment; whilst making it more accessible for public enjoyment.

How will heritage assets and their settings be affected?

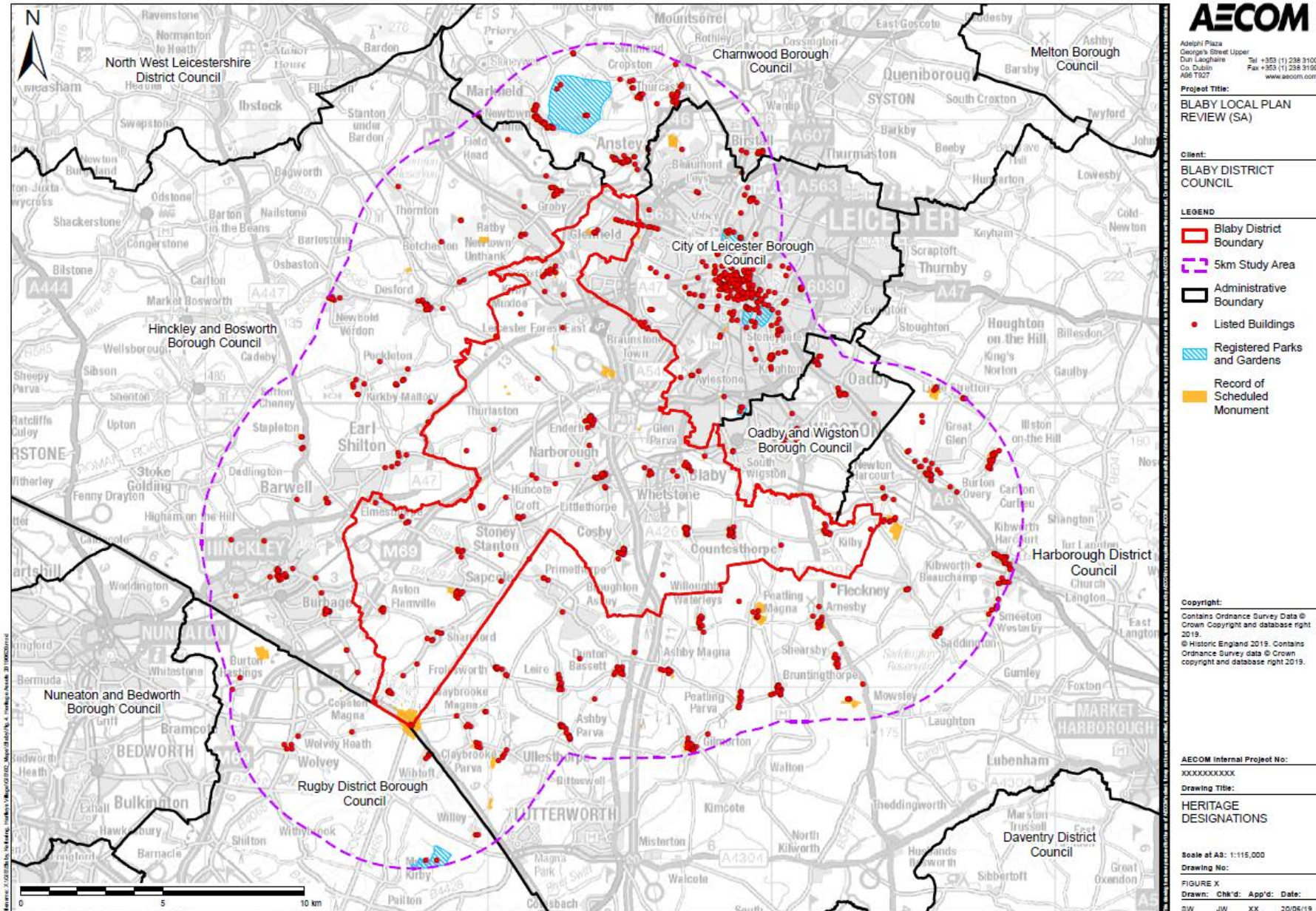
How will locally important buildings and other features be affected?

Will local people be able to interact with historic and cultural features more easily?

Will archaeological features be recorded and where possible retained?

Will development ensure that no substantial harm or loss of designated heritage assets occur? Where a loss occurs can it be proven that this is outweighed by substantial public benefits?

Figure 6.1 Designated heritage assets



7. Waste and Minerals

7.1 Context

European

Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (Waste Framework Directive)

National

The **NPPF (2019)** notes that it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that are needed. Minerals are a finite natural resource and can only be worked where they are found. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working.

In assessing impacts, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy.

Planning Policy Guidance gives advice on the planning for mineral extraction in plan making and the application process; and to provide further information to support waste planning policy.

In terms of waste, local planning authorities must ensure that waste is handled in a manner which protects human health and the environment through testing the suitability of proposed sites, against the policies and factors in the National Planning Policy for Waste.

LPAs should also work with Environmental Health colleagues, Public Health England and the Environment Agency and ensure land raising or landfill sites are restored to beneficial after-uses (e.g. agriculture, biodiversity, forestry, amenity) at the earliest opportunity and to high environmental standards.

The **National Planning Policy for Waste 2014** sets out detailed waste planning policies. These are mainly focussed on the responsibilities of waste planning authorities and include:

- Using a proportionate evidence base to plan new capacity and spatial distribution in terms of waste arisings locally and in a wider context;
- Consider the need for waste management facilities alongside other spatial planning concerns;
- Identify the need for waste management facilities;
- Identifying suitable sites and areas for new waste management facilities;
- Policy on determining planning applications;
- Monitoring to inform local plan preparation and the determination of planning applications
- The factors that proposed sites should be considered to determine suitability.

The **National Waste Management Plan for England 2013** is a high level document which is non– site specific. It provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England, and evaluates how it will support implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised WFD.

The **Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011** implements the revised EU Waste Framework Directive. This seeks to consolidate waste legislation so as to streamline and replace existing regulations (in particular the subordinate legislation).

Regional

The **Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy Update 2011** includes a number of objectives including:

- Managing materials in line with the Waste Management Hierarchy – in order of preference: prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery, disposal - except where costs are prohibitive, or where the environmental consequences can be demonstrated to be negative;
- Managing resources and waste in a way that meets the needs of Leicestershire's residents now without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The **Waste Disposal Authority Plan 2018** aims to deliver a waste management service that encourages prevention, reuse, recycling and reduces waste to landfill, recognising the importance of value for money to Leicestershire residents. It includes priorities in terms of resilience, innovation and change for waste treatment/disposal, recycling and household waste sites and transfers stations; customer service and community engagement; consideration of environmental impacts and joint and partnership working and contract management and procurement.

Leicestershire County Council adopted the **Leicestershire Minerals Development Framework – Core Strategy and Development Control Policies up to 2021** in 2009. It has a number of objectives; the most relevant is 'to safeguard mineral resources from unnecessary sterilisation'.

Leicestershire County Council also adopted the **Leicestershire and Leicester Waste Development Framework – Core Strategy and Development Control Policies up to 2021**. It includes the following objectives:

- To promote the implementation of waste minimisation initiatives in the construction and operation of new development.
- To enable the timely delivery of sufficient waste management facilities in the Waste Development Framework area to meet the waste management capacity apportionment requirement and spatial distribution to at least 2021.
- To support the delivery of the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy and Leicester's municipal waste management requirements.
- To encourage waste management facilities which increase reuse, recycling, composting and value / energy recovery, including through the use of new waste management technologies where appropriate, in order to meet or exceed regional targets.
- To promote use of waste as a resource including optimum use of recycled waste materials as aggregates.
- To minimise final disposal as a means of managing waste arisings.
- To provide for a distribution of waste management facilities in the Waste Development Framework area at locations which encourage the use of previously-developed land, meets the needs of communities, and minimise the distances waste is transported.

- To protect people and local communities, and the natural and built environment (particularly the River Mease Special Area of Conservation) from unacceptable effects of waste management development.
- To encourage opportunities for means of transporting waste other than by road.
- To promote the delivery of measures for environmental, recreational, economic and community gain in mitigation or compensation for any adverse effects of waste related development where appropriate.
- To complement and support wider strategies for the Waste Development Framework area including green infrastructure projects and strategies such as the National Forest and Charnwood Forest Regional Park.

The County Council is now reviewing the **Leicestershire Minerals & Waste Local Plan Up to 2031**. In 2016, a Pre-Submission Draft was published. It includes a spatial vision:

To enable the provision of sufficient minerals and waste facilities within the County of Leicestershire in locations that meet the economic and social needs of present and future generations whilst seeking to protect and enhance the environment.

...and Strategic Objectives:

- To make sufficient provision of minerals in the County of Leicestershire to meet national and local requirements.
- To make sufficient provision of waste facilities in the County of Leicestershire with capacity equal to the waste generated within the County of Leicestershire.
- To provide mineral sites and waste management facilities in the most sustainable locations so that movement other than by road is maximised, untreated waste transportation is minimised, the development of previously developed land is encouraged and the needs of local communities and industry are met.
- To co-ordinate and work with all relevant organisations, in particular Leicester City Council and Leicestershire Local Authorities, to ensure that the Local Plan addresses planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.
- To attain the maximum possible reuse, recycling, composting and recovery of value from waste within the County of Leicestershire and thereby minimising the disposal of waste.
- To safeguard mineral resources, mineral sites and associated infrastructure, and waste management facilities from inappropriate development.
- To reduce the impact of minerals and waste developments upon climate change.
- To protect people and local communities, and the natural, built and historic environment (particularly the River Mease Special Area of Conservation) from unacceptable effects of minerals and waste developments.
- To ensure that land with a temporary use is subsequently restored, managed and maintained to an after-use of high quality at the earliest opportunity which respects the local area's character, provides a net gain in biodiversity and allows greater

public access whilst affording opportunities for recreational, economic and community gain in mitigation or compensation for the effects of development where possible.

- To complement and support wider strategies including the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Plan, green infrastructure projects and strategies such as the National Forest and Charnwood Forest Regional Park.

This Plan will make the strategic decisions relating to waste and minerals, and so the new Plan will not take this role. However, there may be supporting policies to adopt in the Local Plan to ensure that waste and minerals planning is coordinated.

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objectives 3 and 8:

- To deliver the infrastructure, services and facilities required to meet the needs of the population of the District of Blaby, including those arising from growth, and to make services accessible to all.
- To minimise energy use and use of valuable resources and to encourage renewable energy production in suitable locations.

Core Strategy Policy CS23 Waste indicates that the Council will work with partners to research and develop co-ordinated services and infrastructure for waste collection, treatment, transfer and disposal. It also states that the Council will seek to encourage waste minimisation and seeks waste to be a consideration in the design of development.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes policy DM15 Mineral Safeguarding Areas seeks to highlight to developers that proposals in areas identified as mineral safeguarding areas will need to ensure that mineral resources of national or local significance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development taking account of the appropriate policy in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Key locations include land in the Soar and Sence Valleys and land in the vicinity of Croft Quarry.

7.2 The baseline position (Waste)

- 7.2.1 The percentage of household waste sent for re-use / recycling / anaerobic digestion / composting has decreased in recent years and the amount sent to landfill has increased (see **Table 7.1 below**).

Table 7.1: Household waste and residual waste 2015-2017²⁵

Financial year end	% Household waste sent for re-use / recycling / anaerobic digestion / composting	Residual waste per household sent to landfill
2017	44.92	518.73
2016	45.94	481.28
2015	47.05	489.14

²⁵ Blaby Annual Reports (2015 – 2017), Blaby District Council

Figure 7.1. Residual waste sent to landfill.²⁶

7.2.2 The percentage of waste sent to landfill was 52% in Blaby and 46.4% in Leicestershire in 2008 – 2009.

7.2.3 Residual waste sent to landfill has increased steadily each year as shown in Figure 7.1.

7.3 The baseline position (Minerals)

7.3.1 The geology of the District has resulted in mineral workings with important resources of igneous rock, sand and gravel and clays. Currently there is only one extraction site at Croft Quarry, which provides high quality granite.

7.3.2 There was recently an EIA Scoping & Screening request (2018/EIASco/0161/LCC) as a precursor to a planning application to extend the extraction at Croft Quarry for a period of between 12 to 21 years. There are also a number of known sand and gravel reserves located along the valleys of the Rivers Soar and Sence. These resources are reflected in the Minerals Safeguarding Areas.

7.4 Future trends

7.4.1 Waste projections set out in the Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2018) suggest that there will be a slight decrease in waste generation (per annum) between 2020 and 2031.

7.4.2 In 2020/21 the total amount of local authority collected waste and commercial and industrial waste is estimated to be 568,951 tonnes per annum, of which only 28% would be recovered, and 72% sent to landfill.

7.4.3 By 2031, the total amount of waste is estimated to be 562,469 tonnes per annum. However, the amount projected for recovery is higher at 37% (meaning a commensurate reduction in the proportion sent for landfill).

7.4.4 Mineral resources are protected, and it is likely that current workings will remain the primary source of resources for the plan period. There may however, be an increase in the exploration of and extraction of other types of minerals such as coal and shale gas.

²⁶ Blaby Annual Report 2015, 2016 & 2017.

7.5 Key sustainability issues

- 7.5.1 It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that are needed.
- 7.5.2 Minerals are a finite natural resource and can only be worked where they are found. LPAs should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for viable mineral working.
- 7.5.3 There are important mineral resources in the District that should be protected and utilised efficiently. An important issue is the long term future of Croft Quarry. It will also be important to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of materials to support development that is sympathetic to the historic character of settlements.
- 7.5.4 The amount of waste sent to landfill has increased slightly and this trend needs to be reversed. Therefore, the plan should aim to encourage measures to prevent, reuse, recycle and reduce waste to landfill in line with the waste hierarchy.
- 7.5.5 Impacts of pollution should be considered on health and quality of life when planning for development. There needs to be consideration for the need for waste management facilities alongside other spatial planning concerns.
- 7.5.6 Waste minimisation measures should be continued in terms of design and construction of new development.

7.6 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

- 7.6.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon minerals. For this reason, minerals has been ‘**scoped-in**’.
- 7.6.2 There is a need to ensure that development supports the effective management of waste, therefore, this topic has been ‘**scoped-in**’ to the SA.
- 7.6.3 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective	Prompts
6. Protect mineral resources and associated infrastructure from sterilisation; whilst ensuring the efficient extraction and use of mineral resources.	<p>Will development occur in areas identified as potentially containing mineral resources? If so, is it likely that resources would be sterilised? (could they be extracted prior to use, or would resource extraction be unviable anyway?)</p> <p>Will a sufficient supply of historic building materials be available?</p>
7. Minimise waste generation whilst supporting an increase in reuse, recycling and composting.	<p>How will it affect the ability to secure adequate waste management facilities (and supporting infrastructure).</p> <p>Will it support the effective storage and collection of waste and recycling materials?</p>

8. Soil and landscape

8.1 Context

National

The **NPPF** says Local Plans will contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and soil, the character and beauty of the countryside (including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile land), protecting unacceptable soil pollution and remediating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land.

Also, the NPPF seeks the effective use of land and the use of previously developed (or brownfield) land to accommodate development. Local Plans should ensure a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions, land instability and contamination. Remediation of such land should ensure that the land is not being determined as contaminated land.

Planning Practice Guidance explains key issues to consider in terms of landscape character, planning for green infrastructure, effective use of land that has been previously developed, protecting and enhancing valued soils and taking account of the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land; gives guiding principles on how planning can deal with land affected by contamination; and also advice on how to ensure development is suitable for its ground conditions and how to avoid risks caused by unstable land or subsidence.

In ***Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England*** a vision is set out for the future of soils in the country. An element of this vision is the condition of soils in urban areas, which are to be *'sufficiently valued for the ecosystem services they provide and given appropriate weight in the planning system'*. Good quality soils in urban areas are recognised as being *'vital in supporting ecosystems, facilitating drainage and providing urban green spaces for communities'*. That planning decisions take sufficient account of soil quality is a concern of the report, in particular in cases where *'significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved'*. Preventing the pollution of soils and addressing the historic legacy of contaminated land is another element of the reports vision. Changing demands on our soils need to be better understood and it must be ensured that *'appropriate consideration is given to soils'*²⁷

Regional

None identified.

Local

The District Council's **Blaby Contaminated Land Strategy** seeks to ensure that contaminated land within the District is suitably investigated and remediated according to a number of principles.

Policy CS2 Design of the **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy** seeks to ensure that new development secures a high quality environment that respects distinctive local character including landscape.

Policy CS18 Countryside indicates that built development or other development should not have a significant adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

²⁷ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf>

The second part of the Local Plan, the **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD**, includes policy DM2 Development in the Countryside which supports the strategic policy CS18. It indicates that development should be in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing landscape.

It also includes policy DM13 Land Contamination and Pollution which seeks to ensure that development proposals are not adversely affected by or cause land contamination, landfill or land stability.

8.2 The baseline position (Soil and Landscape)

- 8.2.1 As illustrated on figure 8.1, apart from the urban / built up areas within the district, the majority of agricultural land is classified as Grade 3. It is important to differentiate whether this land is Grade 3a (which is best and most agricultural land) or Grade 3b (which is of a lesser quality).
- 8.2.2 Some detailed local surveys have been undertaken in support of planning applications. For example nearby to Sapcote, land has been identified as both Grade 3a and Grade 3b. It is therefore reasonable to assume that other parts of the district will consist of a similar mix of soil types.
- 8.2.3 The District has no national landscape designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The character types are shown on figure 8.2.
- 8.2.4 The Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment notes that the landscape within the district is broadly similar, consisting of gently undulating farmland intersected by transport routes and by the floodplains of the Rivers Sence, Soar and Rothley Brook. There are large settlements around the south westerly boundary of Leicester and a scattering of smaller settlements throughout the rest of the district.
- 8.2.5 There are also some large industrial and employment areas, mostly located in close proximity to the motorway. Quarrying activity is evident across the district. Localised changes in landscape character tend to occur around river valleys and towards the edges of the district. Croft Hill forms an important landscape feature within the district rising 60m above the surrounding land.
- 8.2.6 The assessment divides the district into eight landscape character types. The landscape character types identified are: Floodplain; Gently Rolling Farmland; Agricultural Parkland; Hills; Open Farmland; Urban Fringe; Wooded Farmland; and Rural Rolling Farmland. Within the eight landscape character types, fifteen landscape character areas are identified:
- Sence and Soar Floodplain
 - Soar Meadows
 - Kilby Meadows
 - Elmesthorpe Floodplain
 - Thurlaston Rolling Farmland
 - Stoney Stanton Rolling Farmland
 - Cosby Agricultural Parkland
 - Kilby Rural Rolling Farmland
 - Normanton Agricultural Parkland
 - Lubbesthorpe Agricultural Parkland
 - Croft Hill
 - Foston Open Farmland
 - Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe

- Rothley Brook Fringe
- Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland

8.2.7 In terms of settlement character, the assessment concludes that the settlements in the District are fairly similar in character although there are subtle differences in layout and buildings that provide distinction and a sense of place for each village.

8.3 Future trends

8.3.1 In the absence of a local plan, there would still be a policy framework for the protection of landscape character and soil resources. For example:

8.3.2 Core Strategy (Policy CS2) seeks a high quality environment that respects distinctive local character including landscape.

8.3.3 Policy CS18 indicates that built development or other development should not have a significant adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

8.3.4 The Delivery DPD (Policy DM2) indicates that development should be in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing landscape.

8.3.5 Conversely, there could be an increased likelihood of negative effects with regards to landscape character and a loss of soil resources due to a greater occurrence of ad-hoc development.

8.4 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

8.4.1 There are no national landscape designations but there is a need to protect local landscape and settlement characteristics including Croft Hill.

8.4.2 There is potential for loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

8.4.3 There are limited brownfield opportunities. Pressure for development could mean loss of countryside and impact on landscape and settlement character.

8.4.4 Potential for land contamination on sites but development may provide the opportunity to remediate such land.

8.5 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

8.5.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon soil and landscape. For these reasons, this topic has been '**scoped-in**' for the purposes of the SA process.

8.5.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

8. Protect landscape and townscape character and distinctiveness throughout the district

Will development occur in locations that are more sensitive to landscape change?

Is there potential to mitigate effects on landscape and incorporate green infrastructure enhancements?

9. Conserve the Borough's soils and make efficient and effective use of land.

Will there be a loss of Grade 3a land? If so, are there suitable alternative sites / locations that are Grade 3b or preferably non-agricultural / brownfield land?

Figure 10.1 Agricultural land classifications

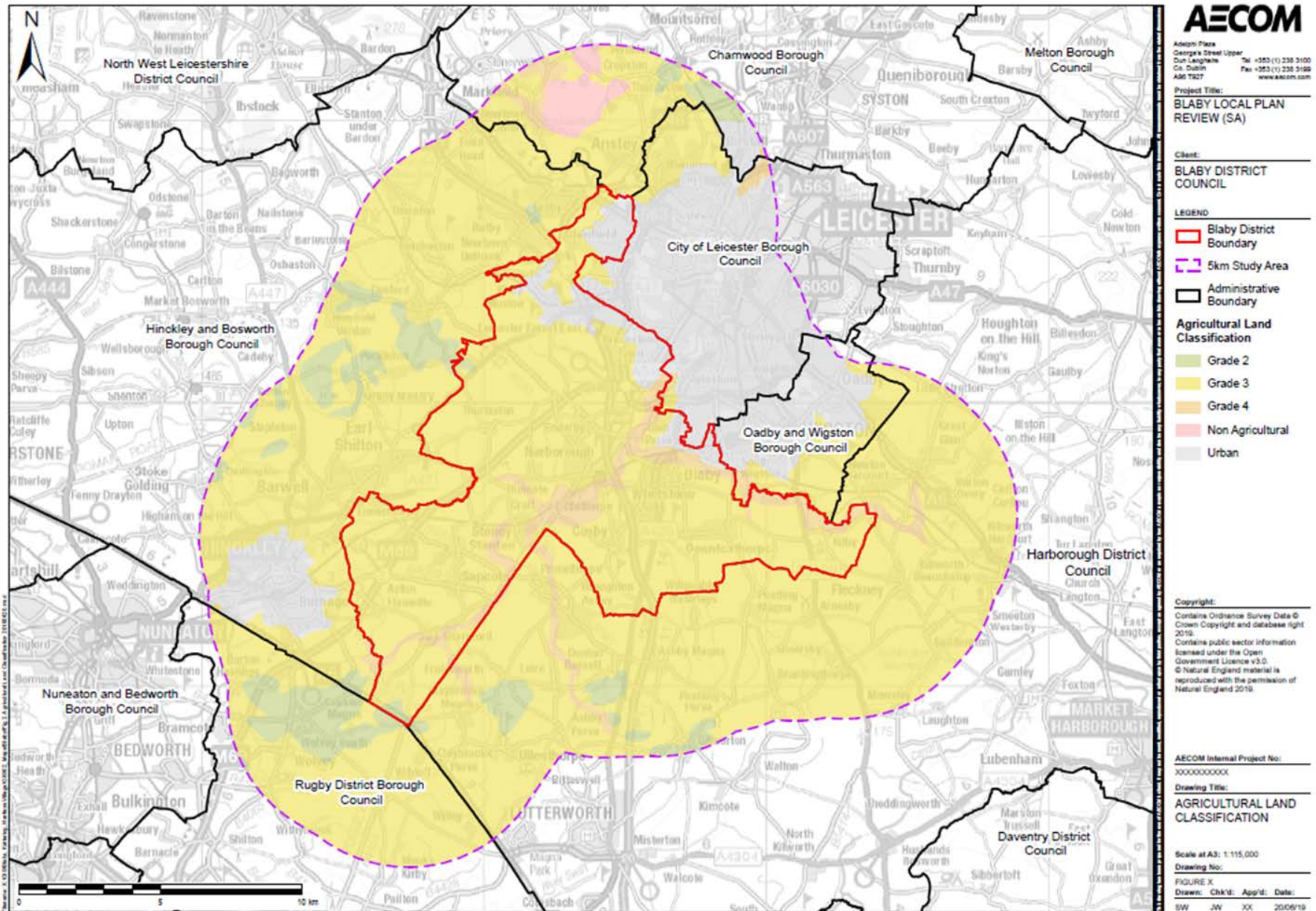
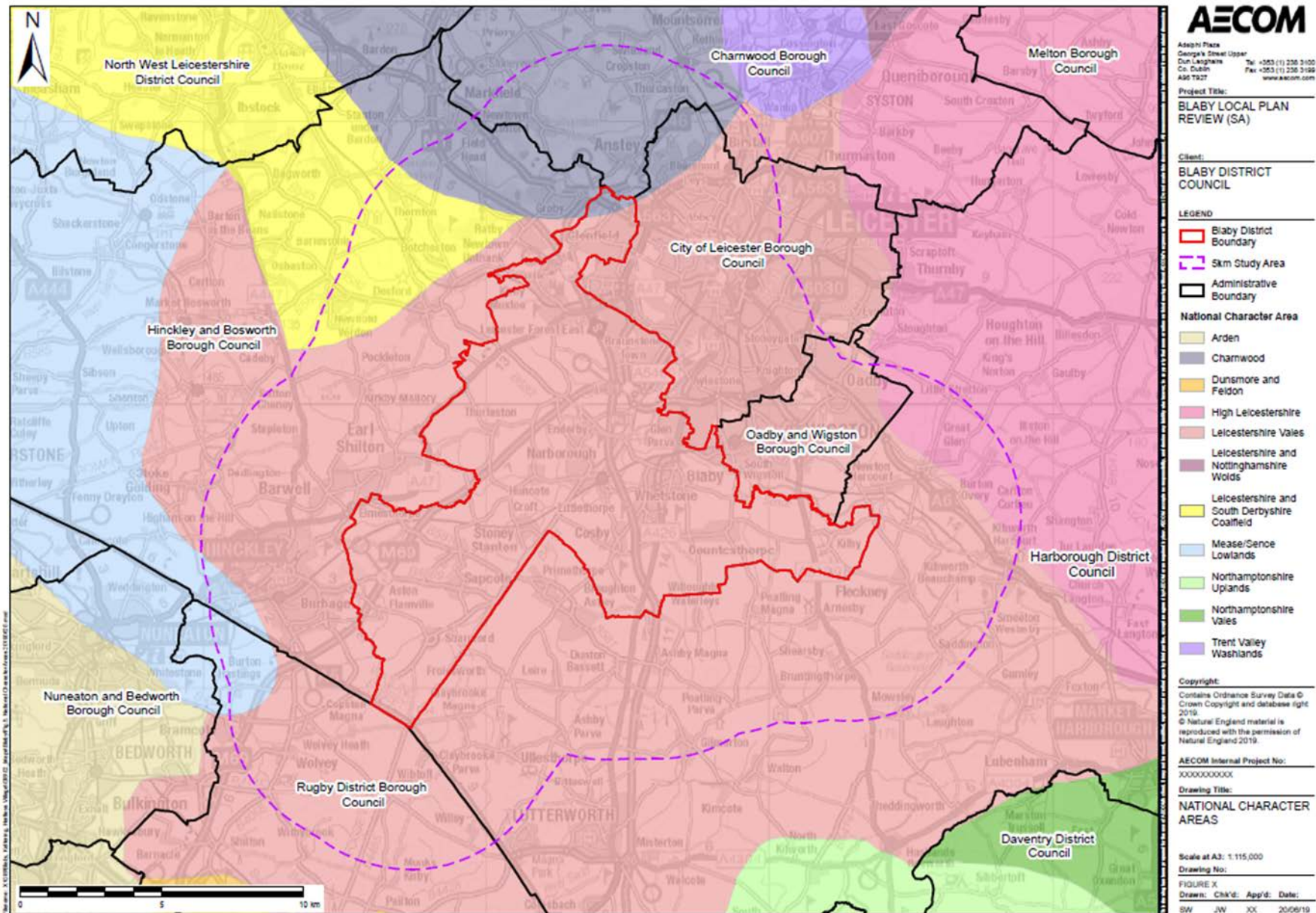


Figure 10.2 National Landscape Character Area



9. Environmental protection

9.1 Context

Water quality

European

The **European Water Framework Directive (WFD)** established a legal framework for managing the water environment across Europe. It focuses on establishing an integrated approach for the protection and sustainable use of the water environment.

This requires looking at the wider ecosystem as a whole, and taking into account the movement of water through the hydrological cycle.

The WFD also aims to prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, through the protection and improvement of the ecological condition of waters. It aims to achieve at least good status for all water bodies by 2021 (or 2027 where this is not possible).

The WFD is implemented through river basin management plans covering each river basin district. These, along with supporting plans and programmes, should set environmental objectives for groundwater and surface waters to achieve 'good' status.

Much of the policy relating to water management stems from European Directives. The government has however, identified an immediate need to increase resilience in the water sector to address pressure on water supplies.

National

The Government's **draft National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure 2018** sets out the need and government's policies for, development of nationally significant infrastructure projects related to water resources in England.

The draft policy statement builds on the Government's **A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018**. The Plan aims to deliver cleaner air and water in cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. The second goal of the plan is to achieve 'clean and plentiful water'. This will be achieved by:

- Improving at least three quarters of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable by:
 - Reducing the damaging abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater, ensuring that by 2021 the proportion of water bodies with enough water to support environmental standards increases from 82% to 90% for surface water bodies and from 72% to 77% for groundwater bodies.
 - Reaching or exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water as per our River Basin Management Plans.
 - Supporting OFWAT's ambitions on leakage, minimising the amount of water lost through leakage. Water companies to reduce leakage by at least an average of 15% by 2025.
 - Minimising by 2030 harmful bacteria in designated bathing waters and continuing to improve the cleanliness of waters.

The third goal of the plan is to achieve a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife.

On land and in freshwaters, this will be achieved by (in part):

- Restoring 75% of the one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term.

The plan also includes a number of additional measures which aim to improve water use efficiency and reduce the threat of flooding:

- Requiring new homes to be built in ways which reduce demands for water and improve flood resilience;
- Introducing new farming rules for water;
- Expanding the use of natural flood management solutions;
- Putting in place more sustainable drainage systems; and
- Making 'at-risk' properties more resilient to flooding.

The **NPPF** states that the provision of (sufficient) water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management should form part of the strategic policies of a local plan. This is should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. The NPPF also requires that all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.

The **Planning Practice Guidance** provides further information. It encourages local plans to consider water related issues through a 'catchment-based approach' (The guidance states that a 'catchment' is a geographic area defined naturally by surface water hydrology). This approach is the most appropriate method to underpin the delivery of the objectives of the European Water Framework Directive.

The **National Policy Statement for Waste Water** sets out the Government's policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure that fall within the definition of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Regional

The **Water Resources Regional Action Plan for the Midlands Region (2009)** states that the future of water resources in Midlands Region is uncertain. Pressure on water resources will grow from increases in population, changes in lifestyle, climate change, the development of new technologies, and from changes in the use of land. These pose challenges to the way water resources are managed, and as a result, the way water is valued will become more important²⁸

The Environment Agency updated the 8 river basin management plans (RBMPs), in 2015. (These are in a process of review, with the draft new RBMPs expected in late 2020). The purpose of RBMPs is to provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment. Blaby District falls within Soar catchment of the **Humber River Basin Management Plan 2015**. The priority issues to be tackled within this catchment are:

- Diffuse pollution from agriculture and urban areas;
- Modified river and wetland habitats;
- Limited understanding of the multiple benefits of rivers, wetlands and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

The catchment of the River Soar covers most of the county of Leicestershire, together with small areas of south Nottinghamshire and north east Warwickshire.

²⁸ Water Resources Strategy Regional Action Plan for Midlands Region, Environment Agency (2009)

The River Soar Catchment Partnership has been set up to support a catchment based approach to delivering water and environmental improvements. It is hosted by Trent River Trust and comprises of a wide range of organisations which include statutory organisations, NGOs, companies and local groups. The ambition of the partnership is set out in the catchment plan and partners are working together to deliver the identified projects.

The **Soar Catchment Management Plan (2018)**, written on behalf of the River Soar Catchment Partnership, describes the Soar catchment and the issues that need to be tackled. The plan identifies the key pressures within the catchment area:

- Diffuse pollution from roads and urban areas;
- Heavily modified river channels and loss of instream habitats;
- Rural point source and diffuse pollution;
- Separation of the river from its floodplain;
- Barriers to fish migration;
- Loss of riparian wetland habitats;
- Litter in the River Soar and its tributaries;
- Raised levels of phosphates;
- Risk of properties and roads flooding;
- Land use leading to flashy watercourses;
- Building and development too close to the watercourse;
- Lack of access to the river and conflicts of recreation users in sensitive areas; and
- Lack of community awareness and engagement with water and rivers.

To overcome the above issues the plan sets out the following long term objectives:

- Enhance biodiversity and natural processes;
- Support sustainable flood risk management;
- Work with disadvantaged communities;
- Promote rural livelihoods;
- Strengthen community involvement and recreation; and
- Improve water quality.

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD** Policy DM13 Land Contamination and Pollution seeks to ensure that development does not unacceptably adversely affect an aquifer or surface water feature that may result in groundwater or surface water pollution.

Air quality

National

Key messages from the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** include that Local Plans should:

- “Sustain and comply with limit values and national objectives for pollutants taking account of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and cumulative impacts from individual sites;
- Identify opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts, for example through traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision and enhancement.

Ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities, i.e. not add unreasonable restrictions to existing businesses/facilities. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in air quality management areas (AQMAs) is consistent with the local air quality action plan.”

New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

Planning Policy Guidance sets out principles on how planning can take account of the impact of new development on air quality; advises on how to consider light within the planning system; and explains the planning controls relating to the storage of hazardous substances and how to handle development proposals around hazardous establishments.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018 sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health.

It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.

There are six key areas to tackle including Chapter 4 on increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste.

The **Clean Air Strategy 2019** is the Government’s approach to tackling all sources of air pollution, making the air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy.

It notes the ambitious, legally binding international targets to reduce emissions of five of the most damaging air pollutants (fine particulate matter, ammonia, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, non-methane volatile organic compounds) by 2020 and 2030 and proposes tough new goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution (PM2.5). Key actions include:

- new legislation to tackle air pollution;
- national and local powers to control air pollution problems;
- Clean Air Zones to lower emissions from all sources of pollution.

It sets out actions in terms of: nitrogen and natural habitats; clean growth and innovation; electricity, heat and industrial policies; shifting to cleaner power sources; cleaner road transport by moving to zero exhaust emission vehicles and encouraging the cleanest modes of transport for passengers and freight (including active travel).

Regional

The **East Midlands Air Quality Network Air Quality Emissions and Mitigation Planning Guidance Note 2018** aims to improve air quality across the East Midlands and thus improve the environment and health of the population. This will be achieved by either preventing new emission sources or encouraging emission reductions, physical activity and health lifestyle choices. It aims to provide a consistent approach to air quality in the planning regime across the East Midlands. The document provides developers with clear information as to what is required and how planning applications are evaluated in terms of air quality, which should help to speed up the planning process.

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objective 11:

- To deliver the transport needs of the District and to encourage and develop the use of more sustainable forms of transport (including walking, cycling, other forms of non-motorised transport and public transport).

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes policy DM13 Land Contamination and Pollution which seeks to ensure that development proposals are not adversely affected by or cause air quality, noise and light pollution issues.

Policy DM14 Hazardous Sites and Installations seeks to keep hazardous sites and installations separate from housing and other vulnerable development.

Blaby Air Quality Action Plan 2014 sets out the local measures to be implemented in pursuit of the air quality objectives. Measures include:

- For the M1 (AQMA 2 and AQMA 3) – Smart Motorways and Painted Chevrons to manage traffic and smooth traffic flows, reducing the speed limit, noise barriers to disperse emissions, catalytic paints to reduce NOX concentrations, variable message signs to encourage eco-driving.
- For the A47 Leicester Forest East (AQMA 3) – Highway improvements associated with the Lubbethorpe SUE including junction improvement and bus lane.
- For Enderby Road Whetstone (AQMA 4B) – investigate details of traffic flow and identify local traffic management schemes.
- For A5460 Narborough Road South (AQMA 1) – monitoring only.

Planning has a significant role to play in terms of helping to integrate land-use and transport to encourage sustainable development, and to secure future improvements to air quality. Although development will usually have an incremental impact on emissions of air pollutants (largely through increased traffic flows and internal heating systems) sustainable schemes can also be a positive force for change, introducing sustainable transport choices not only for residents or users of the development, but for the wider community.

Blaby Air Quality Strategy 2018 includes a number of themes:

- Theme 1: Air Quality and Transport in Blaby District - Work with Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Highways England to develop policies to improve air quality, to mitigate, manage and monitor progress. Increase tree planting along road corridors where this is feasible, including replanting when trees are removed.
- Theme 2 – Air Quality and Planning – embed air quality in the Local Plan, integrate the guidance of the East Midlands Air Quality Network and support the implementation of the Tourism Blueprint relating to the promotion of alternatives to car use.
- Theme 3 – Air Quality and Public Health – work with the Air Quality Public Health Partnership, schools and businesses (reduce impact of traffic) and the Development Services Team (dust protocol).
- Theme 4 – Air Quality in the Junction 21 Area of Blaby District – Complete Feasibility Study of measures to bring forward compliance, undertake actions that result from this and work with Leicestershire County Council to improve the congestion issues around Fosse Park.
- Theme 5 - Air Quality Monitoring - Continue existing monitoring and if practicable monitor PM2.5 at a location in the District.

9.2 The baseline position (Water quality and resources)

- 9.2.1 The Ecological Status of a waterbody is determined through analysis of its constituent biological Quality Elements (i.e. fish, invertebrates, macrophytes and phytobenthos). The overall status is determined by the lowest element status.
- 9.2.2 The 2016 Overall WFD Waterbody Status classifies all Watercourses in the District as either Moderate or Poor”.
- 9.2.3 Table 9.1 below sets out a summary of the position for each monitored watercourse in the District.

Table 9.1. Water quality classifications, trends and influential factors

Waterbody	Overall WFD Classification (2016)	WFD Ecological Status	WFD Chemical Status	Trend	Influential factors
Countesthorpe Brook from source to Sence	Moderate	Moderate	Good	No change since 2013	Agriculture and rural land management. Water industry
Whetstone Brook Catchment (trib of River Soar)	Moderate	Moderate	Good	No change since 2013	Agriculture and rural land management. Sewerage treatment and discharge.
Thurlaston Brook catchment (trib of Soar)	Poor	Poor	Good	Ecological status went to moderate in 2014, then deteriorated again	Agriculture and rural land management. Water industry
Soar from Thurlaston Brook to Sence	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	No change since 2013	Agriculture and rural land management. Water industry Urban transport drainage
Lubbesthorpe Brook Catchment (trib of Soar)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Overall classification was good in 2013.	Urban transport drainage. Flood infrastructure. Agriculture and rural land management.
Sence from Countesthorpe Brook to Soar	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Ecological status has deteriorated, but chemical status has improved. Overall status was moderate in 2013.	Urban transport drainage Sewerage discharge

- 9.2.4 Severn Trent Water's (STW's) Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) published in 2019 shows that in the Strategic Grid Water Resource zone where Blaby is located there is a strong likelihood that STW can meet the demand for water over the next 25 years.
- 9.2.5 Water is not freely available in the STW's Strategic Grid Resource Zone and therefore the Local Planning Authority would need to be sure that there are resources available to supply extra demand incurred with new development. Developments must include details of the source of water requirements. Abstraction Licensing Strategies specifically for the River Soar Catchment details how much water is available for abstraction across Blaby.

9.3 The baseline position (Air Quality)

- 9.3.1 Within Blaby District, there are five Air Quality Management Areas. Concentrations of pollutants are generally decreasing with the exception of Mill Hill, Enderby (the most recently declared AQMA). Croft Quarry is a source of PM 2.5 pollutants due to dust.
- 9.3.2 All AQMAs were declared after monitoring and modelling showed and exceedance of the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide of 40µg/m³:
- AQMA 1: A5460 Narborough Road South
 - AQMA 2: M1 corridor in Enderby and Narborough
 - AQMA 3: M1 corridor between Thorpe Astley and Leicester Forest East
 - AQMA 4B: Enderby Road, Whetstone
 - AQMA 6: Mill Hill, Enderby
- 9.3.3 Monitoring data shows that generally within the AQMAs the concentrations of pollutants are decreasing. However, there are increasing and elevated concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in the area of Mill Hill in Enderby.
- 9.3.4 This area exceeded the annual mean air quality objectives and, as result, an AQMA was declared in January 2018.
- 9.3.5 No other monitoring location in the district recorded an exceedance of air quality objectives in 2017.
- 9.3.6 There have been no exceedances of PM10 air quality objectives at the monitoring locations. However Mill Hill, Enderby remains an area of concern and so continuous monitoring of particulates will continue at this location.
- 9.3.7 Monitoring of PM 2.5 annual mean concentrations were undertaken in June and July 2017. The results show that Croft Quarry, the main source of PM 2.5 local to this area, must continue to be monitored and act accordingly with their PM 2.5 Action Plan.
- 9.3.8 The Council continue to actively monitor this through the permitting process regime for this site.

9.4 Future trends

Air quality

- 9.4.1 Concentrations of pollutants are generally decreasing with the exception of Mill Hill, Enderby (the most recently declared AQMA). These trends could potentially continue as more cleaner vehicles are introduced to the network. Existing planning policy would also seek to ensure that new development was mindful of contributing to air pollution as well as avoiding exposure. However, opposing forces include a likely continuation of car usage, and pressure from new development; which is typically connected to existing road networks.
- 9.4.2 In the absence of a new plan, strategic infrastructure would be less well planned, and so air quality could be negatively affected in this respect.

Water quality and resources

- 9.4.3 Poor water quality can take a long time to be reversed. However, there are programmes in place to help improve and restore water quality throughout the region, which could facilitate improvements.
- 9.4.4 There is an increasing risk of impact on water quality according to Environment Agency predictions.
- 9.4.5 There are several measures that will need to be taken into consideration to ensure that growth does not lead to a deterioration in water quality. It is difficult to predict the extent to which such measures will be successful though. For example, water companies will seek to manage increased waste water and sewage effluent load produced by new and existing development. There are also 5 year Asset Management Plans in place to ensure that appropriate investment is planned and delivered.
- 9.4.6 SUDs could help to manage pollution from runoff resulting from changes in land-use.

9.5 Key sustainability issues

Air quality

- Identification of opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts can include energy, heat, industry, energy efficiency and sustainable transport. Clean Air Zones should be considered when planning for better air quality within the region.
- There are five Air Quality Management Areas in the District due to exceedance of nitrogen dioxide levels as a result of traffic levels in the areas.
- Croft Quarry is a source of PM2.5 pollutants due to dust.

Water quality and resources

- Protecting and enhancing the quality of watercourses is key environmental objective that the Planning system plays an important role in.
- The 'overall' WFD classification of water bodies in the District was moderate or poor in 2016.
- The main threats to water quality are agricultural practices, rural land management, water treatment and discharge and urban run-off from transport.
- As there are increases in population, there may be requirements to ensure expansions / upgrading of current sewerage are in place.
- Water resources are not freely available, so there will be a need to understand and manage demand from new development.

9.6 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

- 9.6.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon different elements of environmental protection. For these reasons, this topic has been 'scoped-in' for the purposes of the SA process.
- 9.6.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

Water Quality

10. Improve the water quality status of the watercourses running through the district; seeking to achieve 'good' overall status for WFD classification.

What are the risks of pollution and sedimentation?
Is there sufficient headroom at waste water treatment plants to accommodate new development?

Will land use changes lead to an increase or decrease in pollutant run off? (For example, agricultural land practices, urban transport).

Will recreational pressures have an effect upon watercourses?

SA Objective

Prompts

11. Reduce emissions of pollutants that contribute to poor air quality (particularly from traffic); whilst ensuring that new and existing communities are protected from the harmful effects that poor air quality causes.

Will there be an increase in car trips and congestion that could exacerbate poor air quality within the district (particularly within the 5 AQMAs)?

Will new communities be created in areas that are susceptible to poor air quality?

What measures will be taken to ensure that communities are less exposed to poor air quality?

10. Climate Change and Flood Risk

10.1 Context

European

In 2018, the European Commission released **A Clean Planet for all - A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy**. This sets out a strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 whilst ensuring social fairness for a just transition.

The EU Adaptation Strategy (2013) Requires Member States to prepare comprehensive resilience strategies and ensure climate proofing through a range of sectors.

National

The **DEFRA National Adaptation Programme (2018-2023)** seeks to achieve resilience for the natural environment, build ecological resilience, identify and address risks to infrastructure. It specifically states the need for Local Plans to steer development away from areas of flood risk and to make use of green infrastructure for resilience.

The **NPPF** says that planning should support the transition to a low carbon future. It should help to shape places to contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, encourage the re-use of existing resources and support renewable and low carbon energy.

Local Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change taking account of flood risk, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Include policies to support measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change. In particular, new development should be planned for in ways that:

- Avoid increased vulnerability to climate change impacts by managing risks for development in vulnerable areas
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through location, orientation and design of new development

To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, Local Plans should include a positive strategy, consider suitable areas and identify opportunities for development to draw energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy.

Planning Policy Guidance provides advice on how planning can identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in plan-making to address the potential impacts of climate change. It gives guidance on developing policies for renewable energy and identifies the planning considerations for a range of renewable sources such as hydropower, active solar technology, solar farms and wind turbines. Wind energy development can only be granted planning permission if the suitable area is identified in a Local Plan and backed by local communities.

The inclusion of SuDS within developments, are seen as an opportunity to enhance ecological and amenity value, and promote Green Infrastructure (incorporating above ground facilities into the development landscape strategy).

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018 sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. There are six key areas to tackle, including Chapter 6 on protecting and improving the global environment which considers the issue of climate change.

The UK is set to leave the European Union and recognises the shared interest in local action on climate change and the mutual benefit of a broad agreement on climate change cooperation. The UK's **draft National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)** outlines several strategic dimensions which support the UK's ambitious energy and climate change legislation.

The five dimensions include: energy security, energy efficiency, decarbonisation, internal energy market, research, innovation and competitiveness.

Key policies have been communicated within the NECP. These policies include energy supply, energy consumption across homes, businesses and public sector, transport, industrial processes, waste, agriculture and land use and forestry.

Regional

Leicestershire County Council (LCC), as a Lead Local Flood Authority, is responsible for management of Local Flood Risk. LCC's most recent **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)** identified the following Priority Settlements, within Blaby District, as being at risk from surface water flooding:

- **Blaby, Narborough & Whetstone** (within the top 5 most at risk across the county);
- Kirby Muxloe, Leicester Forest East & Braunstone; Glenfield; Countesthorpe; and Sharnford (within top 40 most at risk)

The strategy sets out the following objectives for managing Local Flood Risk:

1. Work Collaboratively
2. Improve Understanding and Awareness
3. Enhance the Natural and Historic Environment
4. Improve Resilience
5. Encourage Sustainable Development
6. Use Resources Effectively
7. Promote Riparian Responsibilities

The Environment Agency updated the 8 river basin management plans (RBMPs), in 2015. The purpose of RBMPs is to provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment. Blaby District falls within Soar catchment of the **Humber River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2015**. This draft plan is in the process of review and is within the next phase of consultation scheduled for Oct 2019 to April 2020 with the draft new RBMP due late 2020.

The priority issues to be tackled within this catchment are:

- Diffuse pollution from agriculture and urban areas;
- Modified river and wetland habitats;
- Limited understanding of the multiple benefits of rivers, wetlands and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

The catchment of the River Soar covers most of the county of Leicestershire, together with small areas of south Nottinghamshire and north east Warwickshire. It is one of the major tributaries of the River Trent.

The **Soar Catchment Management Plan (2018)**, written on behalf of the River Soar Catchment Partnership, describes the Soar catchment and the issues that need to be tackled. The plan identifies the key pressures within the catchment area in relation to flooding:

- Heavily modified river channels and loss of instream habitats;
- Separation of the river from its floodplain;
- Loss of riparian wetland habitats;
- Risk of properties and roads flooding;
- Land use leading to flashy watercourses;
- Building and development too close to the watercourse;

To overcome the above issues the plan sets out the following long term objectives:

- Enhance biodiversity and natural processes;
- Support sustainable flood risk management;
- Work with disadvantaged communities;
- Promote rural livelihoods;
- Strengthen community involvement and recreation; and
- Improve water quality.

The **National Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy**, which is due for publication in Spring 2020, sets several strategic objectives with the aims of establishing Environmental Net Gain (ENG) in the planning system; allowing us to maintain and improve the nation's resilience to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.

The **Joint Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2014** considered all sources of flooding (including fluvial, pluvial, groundwater, canal, reservoir and sewer flooding) and included an assessment of all flood defences.

Section 8 of the SFRA recommends the use of Sustain Drainage Systems (SuDS) and states that local planning bodies should:

- Promote the use of SuDS for the management of run off
- Ensure policies and decisions on applications support and compliment the building regulations on sustainable rainwater drainage, giving priority to infiltration over watercourses, then sewer
- Incorporate favourable policies within development plans
- Adopt policies for incorporating SuDS requirements into Local Plans
- Encourage developers to utilise SuDS wherever practicable
- Develop joint strategies with sewerage undertakers and the Environment Agency to further encourage the use of SuDS.

The inclusion of SuDS within developments, are seen as an opportunity to enhance ecological and amenity value, and promote Green Infrastructure (incorporating above ground facilities into the development landscape strategy).

Leicestershire County Council (LCC), as a Lead Local Flood Authority, is responsible for management of Local Flood Risk. LCC's most recent **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)** identified the following Priority Settlements, within Blaby District, as being at risk from surface water flooding:

- **Blaby, Narborough & Whetstone** (within the top 5 most at risk across the county);
- Kirby Muxloe, Leicester Forest East & Braunstone; Glenfield; Countesthorpe; and Sharnford (within top 40 most at risk)

The strategy sets out the following objectives for managing Local Flood Risk:

8. Work Collaboratively
9. Improve Understanding and Awareness
10. Enhance the Natural and Historic Environment
11. Improve Resilience
12. Encourage Sustainable Development
13. Use Resources Effectively
14. Promote Riparian Responsibilities

Approaches to help reduce surface water flood risk include:

- Blue corridors, key components of green infrastructure, are designated for the primary purpose of conveying water, particularly in times of flood:
 - Gradual reinstatement of green open spaces (within existing and new developments), together with the introduction of wetlands and woodlands;
 - Seeking opportunities when new development and redevelopment opportunities arise;
 - Identify and realise areas of floodplain reinstatement in conjunction with green and blue infrastructure. This approach will only have ecological, environmental and recreational improvements.
- The use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) (SuDS) aim to mimic natural drainage processes by limiting the rate and volume of surface water runoff and treating water to improve quality. Components of a SuDS system could include: green roofs, infiltration trenches, permeable paving, underground storage, wetlands and ponds).
- New development should not increase flood risk to the areas upstream or downstream of the development. Development that actively reduces runoff rates, volume and flood risk is encouraged.

The Strategy also recommends that the evidence base provided in the SFRA should inform the Green Infrastructure strategy for the joint SFRA area.

Local

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy** includes strategic objective ix):

- To minimise the risk of flooding (and other hazards) to property, infrastructure and people.

Policy CS22 – Flood Risk Management seeks to ensure that all development minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to flooding. This will be achieved via:

- Directing development to locations at the lowest risk of flooding;
- Using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);

- Managing surface water run-off; and
- Consulting with the Environment Agency in the management of flood risk.

The supporting text to the policy also states that site specific opportunities to reduce overall flood risk will form part of the development management process.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD** Policy DM13 Land Contamination and Pollution seeks to ensure that development does not unacceptably adversely affect an aquifer or surface water feature that may result in groundwater or surface water pollution.

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objectives 8 and 9:

- To minimise energy use and use of valuable resources and to encourage renewable energy production in suitable locations;
- To minimise the risk of flooding (and other hazards) to property, infrastructure and people.

Policy CS21 Climate Change seeks to support development that mitigates and adapts to climate change. It sets out how the Council will contribute to national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by:

- Directing development to the most sustainable locations;
- Seeking site layout and design principles to reduce energy demand and increase efficiency;
- Encouraging the use of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy.

It also indicates how the Council will ensure development minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to climate change and flooding by:

- Supporting innovations which have a positive impact on climate change adaptation;
- Managing flood risk.

The **Blaby District Growth Plan 2019** builds on the Blaby District Local Plan focusing on making Blaby a great place to live in terms of the delivery of housing, infrastructure and jobs. It is an ambitious plan based on planning new communities, on a large scale which are exemplar developments, deliver real innovation, are sustainable, and most importantly are great places to live.

It sets out six fundamental non-negotiable principles, each with their own objectives, to achieving the Council's ambition. Relevant principles include 'integrated and self-sustaining' and considers how new communities will be self-sustaining and well integrated to reduce commuting times, reduce the carbon footprint and increase well-being. Objectives include: planning for 'whole life' communities, long term stewardship and ownership and large scale development that is zero carbon / energy positive.

The **Council's Climate Local Commitment Plan 2013** includes the following themes:

- Promoting climate change resilience, mitigation and adaptation measures for local people, businesses and wildlife;
- Supporting renewable and low carbon energy and energy efficiency;
- Reducing carbon emissions;
- Promoting sustainable transport modes; and
- Making use of green infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

10.2 The baseline position (Greenhouse gas emissions)

- 10.2.1 The average consumption of Ordinary Domestic Electricity, Consumption of Economy and Consumption of Domestic Gas in Blaby and England is outlined in the table below.
- 10.2.2 It shows that usage of 'ordinary' electricity has remained fairly similar between 2011-2014 in Blaby, but that the national average has decreased. Nevertheless, the average usage in 2014 was still slightly lower for Blaby than England. The pattern is similar for 'economy' electricity, though the England average is much higher than Blaby.
- 10.2.3 With regards to gas, Blaby residents use more on average compared to the national average, but both have experienced a decrease in the last four years.

Table 10.1: Average consumption of economy and ordinary domestic electricity and gas.²⁹

	Year	Blaby	England
Average Consumption of Ordinary Domestic Electricity (Kilowatt Hours)	2014	3,632	3,692
	2013	3,611	3,687
	2012	3,597	3,692
	2011	3,682	3,777
Average Consumption of Economy Domestic Electricity (Kilowatt Hours)	2014	4,249	5,288
	2013	4,287	5,244
	2012	4,434	5,574
	2011	4,458	5,478
Average Consumption of Domestic Gas (Kilowatt Hours)	2014	14,268	13,226
	2013	14,738	13,660
	2012	15,258	14,043
	2011	15,395	14,173

- 10.2.4 With regards to emissions, Blaby District has experienced a decrease in CO² emissions between 2005 – 2013 (see **Table 10.2**).
- 10.2.5 The national average (see **table 10.3**) has decreased by 21% between the years 2005 – 2013, whereas the figures for Blaby have decreased by only 15%.
- 10.2.6 The main contributor to carbon dioxide emissions in Blaby District is domestic sources; which has only decreased slightly over 8 years.

²⁹ National Statistics: UK Local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 – 2016. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2016>

Table 10.2: Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita 2005 – 2012 for Blaby District³⁰

	Industrial and commercial (t CO ₂)	Domestic (t CO ₂)	Road and transport (t CO ₂)	Total (t CO ₂)
Blaby District				
2005	2.2	2.5	1.6	6.3
2006	2.2	2.5	1.6	6.3
2007	2.1	2.4	1.6	6.2
2008	2.1	2.4	1.6	6.1
2009	1.8	2.2	1.6	5.5
2010	1.9	2.3	1.5	5.8
2011	1.8	2.0	1.5	5.3
2012	1.9	2.2	1.5	5.6
2013	1.9	2.1	1.4	5.5

Table 10.3: Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita 2005 – 2012 for England³¹

	Industrial and commercial (t CO ₂)	Domestic (t CO ₂)	Road and transport (t CO ₂)	Total (t CO ₂)
England				
2005	3.0	2.5	1.7	7.2
2006	2.9	2.5	1.7	7.1
2007	2.8	2.4	1.7	6.9
2008	2.7	2.4	1.6	6.7
2009	2.4	2.1	1.5	6.0
2010	2.5	2.3	1.5	6.3
2011	2.2	2.0	1.5	5.7
2012	2.4	2.1	1.4	5.9
2013	2.3	2.0	1.4	5.7

³⁰ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions Blaby³¹ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions England

10.3 The baseline position (Flood risk and climate change adaptation)

- 10.3.1 Parts of Blaby District are within Flood Zone 2 and 3 (Figure 10.1).
- 10.3.2 There are areas which are also susceptible to surface water flooding
- 10.3.3 The River Sence is a key source of flooding as it is a main river forming the north-eastern boundary of the Plan area. The River Sence is in the preliminary stages of being re-modelled to cover the Blaby area. This is currently due for release towards the end of 2021.
- 10.3.4 The SFRA states that the extensive flood plain of the River Soar, Whetstone Brook, the River Sence and the River Soar around the urban areas of Croft, Blaby, Whetstone and Narborough are at the potential greatest risk to fluvial flooding within the district. This includes significant historic flood events along the River Soar in Narborough, Littlethorpe and Sharnford (in November 2012). Thorpe Astley is also identified as having a history of surface water flooding. Developments in particular of a residential use proposed within flood Zones 2 and 3, should be informed by appropriate and relevant flood risk modelling through a site specific flood risk assessment.

10.4 Future trends

- 10.4.1 At a national level the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team have estimated that the average temperature may increase by 2.5°C and 2.2°C in summer and winter, respectively. This will have an impact on the local community. To support a resilient district, policy to include the promotion of climate change mitigation and resilience to the potential effects of climate change are encouraged.
- 10.4.2 The key concerns for climate change in Blaby District is that it has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the District, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. Previous trends show that CO₂ has decreased, however if new infrastructure, roads and housing are built with no plan to suggest climate change initiatives, the CO₂ may increase intermittently.
- 10.4.3 The risks associated with climate change are likely to increase as development increases (including surface water flooding) with a need for resilience and adaptation. It has also been noted that no water cycle study has been undertaken for the District, which will need to be addressed.
- 10.4.4 In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita emissions are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. However road transport and domestic sources are likely to be increasing contributors proportionally.
- 10.4.5 In the absence of a new local plan, existing plan policies and the NPPF would form the basis for managing development.
- 10.4.6 With regards to flooding, these would primarily be Core Strategy Policies CS21 (which seeks to address adaptation and flood risk), and Policy CS22 (which seeks to manage the location of development and minimise surface water run-off, whilst requiring SUDs). These policies are likely to lead to an improvement in flood risk management if applied consistently and fully.
- 10.4.7 With regards to climate change mitigation, Policy CS21 also seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

10.4.8 Core Strategy (Policy CS21) supports development that mitigates and adapts to climate change. It sets out the approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by:

- Directing development to the most sustainable locations;
- Seeking site layout and design principles to reduce energy demand and increase efficiency;
- Encouraging the use of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy.
- It also indicates ways to ensure development minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to climate change and flooding by supporting innovations which have a positive impact upon climate change adaptation.

10.5 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

10.5.1 The NPPF and other important policy document promote a radical move towards a low carbon future by reducing the level of greenhouse gas emissions.

10.5.2 The NPPG notes that development should take place away from flood risk zones.

10.5.3 While the overall CO2 emissions for the Blaby district are lower than both regional and national levels – these have been decreasing at a lower rate. The District has an above average reading of CO2 emissions per capita, in particular road transport CO2 and carbon energy.

10.6 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

10.6.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon climate change. For these reasons, this topic has been ‘**scoped-in**’ for the purposes of the SA process.

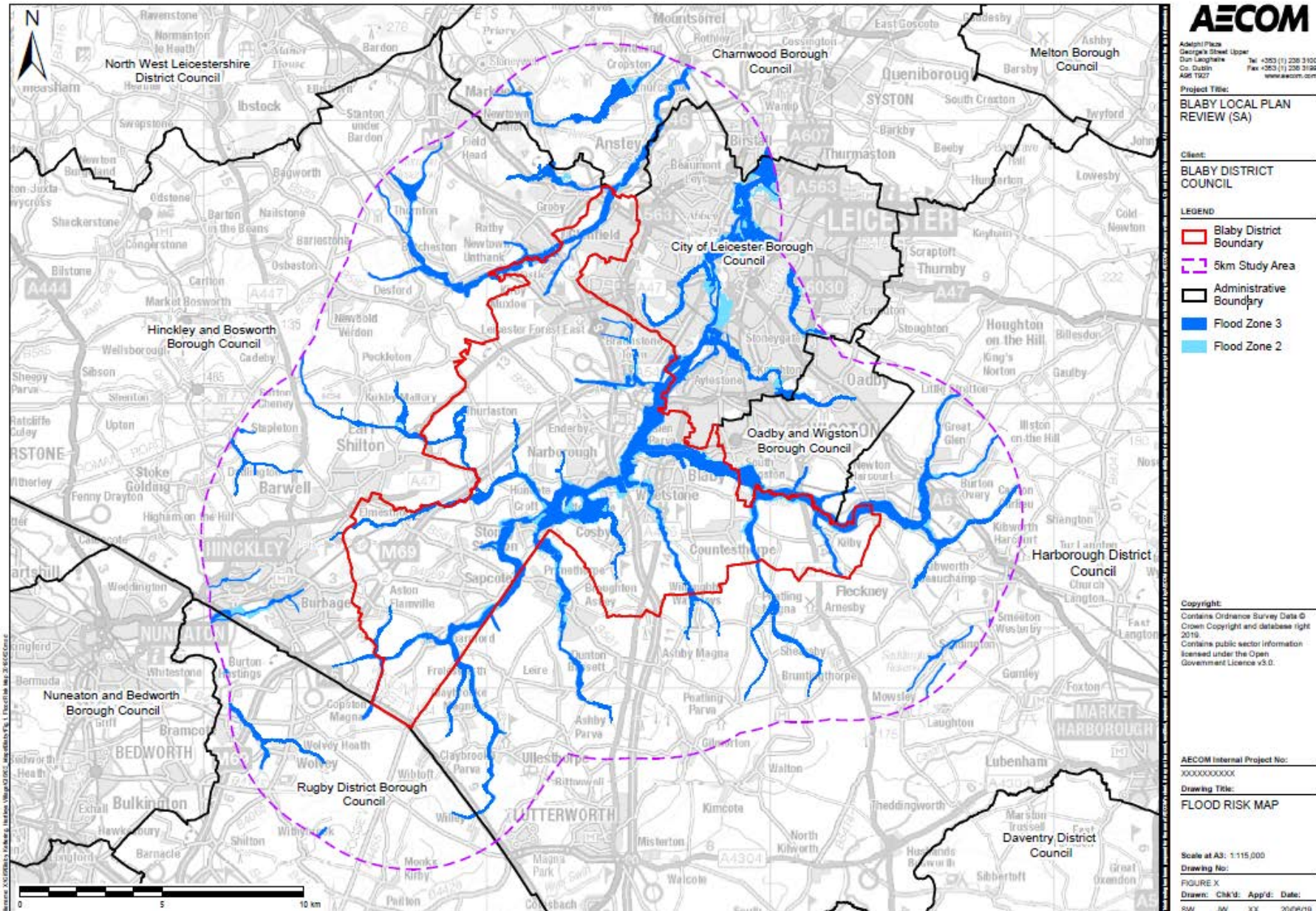
10.6.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

SA Objective	Prompts
	Will new development be located in areas of lower flood risk? (Especially when there are suitable alternatives).
12. Ensure that existing and new development is resilient to the effects of climate change, particularly flood risk.	How will surface water run-off and drainage be affected?
13. Support the move to a low carbon economy.	How will wider resilience to climate change impacts be affected?
	Will opportunities to achieve higher standards of resource efficiency in new development be taken?
	Would it support a reduction in greenhouse gases?

Figure 10.1 Flood Zones



11. Economy

11.1 Context

National

An overarching objective of the NPPF is to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Local plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area taking account of unmet needs from neighbouring areas. Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development.

To support economic growth, planning policies should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which encourages economic growth;
- Set criteria or identify sites for inward investment to meet anticipated needs;
- Seek to address potential barriers to investment;
- Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan;
- Recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries, and for storage and distribution operations of various scales;
- Provide for large-scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, such as interchanges for rail freight, public transport projects and roadside services, all of which either generate employment or have an impact on economic activity in an area;
- Support the rural economy.

The NPPF says that the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities should be supported, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.

The Government's **National Policy Statement for National Networks** sets out the need for, and Government's policies to deliver, development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) on the national road and rail networks in England. This includes creating networks:

- With the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs;
- To support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety;
- To support the delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy;
- To join up our communities and link effectively to each other.

The Government's **Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future date** sets out four Grand Challenges to put the United Kingdom at the forefront of the industries of the future: AI and Data Economy, Future of Mobility, Clean Growth, and Ageing Society.

Regional

The **Midlands Engine Strategy** sets out the actions the Government is taking to address productivity barriers across the Midlands, enabling businesses to create more jobs, export more goods and services, and grow their productivity. Five key objectives are listed:

- Improving connectivity in order to raise productivity;
- Strengthening skills in order to make the Midlands a more attractive location for businesses;
- Supporting enterprise and innovation in order to foster a more dynamic regional economy;
- Promoting the Midlands nationally and internationally in order to maximise trade and investment in the region;
- Enhancing quality of life in order to attract and retain skilled workers, as well as to foster the local tourist economy.

The Midlands Engine Strategy identifies the growth potential of major employment areas, including East Midlands Airport, East Midlands Gateway, enterprise zones at MIRA Technology Park, Hinckley and at the Loughborough and Leicester Enterprise Zone, the logistics and distribution industry and the potential of Leicester City Centre.

The Midlands Engine Partnership responded with the **Midlands Engine Vision for Growth 2017**. It includes priorities for investment to enable the Midlands to contribute to the UK's Industrial Strategy and drive Britain's post-Brexit growth. Delivery of the Midlands Connect transport strategy is noted as a key priority as well as the importance of the Midlands location within the 'golden triangle' for logistics.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) prepared the **Leicester and Leicestershire Local Industrial Strategy Prospectus 2018**. The Prospectus identifies five themes as Growth Opportunities: Space Technologies; Life Sciences – Health and Medical Technologies; Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Advanced Logistics; and Textiles – Design and Manufacturing.

The LLEP's **Strategic Economic Plan 2014** covers the period to 2020. Blaby is included as part of the South West Leicestershire Growth Area with its mix of key commercial and employment hubs, the M1, M69 and A5 corridors, Sustainable Urban Extensions and, in the future, where there will be key investment in the Nuneaton to Felixstowe freight line (that runs through Blaby District).

The Leicester and Leicestershire Councils and the LLEP prepared the **Strategic Growth Plan 2018** to shape the future of Leicester and Leicestershire to 2050.

The Plan focuses on four key matters: delivering new housing, supporting the economy, identifying essential infrastructure, and protecting our environment and built heritage. It includes housing and employment requirements.

For Blaby, the Strategic Growth Plan proposes the following amount of employment land:

Employment Land Hectares	2011 to 2031	2011 to 2036	Beyond 2036
B1a/b	37 - 45	47-48	Not known
B1c/B2	15	19	
Small B8	10	12	

Large B8 employment floorspace is identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study (2015, and subsequent refresh).

The Strategic Growth Plan recognises that significant and new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester and Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services. The Plan proposes:

- Focusing growth in areas close existing employment clusters and opportunities and new infrastructure proposals (Fosse Park Retail Centre is identified as an economic growth area within the Plan as a place/activity highlighted in the Midlands Engine Strategy, 2017);
- Focus development 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 are: Leicester: Our Central City, the A46 Priority Growth Corridor and the A5 Improvement Corridor;
- 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.

Local

The Vision of the Council's **Blaby Plan 2018-2021** is that 'Blaby District is made up of thriving and vibrant communities where people are happy to live work and visit'. The ambitions include a place to work where:

- A thriving and prosperous local economy creates an environment for innovation, investment, growth.
- Partners work together to develop a modern, skilled workforce.
- A strong business sector contributes to the well-being of employees and the local community.
-

To deliver these ambitions, the Council will support local business development and growth and work with partners to deliver high quality, accessible job opportunities.

The **Blaby District Growth Plan 2019** builds on the Blaby Plan and focuses on the theme of making Blaby a great place to live in terms of the delivery of housing, infrastructure and jobs. It is an ambitious plan based on planning new communities, on a large scale which are exemplar developments, deliver real innovation, are sustainable, and most importantly are great places to live.

Blaby District Growth Plan is not a statutory plan but a link between the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and the Local Plan. It provides a strong framework for the Local Plan. A key aspiration is that development does not happen at the expense of existing communities where recent expansion has stretched roads, schools and healthcare.

Consider that housing growth is preferable in the form of freestanding new communities and garden villages.

It sets out six fundamental non-negotiable principles, each with their own objectives, to achieving the Council's ambition. One such principle is accessible for employment, business and skills where the priority is to support businesses whether at the start-up or growing stage. Objectives include: new sites to support market demand and creating links to local labor market and developing skills.

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objectives 10 and 12

:

- To provide the appropriate quantity, quality and mix of employment opportunities to meet the needs of the District's current and future populations, and to meet strategic employment, education and training needs;
- To maintain, and where appropriate improve, the position of retail centres within the retail hierarchy. To make sure that the existing centres, primarily Blaby Town Centre, have opportunities to grow in order to enhance their vitality and viability and to prevent expansion of out of town centres (including the Motorways Retail Area) where this would result in an unacceptable impact on existing centres.

Core Strategy Policy CS1 makes provision for a minimum of 68 hectares of employment land between 2006 and 2029, of which at least 57 hectares will be provided within and adjoining the Principal Urban Area of Leicester.

Core Strategy Policy CS3 – Sustainable Urban Extension sets out the broad parameters for development at this location, identifies employment opportunities and makes provision to create new District and Local Centres with associated retail facilities.

Core Strategy Policy CS4 – Strategic Employment Site identifies land east of the Warrens (south of the M69) at Enderby as a Strategic Employment Site (SES) in conjunction with the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) at Lubbethorpe. The SES will provide some 21 hectares (net) of employment land in use classes B1, B2 and B8. The policy requires a new bridge over the M69 to encourage movements between the SES and the SUE north of the M69.

Core Strategy Policy CS6 – Employment aims to provide the appropriate quantity, quality and mix of employment opportunities to meet the needs of the District's current and future populations, and to meet strategic employment, education and training needs. The policy:

- Supports the SES at Lubbethorpe and approximately 2,000m² of office floorspace within the Lubbethorpe SUE;
- Seeks to ensure that SES at Glenfield Park (adjacent to Junction 21a of the M1) secures the highest possible design standards and balances the provision of employment land with the need to achieve high quality environmental standards and social benefits;
- Encourages the provision of new smaller scale employment uses in other settlements;
- Directs office uses to 'defined Town, Village and District centres' and stipulates that planning applications for B1(a) office uses of 2,500m² or more outside of centres shall be subject to a sequential test and accompanied by an impact assessment;
- Seeks to protect key employment sites from non-employment uses;
- Allows for the re-use of agricultural buildings in rural areas for employment

- Promotes local labour agreements with developers to help enable local people to secure employment and skills development.

Core Strategy Policy CS13 – Retailing and other town centre uses:

- Establishes a retail hierarchy for the District, ranging from Leicester City Centre to Local Centres;
- Identifies Out of Centre locations (Fosse Park, Grove Farm Triangle and Asda, known as the Motorways Retail Area);
- Recognises Blaby Town Centre as the District's only town centre where new retail development will be focused. Encourages measures to improve accessibility (particularly by public transport) and to improve the quality, safety, convenience and attractiveness of the environment of Blaby Town Centre.
- Permits managed growth at the Motorways Retail Area and Meridian Leisure subject to meeting certain criteria.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes policy SA3, an employment land allocation of approximately 33 hectares (gross) on land west of St Johns, Enderby. The Delivery DPD also includes a number of other policies relating to employment and retail:

- SA5 Key Employment Sites and Other Existing Employment Sites – identifies Key Employment Sites that should be protected for employment use and criteria against which proposals for non-employment uses should be assessed;
- DM3 Employment Development on Unallocated Sites – sets out criteria for considering applications for employment development that are not in key employment sites, on employment land allocations or other suitable locations within the settlement boundary.
- DM5 Blaby Town Centre – Primary and Secondary Frontages – defines the primary and secondary shopping frontages within Blaby Town Centre and what uses are acceptable within the Primary and Secondary Frontages.
- DM6 Neighbourhood Parades – seeks to protect small local shopping centres by defining the uses that will be acceptable in locations that are defined as Neighbourhood Parades.
- DM9 A47 High Load Road Route – states that development will not be supported where it would impede the passage of high loads along the A47 High Load Road Route.

The **Blaby Neighbourhood Plan 2018** addresses the need for sustainable development within the parish of Blaby until 2029. The Plan divides the parish into Character Areas. Character Area B: Town centre shops, restaurants and pubs and Character Area H: Commercial employment area (Winchester Road Business Park) are the most relevant.

Policy BNP1: Character and Environment that states that all new development shall create a sense of place appropriate to its location using the identified Character Areas by reflecting the principal characteristics of adjacent area(s) in regards to scale, layout and materials.

Policy BNP5: Development in Blaby Town Centre requires that development proposals for Blaby Town Centre must accord with the general principles set out in the Blaby Town Centre Masterplan.

Policy BNP8: Design of New Development sets out that new development within Blaby

should incorporate design features which enhance and complement Blaby’s character and reflect relevant principles for certain areas, one of which is Character Area B: Blaby Town Centre.

The Blaby Neighbourhood Plan is supported by the **Neighbourhood Plan Design Principles (2015)** which includes key design principles for public realm within the town centre.

The Council’s Economic Development Strategy **Building Blaby, Shaping Futures 2016-2019** helps guide and invest activity to improve the economy of the District. It identifies three key priorities: investing in our place, investing in our business, and supporting and developing our people.

11.2 The baseline position (Economy and employment)

11.2.1 Figure 11.1 illustrates that economic activity rates in Blaby District are slightly higher than the average compared to regional and national averages. It also shows that people within Blaby District are less economically inactive than regional and national averages, meaning more people in Blaby District are working.

Figure 11.1: Economic activity, 2011³²

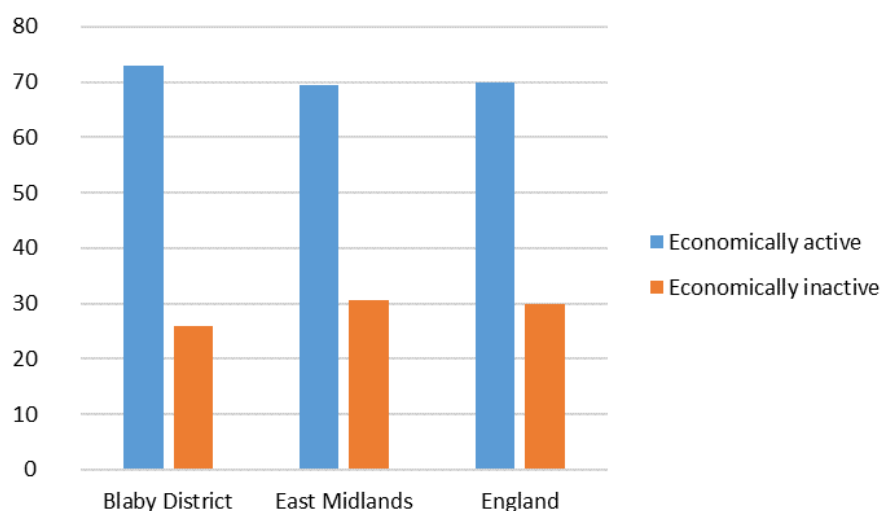


Table 11.1: Economic activity rate across Blaby, Leicestershire and UK, 2011³³

	Year	Blaby District	Leicestershire	UK
Economic Activity Rate (%)	2018	83.3	80.6	78.8
	2017	89.5	80.4	77.8
	2016	82.8	79.8	77.7
	2011	80.3	78.9	76.2

³² ONS (2011) Highest Level of Qualification (QS501EW)

³³ ONS, Nomis

11.2.2 The unemployment rate in the District is low. Whilst the rate has fluctuated since 2011, it has generally remained between 2 to 3% which is below both the County and UK average.

Table 11.2: Unemployment activity across Blaby District, Leicestershire and UK, 2011³⁴

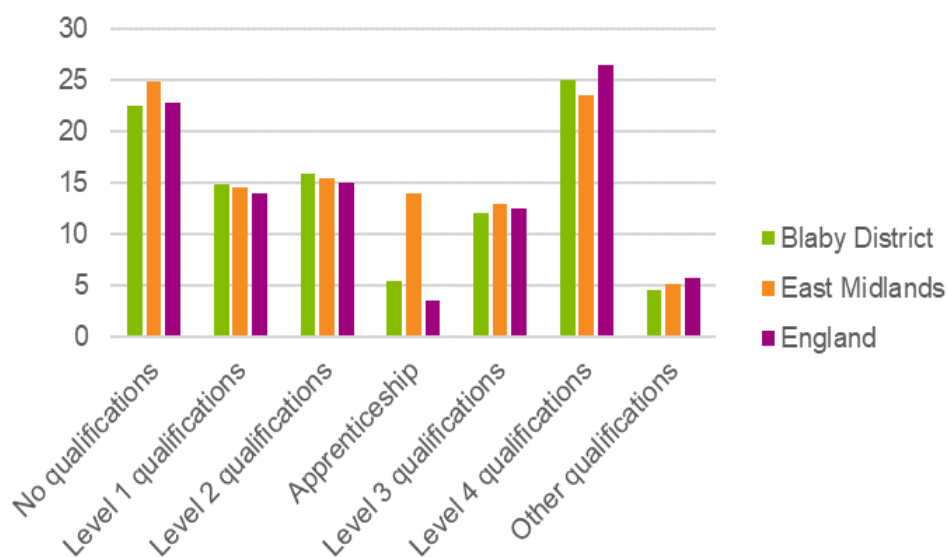
	Year	Blaby District	Leicestershire	UK
Unemployment rate (% all aged 16+)	March 2018	2.9	3.7	4.3
	March 2017	2.4	3.6	4.7
	March 2016	2.3	2.4	5.1
	2011	5.5	6.4	8

11.2.3 The rates for economically active residents in the Blaby District are averaged at (42.6%).

11.2.4 This is fraction higher, but generally broadly comparable to regional (38.8%) and national (38.6%) averages.

11.2.5 Figure 11.2 show the highest level of qualifications in the Blaby District in comparison to regional and national averages.

Figure 11.2 Percentage of highest Level of Qualification, 2011³⁵



³⁴ ONS, Nomis

³⁵ ONS (2011) Highest Level of Qualification (QS501EW)

- 11.2.6 The largest employment occupations in the District have changed since 2012, when the highest were Professional occupations (18.9%), Associate professional and technical occupations (14.4%) but also Elementary occupations (13.8%). At 2018, Professional occupations and managers, directors and senior officials no longer fall within the top five employment occupations.
- 11.2.7 The economic activity rate has fluctuated since 2011, showing no clear trend but the District figure has remained above County and UK levels.

Table 11.3: Largest Employment Occupations in Blaby District

	2012	2018
Largest Employment Occupations in Blaby District	Professional occupations (18.9%)	Associate professional and technical occupations (18.8%)
	Associate professional and technical occupations (14.4%)	Skilled trade occupations (15.1%)
	Elementary occupations (13.8%)	Administrative and secretarial occupations (11.9%)
	Managers, directors and senior officials (10.4%)	Sales and customer service occupations (11.8%)
	Skilled trade occupations (10.3%)	Elementary occupations (10.7%)

- 11.2.8 There have also been changes to the top five largest employment sectors since 2011, as set out below. There are significant falls in the percentage of employment in the Human health and social work activities, Education and Construction sectors.

Table 11.4: Largest Employment Occupations in Blaby District, 2011³⁶

	2011	2017
Largest Employment Sectors in Blaby District	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (19.2%)	Professional, scientific and technical activities (18.3%)
	Human health and social work activities (11.9%)	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (15.0%)
	Manufacturing (11.4%)	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (8.3%)
	Education (10.2%)	Manufacturing (8.3%)
	Construction (9.6%)	Public admin and defence; compulsory social security (8.3%)

³⁶ Census 2011 and ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2017

- 11.2.9 For convenience retail, the five most dominant stores within the Blaby District cumulatively attract a 14.5% market share of main food shopping trips originating within the Leicester and Blaby Retail Study Area.
- 11.2.10 A large majority of respondents use their car in travelling to do their main food shop (84.9%), with the next most popular means of transport being by foot (9.3%) and then by bus (4.0%). Just 4.6% of respondents suggested that their last main food shop was undertaken via the internet.

Table 11.5: Dominant Food Stores in Blaby District, 2011³⁷

	Food store	% market share
Dominant Food Stores in Blaby District	ASDA, Narborough Road South	5.2%
	Sainsbury's, Grove Farm Triangle	4.3%
	Aldi, Welford Road, Blaby	2.2%
	Aldi, Meridian Way, Braunstone	1.4%
	Co-operative Foodstore, Glenfield	0.9%

- 11.2.11 After Leicester City Centre, Fosse Park is a popular destination for comparison shopping. Leicester City Centre is the most popular destination for clothes shopping, attracting 48.5% of trips originating in the Study Area. The second most popular destination is Fosse Park and Grove Farm Triangle (25.6%).

Table 11.6. Popular destinations for Comparison Shopping

	Top Destinations	Clothes, Books, CDs and DVDs, Small Household Goods	Toys, games, bicycles and recreation goods
Shopping location	Leicester City Centre	1st	1st
	Fosse Park	2nd	3rd
	St George's Retail Park	-	2nd

³⁷ Leicester and Blaby Retail Study 2015.

11.2.12 The wider Fosse Park (Motorways Retail Area) is a key shopping destination for both convenience and comparison shopping. There has been a recent planning approval to extend Fosse Park. The proposal includes 26,758 sq. m of retail and 1,571 sq. m of Class A3 food outlets at the former Everards Brewery (Castle Acres).

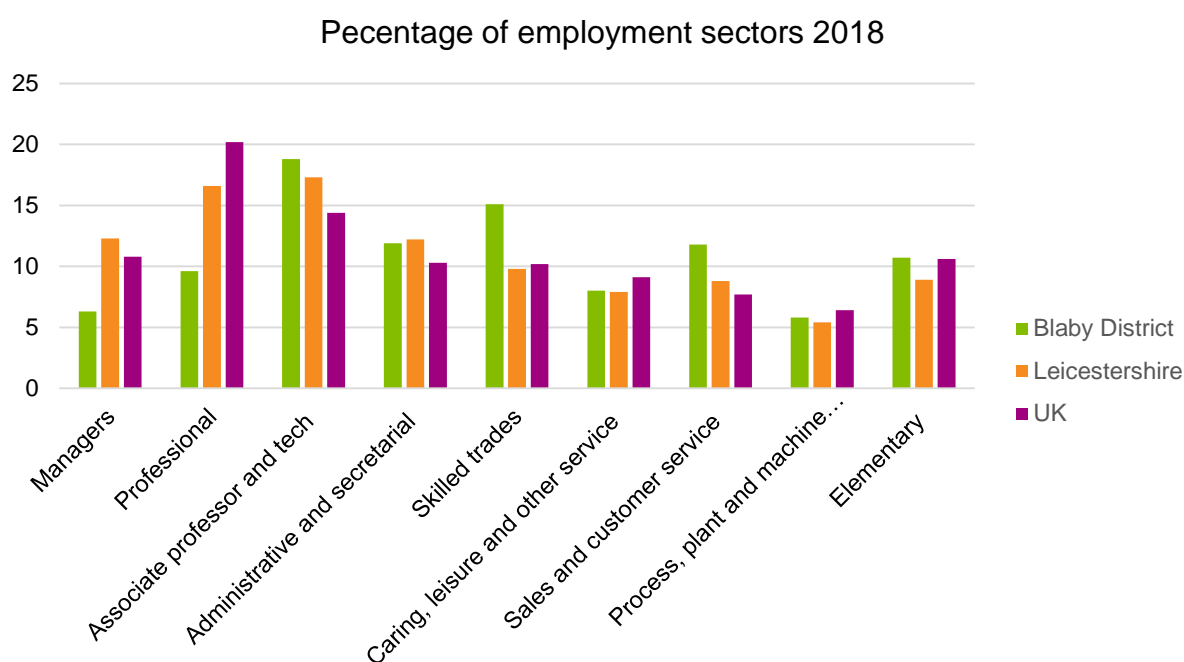
11.2.13 In terms of floorspace in Blaby town centre, the largest uses are for convenience floorspace. This is above the national average.

Table 11.7: Largest users of floor space

	Total Floorspace (sqm)	Percentage	National Average
Convenience	3140	28.3	15.0
Comparison	2780	25.0	36.2
Retail Service	1920	17.3	7.4
Leisure Services	1680	15.1	23.2
Finance & Business Services	1510	13.6	8.2
Vacant	80	0.7	9.3
TOTAL	11110	100	100

11.2.14 Figure 11.3 below reflects the percentage of employment sectors across Blaby, Leicestershire and UK. In Blaby, the employment sectors with the highest percentage of employees are associate professors/tech, skilled trades and administrative.

Figure 11.3: Percentage of employment sectors, 2018³⁸

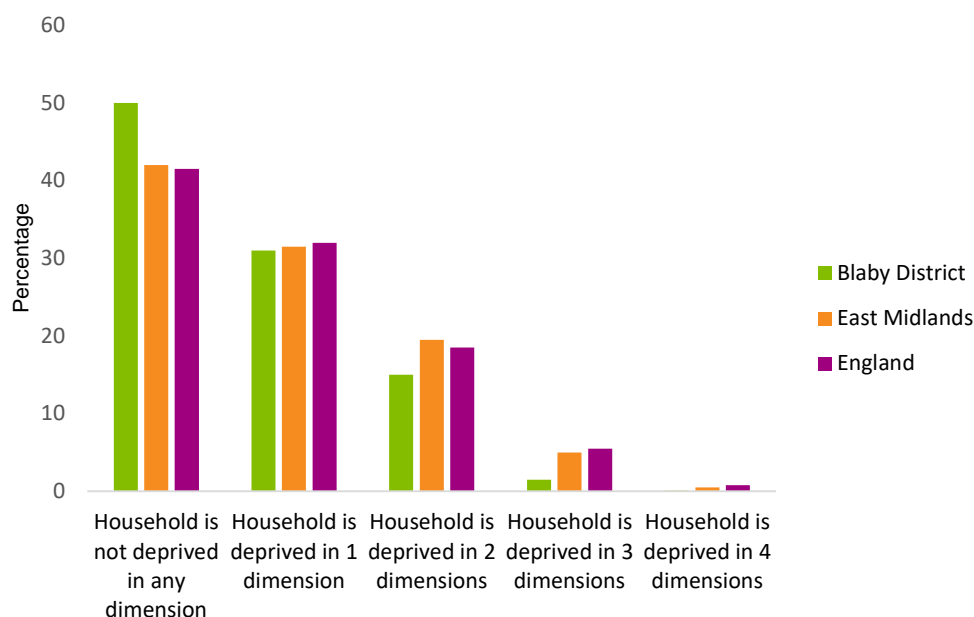


³⁸ Census 2011 and ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2017

11.3 The baseline position (deprivation)

- 11.3.1 Since 1970, The Department of Communities and Local Government report on local measures of deprivation across England. There are different types of dimensions to express deprivation, for instance income, health, housing and education.
- 11.3.2 Approximately half of Blaby District as a whole is broadly comparable to regional and national averages. Life expectancy is 3.2 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of Blaby than in the least deprived areas³⁹.

Figure 11.3: Deprived housing⁴⁰

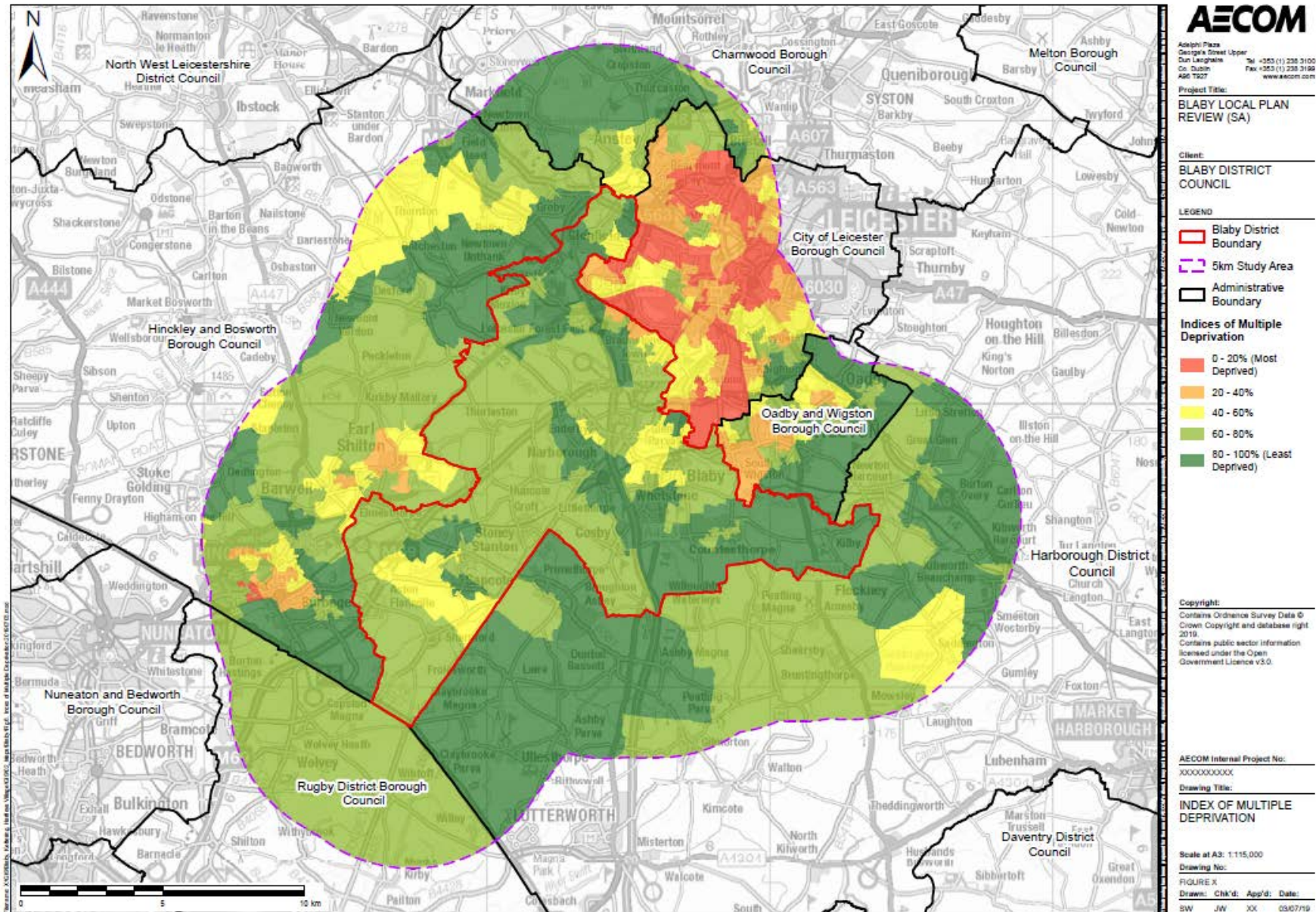


- 11.3.3 Figure 11.3 demonstrates the differences in housing deprivation in the District based on national comparisons, using national quintiles (fifths) of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD 2015), shown by lower super output area.
- 11.3.4 Broadly speaking, Blaby is less deprived in the housing dimension compared to the East Midlands and England averages.
- 11.3.5 This is reflected in the levels of children living in poverty in Blaby (9.1%) being significantly less than children living in poverty across England (19.2%).
- 11.3.6 As illustrated on figure 11.4, there are large parts of Leicester within a 5km radius of Blaby District which fall into the 0-20% most deprived categories across England.
- 11.3.7 However, within Blaby District itself, many areas fall within the 60-100% least deprived areas. In terms of overall deprivation ranking across England Blaby ranked 288 out of 354, with 1 being the most deprived and 354 being the least deprived. The ranking has decreased from 318 since 2004.

³⁹ Public Health England, Health Profile (2017) available at: <https://www.blabystayinghealthy.co.uk/uploads/blaby-health-profiles-2017.pdf> (accessed 03 July 2019)

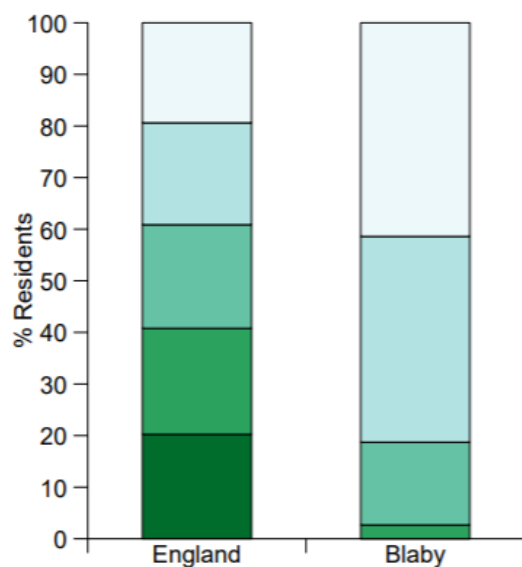
⁴⁰ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Households by Deprivation Dimensions, 2011 (QS119EW)

Figure 11.4 Multiple Deprivation in Blaby and a 5km radius



- 11.3.8 Blaby has very few areas that are deprived. In fact, figure 11.5 shows that approximately 40% of Blaby District population is Least deprived quintile, and 0% are within the most deprived quintile, whilst averages across England demonstrate that 20% are Least deprived and 20% Most deprived.

Figure 11.5: Areas of deprivation in Blaby District in comparison to England, 2016⁴¹



11.4 Future trends

- 11.4.1 It is difficult to predict future economic conditions, but there are some assumptions that have been made about important factors that would occur in the absence of a new Local Plan.
- 11.4.2 The way people purchase goods is changing rapidly, and it is sensible to assume that these trends will continue. This will have a critical impact on the role of town centres, retail parks and transportation.
- 11.4.3 Future growth forecasts for convenience shopping expect a drop in convenience goods per capita expenditure growth.
- 11.4.4 The figures for comparison goods per capita expenditure remain broadly the same. In terms of on-line shopping, convenience online shopping is expected to increase significantly between 2018 and 2030, however the increase in comparison goods online shopping is only expected to increase marginally (as it is already well-established).
- 11.4.5 Conversely, population growth is likely to lead to increased demand for goods and services within Blaby.

⁴¹ Public Health England, Health Profile (2017) available at: <https://www.blabystayinghealthy.co.uk/uploads/blaby-health-profiles-2017.pdf> (accessed 03 July 2019)

- 11.4.6 There is potential for economic shocks and shifts, particularly if/when BREXIT is completed and the UK leaves the European Union. It is possible that this could affect the types of employment land required, as well as overall economic outputs.
- 11.4.7 With regards to the plan-making context, existing Local Plan policies would be used in combination with the NPPF. Existing / proposed development management policies are likely to remain of use for determining planning applications, which would largely protect existing employment areas and support appropriate growth. However,
- 11.4.8 Given that there are no current policies that address strategic-scale distribution need, applications for such developments would be ad-hoc and would be less well-planned.
- 11.4.9 Whilst Core Strategy employment numbers align with that for employment, and in the HEDNA, any change in housing numbers in the District may trigger a review of employment land requirement in the District.
- 11.4.10 The retail hierarchy set out in Core Strategy policy CS13 does not accord with the latest 2015 Retail Study and the NPPF. In the absence of a new plan, development would be judged against the provisions of the NPPF, but these are not locally specific and so may not be the most appropriate approach for Blaby.
- 11.4.11 Levels of deprivation are considered unlikely to worsen significantly in Blaby over the plan period. However, it is difficult to predict external influences and how these could affect jobs, environmental quality, affordability and other factors that contribute towards affluence.
- 11.4.12 In the absence of a new Plan, development would likely continue to be focused at the edge of Leicester, and traffic into the centre would likely remain a problem (which could disproportionately affect such communities). Conversely, an increase in housing provision could help to tackle affordability issues.
- 11.4.13 If a 5 year supply cannot be maintained, there would be an increase in ad-hoc housing developments that might not necessarily be of the type that is needed. This could lead to a continuation of the gap in deprivation between different parts of Blaby and between Leicester and Blaby as a district.

11.5 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

- 11.5.1 Currently in Blaby, the local economy is relatively healthy and people are economically active. However, there is a need to ensure that the right types of land are provided to support emerging employment sectors.
- 11.5.2 The retail landscape is changing and the industry is experiencing changes in trends particularly changes that are influenced by technology. This is having significant impacts upon the role of town centres.
- 11.5.3 The objectives for Blaby District is to support and maintain a strong and sustainable local economy and to provide access to employment and training opportunities particularly in Fosse Park and the Motorways Retail Area. Promoting Blaby as a destination is also a core focus for the District.
- 11.5.4 Promoting Blaby District as a visitor destination is a local aspiration.
- 11.5.5 The Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange is a potential major source of employment. Similarly, there is likely to be Growth at Fosse Park/Motorways Retail Area.

- 11.5.6 The population of Blaby District overall is in good health, and almost all areas in Blaby fall within areas of low deprivation. Nevertheless, there are some areas such as parts of Narborough and Countesthorpe, Thorpe Astley and Kirkby Muxloe that are less deprived than others, and the policy context suggests that Council's should continue to 'close the gap' between different areas.
- 11.5.7 Furthermore, there are high levels of deprivation in the City of Leicester, and development within Blaby could potentially have effects on these areas in terms of housing provision and employment. Nearby communities may also benefit from access to services within Blaby, so improvements (or a decline) in services could have wider consequences.

11.6 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

- 11.6.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon economy. For these reasons, this topic has been 'scoped-in' for the purposes of the SA process.
- 11.6.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

14. Support the sustainable growth of Blaby's economy to ensure that a suitable range of employment opportunities are available to all.

Prompts

Will residents be able to benefit from increased access to jobs (including higher quality jobs)?

Will a range of employment spaces be created to support different sectors and scales of business?

Will large scale distribution units be accessible by public transport and adopt exemplary design?

How will Blaby's attractiveness as a place to visit and do work be affected?

How will town and district centres be affected?

12. Accessibility

12.1 Context

National

According to the **NPPF**, planning for transport and travel will have an important role in ‘contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. To minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure and other activities, planning policies should aim for ‘a balance of land uses’. Wherever practical, key facilities should be located within walking distance of most properties.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁴² (NPPF) include:

- (a) *‘Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*
- a. *The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed*
 - b. *Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised*
 - c. *Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued*
 - d. *The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account*
 - e. *Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.’*

‘Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.’

The Transport White Paper (2011) describes policies and funding arrangements for transport in the UK from 2011. The government wants to apply its principles of localism, the Big Society, and encouraging changes in behaviour towards more sustainable travel choices.

Regional

Midlands Connect Strategy: Powering the Midlands Engine 2017: Midlands Connect is the transport component of the Midlands Engine for Growth. It aims to improve transport connectivity between towns and cities in the Midlands and with key centres elsewhere to boost economic growth. It establishes a programme of strategic road and rail improvements to give certainty to businesses, communities and investors.

The spatial framework for investment includes 4 Strategic Economic Hubs including Leicester and Coventry and 6 Intensive Growth Corridors, including:

- Birmingham –Coventry/Leicester – Northamptonshire – Milton Keynes and the South;
- Nottingham – Leicester – Coventry – Warwick and Thames Valley, and includes connections from Leicester and Birmingham

⁴² MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf [accessed 29/03/19]

Early priorities include:

- Birmingham to Nottingham and Birmingham to Leicester rail services
- Coventry to Leicester rail enhancement
- Midland mainline upgrade and electrification
- Business case for the Midlands Rail Hub – increasing capacity and improving east-west connectivity
- Business case for the Midlands Motorways Hub – long term plan for nation’s motorway crossroads
- M1 (junctions 19 to 23a) Smart Motorway Scheme
- A46 Expressway route M5 to Syston upgrade
- Phase 1 of upgrade of A5 between A38 and M1

The **Midlands Connect Strategy** includes the A46 expressway, a new road extending from a new or improved junction on the M69, and continuing to the south and east of Leicester, with a new junction on the M1 (J20a) to meet the existing A46 at Syston. The precise route of the road is not yet known but will have significant implications for encouraging growth in Leicester and Leicestershire and particularly for Blaby District.

The proposals for a new or improved junction on the M69 at Junction 2 and a new junction on the M1 (J20a) are identified in the **Midlands Connect A46 Corridor Study – Stage One Enhanced Strategic Case**, November 2018.

The J2, M69 improvements are associated with the proposals for a National Rail Freight Interchange on land south-west of Elmesthorpe.

The creation of a new junction on the M1 - J20a – is also identified in Leicestershire County Council’s **Prospectus for Growth**, 2017.

The **Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan 2018** reflects the Midlands Connect Strategy in terms of the potential for an A46 expressway. The Strategic Growth Plan recognises that significant and new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester and Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services. The Plan proposes:

- Focusing growth in areas close existing employment clusters and opportunities and new infrastructure proposals
- Focus development 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 are: Leicester: Our Central City, the A46 Priority Growth Corridor and the A5 Improvement Corridor.

Longer term plans for an A46 expressway has transport implications for the District of Blaby both in terms of the Strategic Road network (M1 and M69) and local road network (including classified roads and the ‘radial routes’ that feed into the centre of Leicester, including A426 (Aylestone Road) and A4560 (Narborough Road).

Local

The **Blaby District Growth Plan 2019** builds on the Blaby Plan and focuses on the theme of making Blaby a great place to live in terms of the delivery of housing, infrastructure and jobs.

It is an ambitious plan based on planning new communities, on a large scale which are exemplar developments, deliver real innovation, are sustainable, and most importantly are great places to live.

Blaby District Growth Plan is not a statutory plan but a link between the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and the Local Plan.

It provides a strong framework for the Local Plan. A key aspiration is that development does not happen at the expense of existing communities where recent expansion has stretched roads, schools and healthcare. Consider that housing growth is preferable in the form of freestanding new communities and garden villages.

It sets out six fundamental non-negotiable principles, each with their own objectives, to achieving the Council's ambition. One such principle is 'well connected' where the priority is to ensure that new development is well connected to the wider area to reduce reliance on car travel and allows access to services and facilities. Objectives include: making walking, cycling and public transport the most attractive modes, integrate with existing highway network and using green infrastructure to connect new development to the existing local area.

The **Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy 2013** includes strategic objective 11 which seeks to:

“To deliver the transport needs of the District and to encourage and develop the use of more sustainable forms of transport (Including walking, cycling, other forms of non-motorised transport and public transport).”

Core Strategy Policy 10 'Transport Infrastructure' sets out how the Local Planning Authority will deal with transport related matters including the Council's approach to locating new development, encouraging modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport, improving public transport and provision of transport infrastructure associated with strategic development (Including at Lubbesthorpe).

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Appendix D to the Core Strategy identifies the type of transport infrastructure required, its cost, who will provide funding and who will deliver it.

The **Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD 2019** includes a requirement for a strategic housing allocation at land north of the A47 (Kirby Muxloe). The policy associated with the proposed development seeks the provision of transport infrastructure including junction and link improvements on the A47.

Additional 'non-strategic' transport policies are included in the plan in relation to 'Road Related facilities', 'Local Parking & Highway Design Standards' and 'A47 High Load route'.

12.2 The baseline position

Strategic Infrastructure

- 12.2.1 Blaby is served by Narborough Train Station which is located on the main Birmingham to Peterborough line.
- 12.2.2 Blaby District is connected by bus route 84 and 85 to Leicester through most settlements. Journey times to Leicester from key settlements such as Blaby and Narborough are approximately 30 minutes and run at least four times an hour.
- 12.2.3 Blaby is relatively well served by the strategic road network, with easy access to the M1 and orbital routes around Leicester.

Modes of transport

- 12.2.4 Figure 12.1 highlights the availability of cars and vans in Blaby (Census 2011). Whilst this is fairly dated now, it does provide a broad indication of modes of transport in the district.
- 12.2.5 The proportion of households with no access to a car / van was lower than regional and national averages in 2011, although higher than district levels. The proportion of households with 1 vehicle was slightly above all comparators, while numbers of households with more than one car were broadly similar to other comparators.

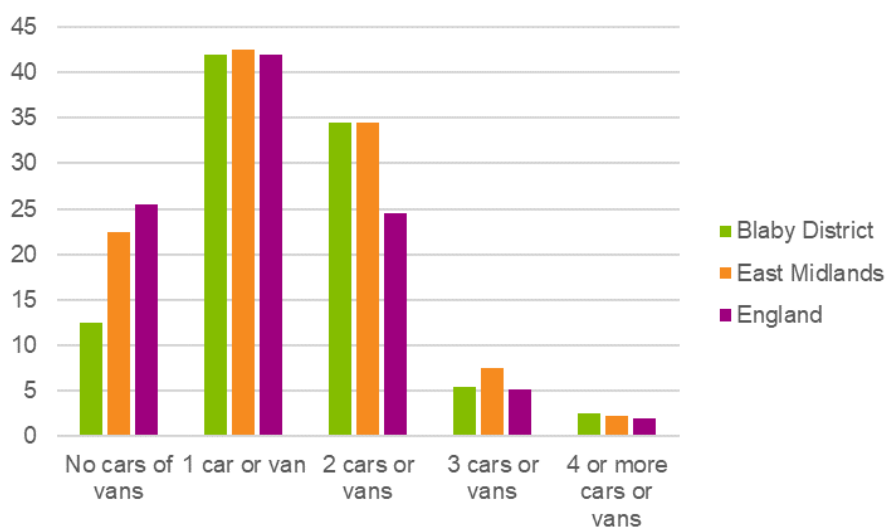


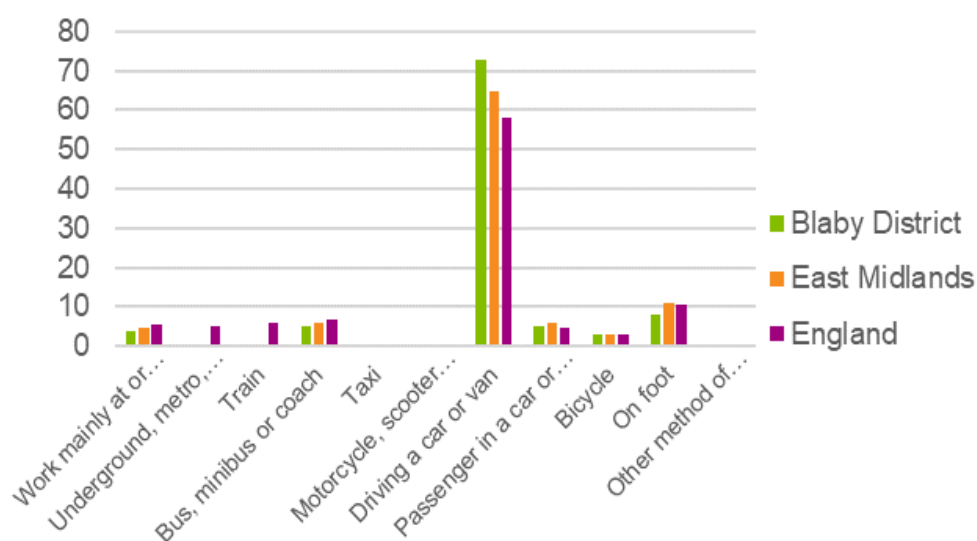
Figure 12.1: Availability of cars and vans within households, 2011⁴³

- 12.2.6 Figure 12.2 illustrates the several modes of transport used in Blaby, with car use being the highest. An increase in population in Blaby District has the potential to lead to increased traffic and congestion as the main form of transport used is the car.
- 12.2.7 As highlighted by figure 12.2, the proportion of people who travel to work by bicycle in Blaby is broadly comparable to regional and national averages.

⁴³ ONS (2011) Car and van ownership 2011 (QS416EW)

12.2.8 Conversely, a higher proportion of people travel to work by car than regional and national comparators.

Figure 12.2: Method of travel to work (2011)⁴⁴



12.2.9 Significantly less people travel to work via train than national averages – reflecting the lack of rail connection for some settlements in Blaby (and in the east midlands generally).

12.2.10 A higher percentage of people travel to work by car or van than regional and national averages – however slightly less than regional levels.

Road networks

12.2.11 Transport evidence suggests that a number of roads and junctions in Blaby District, including radial routes into and out of Leicester City are at full capacity and are now serving as a constraint to transport. Strategic locations for growth tend to be served through existing transport links, which are already congested.

12.2.12 Junction 21 of the M1 is constrained with substantial delays and congestion at peak hours (most notably southbound approaching J21 during the morning and afternoon peaks). There are limited opportunities to improve the capacity, however a new bridge over the M69 to the south of Lubbethorpe and a new relief road for Enderby is proposed.

Public transport

12.2.13 There will be some improvements to the bus services in upcoming places such as Lubbethorpe as a result of developer funded schemes.

12.2.14 Some rural bus services are expected to be cut due to lack of passenger usages and levels of service.

12.2.15 There currently is one train station in Blaby District at Narborough. Research concludes there is very little potential to deliver any additional stations.

⁴⁴ ONS (2011) Method of Travel to Work 2011 (QS701EW)

- 12.2.16 In terms of cycle paths, there is a network currently within the District but this is not comprehensive.

Freight movement

- 12.2.17 A Strategic Rail Freight Interchange could help deliver employment opportunities whilst allowing substantial movement of goods by rail. The potential introduction of slip roads to allow access south on to the M69 and egress north from the M69 is likely to result in some redistribution of traffic. The plan should address that there is a current issue with high car usage and encourage use of sustainable modes of travel including the use of improved technology for managing personal travel needs to be explored further.

12.3 Future trends

- 12.3.1 Despite efforts to achieve modal shift, it is likely that the car will remain the primary mode of transport within Blaby District.
- 12.3.2 New development will add to congestion unless strategies are implemented to reduce these impacts. Whilst residual effects as a result of new development are likely to be mitigated in part by measures outlined in the Leicestershire County Council Local Transport Strategy and Blaby Core Strategy, it is important that new development is situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car and also address issues of on-street parking causing unnecessary congestion.
- 12.3.3 Without a new local Plan, speculative developments would continue to be promoted which would seek to exploit a lack of 5 year land supply. Development could be delivered in locations with poor access to public transport or where there are existing capacity constraints on junctions and links.
- 12.3.4 Whilst the Core Strategy Seeks to encourage sustainable transport solutions and provides some specific transport improvements, it would be difficult to plan for longer term growth in a sustainable way without reviewing the most appropriate locations and supporting infrastructure required.
- 12.3.5 In terms of infrastructure improvements there are several schemes of note that will influence the future of transportation in the district.
- 12.3.6 The proposed A46 Expressway has potential to result in a distribution of strategic vehicle movements. This could result in some capacity improvements on the M1 junctions 21 to 21a and parts of the A46 as traffic is diverted to the new route.
- 12.3.7 The A46 expressway could be accompanied by substantial growth along its route placing additional pressures on existing key routes that already experience delays and congestion. Safeguarding the alignment of the A46 expressway where as yet the route is unknown.
- 12.3.8 Smart Motorway work on the M1 will affect the future of Leicester Forest East Services.
- 12.3.9 Improvements in technology could affect the way that people travel in the future, helping to reduce the need to travel (for example live/work units, superfast broadband and video-conferencing) and improving public transport experiences (through personal travel information).
- 12.3.10 A Strategic Rail Freight Interchange could help to deliver employment opportunities whilst allowing substantial movement of goods by rail. The potential introduction of slip roads to allow access south on to the M69 and egress north from the M69 is likely to result in some redistribution of traffic.

12.4 Conclusions / key sustainability issues

- 12.4.1 Many junctions on the main radial routes into Leicester are at capacity. Growth is resulting in annual increases in vehicles using the transport network and this trend is likely to continue with an increase in car ownership.
- 12.4.2 There is a need to ensure that new development is supported by adequate road infrastructure to reduce pressure on the existing network. However, at the same time, there is a national and local policy imperative to support modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. This will be difficult to achieve given that strategic locations for growth are broadly served from a congested network.
- 12.4.3 With regards to long term growth, the A46 Expressway will be a critical piece of infrastructure, but it is important to ensure that this helps to reduce pressure on junctions and supports increased public transport usage.
- 12.4.4 Timely delivery of transport infrastructure is essential to support growth, to make development acceptable and the cost of transport infrastructure needs to be considered to ensure schemes are viable.
- 12.4.5 There is a need to promote and enable the uptake of technologies and economic practices that reduce the need to travel and make personal travel easier.

12.5 Scoping outcome / SA Objectives

- 12.5.1 It has been determined that the Plan has the potential for significant effects upon accessibility. For these reasons, this topic has been '**scoped-in**' for the purposes of the SA process.
- 12.5.2 The following SA Objectives and prompts have been identified, and form a part of the wider SA Framework (see Chapter 13).

SA Objective

Prompts

	Will technological enhancements be supported that reduce the need to travel such as super-fast broadband?
	Will ways of working be supported that reduce the need to travel such as live/work units?
15. Encourage sustainable modes of transport and provide suitable infrastructure to contribute to a reduction in the need to travel.	Will new employment and housing be closely matched to ensure that the need to travel is reduced and that sustainable modes of transport are a realistic option?
	Will public transport networks be strengthened?
	Will infrastructure improvements be secured that allow for cleaner vehicles?
	Will an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes be created?
	Will freight movement be diversified?
	Will congestion be reduced?

13. Key sustainability issues and the SA Framework

13.1 Introduction

- 13.1.1 Drawing on the review of the policy context, baseline position and baseline indicator trends, a range of sustainability issues have been identified. These are presented at the end of each sustainability topic chapter and are summarised in table 13.1 below.
- 13.1.2 In response to the issues that have been identified for the different SA Topics, a decision has been made whether that factor should be scoped-in or scoped out of the SA process (as included as the conclusion to each SA Topic chapter. Where the potential for significant effects exist, sustainability objectives have been proposed, supported by a series of ‘prompts’ that will help to guide the appraisal process. These objectives have been pulled together into one consolidated table below.
- 13.1.3 Taken together, the sustainability objectives and prompts provide a methodological framework for the appraisal of the draft Plan (and reasonable alternatives). These are referred to as the ‘SA Framework’.

Figure 13.1: Key sustainability issues and corresponding SA Objectives

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
Population and housing	<p>The population is increasing and ageing; which requires specific housing solutions.</p> <p>The number of households is increasing and is projected to continue to increase.</p> <p>The percentage of households owning their own home is decreasing.</p> <p>Average house prices are increasing and the ratio of house price to earnings is increasing.</p> <p>The number of dwellings classed as long term empty homes is decreasing.</p>	<p>1. Provide a suitable level of housing to meet overall need within the district; and a range of housing types to meet the needs of different groups.</p>	<p>Will the needs of specific groups be catered for including the elderly, young, low income, gypsies and travellers?</p> <p>Will the right mix of homes be delivered?</p> <p>Will homes be high quality, adaptable and accessible?</p> <p>Will there be a sufficient amount of affordable homes that are unrecognisable from market homes?</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
<p>Health and well-being</p> <p><i>Health and physical activity</i></p> <p><i>Crime</i></p> <p><i>Pollution / amenity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Local Schools are at capacity • New schools are being delivered at Lubbesthorpe • Some Primary Care Facilities are close to capacity and some are not 'fit for purpose' • New GP practices are being delivered at Warren Way (extensions) and Thorpe Astley Community Centre (Consulting rooms opened) and a new primary care facility is proposed as part of the Lubbesthorpe SUE • Delivery of infrastructure in potential new settlements in a timely fashion • Viability issues associated with the delivery of infrastructure in any of the option areas • Some areas of Blaby District have poorer health and increased deprivation. • Access to open space varies across the District. <p><u>Community safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of crime vary across the District but there are hotspots in the more populated central areas • Addressing crime and anti-social behaviour are national and local priorities. • It is evident that vehicle related crimes are quite high for the District. <p><u>Amenity issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trunk road network and railway line are a source of noise pollution. • The major hazards at Calor Gas and High Pressure Gas Pipeline are constraints. 	<p>2. Ensure that all groups within the community have good access to high quality local services (including schools, GP practices and open space).</p> <p>3. Support good health and wellbeing for all residents.</p>	<p>Will new development be located in areas that have capacity (or can be expanded) in schools and health care to accommodate growth?</p> <p>Will people have good access to natural green space, play spaces, leisure and other forms of recreational space?</p> <p>Will there be good access to services for all members of the community?</p> <p>Will places be made safe and encourage social interaction?</p> <p>How will the wellbeing of communities be affected by amenity issues such as noise, light, pollution and loss of recreational land?</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The concept of net-biodiversity gain is very important and will need to be ensured in future development.</p> <p>Development ought to be located in areas that cause the least harm and provide opportunities to strengthen strategic ecological networks.</p> <p>There is only a small number/area of nationally important biodiversity sites within Blaby. More than half of these are in favourable condition.</p> <p>It is important to identify, protect and improve the wider ecological network.</p> <p>Green infrastructure can contribute to biodiversity and geodiversity aims and should be supported within the Local Plan.</p> <p>The District has a number of important geological sites some of which have the potential for recreational activity.</p> <p>A key focus for Blaby is to protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats and green space.</p>	<p>4. Direct growth away from the most sensitive wildlife habitats, whilst ensuring that ecological networks are strengthened and there is a net gain in biodiversity.</p>	<p>How likely is it that net gain can be achieved on or nearby to development locations?</p> <p>Will effects upon sensitive biodiversity be avoided and mitigated before considering compensation?</p> <p>Will ecological networks be protected and enhanced (in terms of quality and extent)?</p> <p>Is development likely to put recreational pressure upon biodiversity and geodiversity? If so, how can this be managed?</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>Conserve and enhance the District's designated and non-designated heritage assets and the wider historic built and natural environment features.</p> <p>Maintain the current status of there being no heritage assets 'at risk'.</p>	<p>5. Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment; whilst making it more accessible for public enjoyment.</p>	<p>How will heritage assets and their settings be affected?</p> <p>How will locally important buildings and other features be affected?</p> <p>Will local people be able to interact with historic and</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
	<p>Maintain the local character and distinctiveness of the District's towns and villages, taking account of historic and cultural assets and their setting.</p> <p>Heritage assets are irreplaceable and should be conserved and where possible enhanced.</p> <p>Heritage assets should be promoted as tourism opportunities and made accessible for the enjoyment of the public.</p>		<p>cultural features more easily?</p> <p>Will archaeological features be recorded and where possible retained?</p> <p>Will development ensure that no harm or loss of significant designated heritage assets are made unless can be proven to achieve substantial public benefits?</p>
Minerals	<p>Minerals are a finite natural resource and can only be worked where they are found. LPAs should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for viable mineral working.</p> <p>There are important mineral resources in the District that should be protected and utilised efficiently. An important issue is the long term future of Croft Quarry.</p>	<p>6. Protect mineral resources and associated infrastructure from sterilisation; whilst ensuring the efficient extraction and use of mineral resources.</p>	<p>Will development occur in areas identified as potentially containing mineral resources? If so, is it likely that resources would be sterilised? (could they be extracted prior to use, or would resource extraction be unviable anyway?)</p> <p>Will a sufficient supply of historic building materials be available?</p>
Waste	<p>The amount of waste sent to landfill has increased slightly and this trend needs to be reversed. Therefore, the plan should aim to encourage measures to prevent, reuse, recycle and reduce waste to landfill in line with the waste hierarchy.</p> <p>Impacts of pollution should be considered on health and quality of life when planning for development. There needs to be consideration for the need for waste management facilities alongside other spatial planning concerns.</p> <p>Waste minimisation measures should be continued in terms of design and construction of new development.</p>	<p>7. Minimise waste generation whilst supporting an increase in reuse, recycling and composting.</p>	<p>How will it affect the ability to secure adequate waste management facilities (and supporting infrastructure).</p> <p>Will it support the effective storage and collection of waste and recycling materials?</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
Landscape and soil	<p>No national landscape designations but need to protect local landscape and settlement characteristics including Croft Hill</p> <p>Potential for loss of best and most versatile agricultural land</p> <p>There are a limited brownfield options for development. Pressure for development will mean loss of countryside and impact on landscape and settlement character.</p> <p>Potential for land contamination on sites but opportunity to remediate.</p>	<p>8. Protect landscape and townscape character and distinctiveness throughout the district</p> <p>9. To conserve the Borough's soils and make efficient and effective use of land.</p>	<p>Will development occur in locations that are more sensitive to landscape change?</p> <p>Is there potential to mitigate effects on landscape and incorporate green infrastructure enhancements?</p> <p>Will there be a loss of Grade 3a land? If so, are there suitable alternative sites / locations that are Grade 3b or preferably non-agricultural / brownfield land?</p>
Environmental Protection	<p>Water quality</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing the quality of watercourses is key environmental objective that the Planning system plays an important role in.</p> <p>The overall classification of watercourses in the District is either poor or moderate.</p> <p>The main threats to water quality are agricultural practices, rural land management, water treatment and discharge and urban run-off from transport.</p> <p>As there are increases in population, there may be requirements to ensure expansions / upgrading of current sewerage are in place.</p> <p>Water resources are not freely available, so there will be a need to understand and manage demand from new development.</p>	<p>10. Improve the water quality status of the watercourses running through the district; seeking to achieve 'good' overall status for WFD classification .</p>	<p>What are the risks of pollution and sedimentation? Is there sufficient headroom at waste water treatment plants to accommodate new development?</p> <p>Will land use changes lead to an increase or decrease in pollutant run off? (For example, agricultural land practices and urban run-off from transportation).</p> <p>Will recreational pressures have an effect upon watercourses?</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
	<p>Air quality</p> <p>There are five Air Quality Management Areas in the District due to exceedance of nitrogen dioxide levels as a result of traffic levels in the areas.</p> <p>Concentrations of pollutants are generally decreasing with the exception of Mill Hill, Enderby (the most recently declared AQMA)</p> <p>Croft Quarry is a source of PM2.5 pollutants due to dust.</p>	<p>11. Reduce emissions of pollutants that contribute to poor air quality (particularly from traffic); whilst ensuring that new and existing communities are protected from the harmful effects that poor air quality causes.</p>	<p>Will there be an increase in car trips and congestion that could exacerbate poor air quality within the district (particularly within the 5 AQMAs)?</p> <p>Will new communities be created in areas that are susceptible to poor air quality?</p> <p>What measures will be taken to ensure that communities are less exposed to poor air quality?</p>
<p>Climate change (flooding)</p>	<p>A number of the District's main settlements are at high risk of surface water flooding and fluvial flooding.</p>	<p>12. Ensure that existing and new development is resilient to the effects of climate change, particularly flood risk.</p>	<p>Will new development be located in areas of lower flood risk? (<i>Especially when there are suitable alternatives</i>).</p> <p>How will surface water run-off and drainage be affected?</p> <p>How will wider resilience to climate change impacts be affected?</p>
<p>Climate change (mitigation)</p>	<p>The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the shift to a low carbon (more self-sufficient) economy are extremely important national and local imperatives.</p> <p>Higher than average overall per capita CO2 emissions</p> <p>Increasing road transport CO2 emissions</p> <p>Low potential for large scale renewable and low carbon energy</p>	<p>13. Support the move to a low carbon economy.</p>	<p>Will opportunities to achieve higher standards of resource efficiency in new development be taken?</p> <p>Would it support a reduction in greenhouse gases?</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
<p>Economy and employment</p> <p><i>Economy</i></p> <p><i>Deprivation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local economy is relatively 'healthy' • Demand for business premises. Retail trends are changing • The role of the town centre is changing • There is planned growth at Fosse Park/Motorways Retail Area • Land-intensive industries are emerging (i.e. strategic scale distribution units) • The Hinckley SRFI • The inter-relationship between housing and jobs, both in quantity and location • Promoting Blaby District as a destination • Overall, Blaby district is one of the lesser deprived local authority areas in the country. However, there are some areas that are more deprived than others, and the policy context suggests that Council's should continue to 'close the gap' between different areas. In particular, there are high levels of deprivation in Leicester that are nearby. 	<p>14. Support the sustainable growth of Blaby's economy to ensure that a suitable range of employment opportunities are available to all.</p>	<p>Will residents be able to benefit from increased access to jobs (including higher quality jobs)?</p> <p>Will a range of employment spaces be created to support different sectors and scales of business?</p> <p>Will large scale distribution units be accessible by public transport and adopt exemplary design?</p> <p>How will Blaby's attractiveness as a place to visit and do work be affected?</p> <p>How will town and district centres be affected?</p> <p>How will communities that suffer from greater levels of deprivation be affected (for example in adjacent neighbourhoods within Leicester).</p>
<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>Many junctions on the main radial routes into Leicester are at capacity. Growth is resulting in annual increases in vehicles using the transport network and this trend is likely to continue with an increase in car ownership.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure that new development is supported by adequate road infrastructure to reduce pressure on the existing network. However, at the same time, there is a national and local policy imperative to support modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. This will be difficult to achieve given that strategic locations for growth are broadly served from a congested network.</p> <p>With regards to long term growth, the A46 Expressway</p>	<p>15. Encourage sustainable modes of transport and provide suitable infrastructure to contribute to a reduction in the need to travel.</p>	<p>Will technological enhancements be supported that reduce the need to travel such as super-fast broadband?</p> <p>Will ways of working be supported that reduce the need to travel such as live/work units?</p> <p>Will new employment and housing be closely matched to ensure that the need to travel is reduced and that sustainable modes of transport are a realistic option?</p> <p>Will public transport networks be strengthened?</p> <p>Will infrastructure improvements be secured that</p>

Topic	Key Issues	SA Objectives	Prompts
	<p>will be a critical piece of infrastructure, but it is important to ensure that this helps to reduce pressure on junctions and supports increased public transport usage.</p> <p>Timely delivery of transport infrastructure is essential to support growth, to make development acceptable and the cost of transport infrastructure needs to be considered to ensure schemes are viable.</p> <p>There is a need to promote and enable the uptake of technologies and economic practices that reduce the need to travel and make personal travel easier.</p>		<p>allow for cleaner vehicles?</p> <p>Will an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes be created?</p> <p>Will freight movement be diversified?</p> <p>Will congestion be reduced?</p>

14. Methodology

14.1 Identification of significant effects

- 14.1.1 The appraisal will identify and evaluate 'likely significant effects' on the baseline / likely future baseline associated with each the Plan (and reasonable alternatives), drawing on the sustainability topics, objectives and decision guiding criteria as a methodological framework.
- 14.1.2 The task of forecasting effects can be challenging due to:
- The high level nature of the alternatives under consideration;
 - Being limited by definition of the baseline and (in particular) the future baseline;
 - The ability of developers to design out/mitigate effects during the planning application stage.
- 14.1.3 In light of this, where likely significant effects are predicted this will be done with an accompanying explanation of the assumptions made.⁴⁵
- 14.1.4 It is important to note that effects will be predicted based upon the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations.⁴⁶ So, for example, account will be taken of the nature of effects (including magnitude, spatial coverage and duration), the sensitivity of receptors, and the likelihood of effects occurring as far as possible.
- 14.1.5 The potential for 'cumulative' effects will also be considered. These effect 'characteristics' will be described within the appraisal as appropriate under each sustainability topic.
- 14.1.6 The following significance scale will be utilised to provide a 'score' for different elements of the Plan, including reasonable alternatives.

Effects Significance	Effects symbol
<i>Significant positive effects</i>	++
<i>Minor positive effects</i>	+
<i>Uncertain positive effect</i>	?
<i>Neutral effects</i>	0
<i>Uncertain effect</i>	?
<i>Uncertain negative effect</i>	?
<i>Minor negative effect</i>	-
<i>Significant negative effect</i>	--

⁴⁵ As stated by Government Guidance (The Plan Making Manual, see <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=156210>): "Ultimately, the significance of an effect is a matter of judgment and should require no more than a clear and reasonable justification."

⁴⁶ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

15. Next Steps

15.1 Subsequent stages for the SA process

15.1.1 Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage in a six-stage SA process:

- Screening (NPPG Stage A)
- Scoping (NPPG Stage B)
- Assess reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing preparation of the draft plan (NPPG Stage C)
- Assess the draft plan and prepare the Environmental Report with a view to informing consultation and plan finalization (NPPG Stage D/E)
- Publish a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption in order to 'tell the story' of plan-making/SEA (and present 'measures decided concerning monitoring') (NPPG Stage F)

15.1.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the Plan, with a particular focus on the assessment of site options.

15.1.3 The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Council so that they might be taken into account when preparing the draft Plan.

15.2 Consultation on the Scoping Report

15.2.1 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SA process. At the scoping stage, the SA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies.

15.2.2 The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The Scoping Report was released to these three statutory consultees and comments were invited in a five week period during August and September 2019.

15.2.3 Comments received during the scoping consultation have been summarised in **Appendix A**, with a short commentary on the actions taken in response to the comments.

APPENDIX A Consultation responses

Comments	Response
<p>Historic England</p> <p>suggest amendments to the wording of an objective -</p> <p><u>6. Cultural Heritage, Archaeology, Conservation and Townscape</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommends that Historic Landscape Characterisation data be used <p><i>6.1 Context</i></p> <p>Recommends that NPPF paragraphs 194 and 195 are mentioned</p> <p>Recommends that the terms ‘ protect, maintain and enhance’ be replaced with conserve and enhance’.</p>	<p>References made to the NPPF Para 194 & 195</p> <p>SA Objective 5 term ‘ protect and maintain’ have been replaced with ‘conserve and enhance’</p>
<p>Historic England</p> <p><u>7. Waste and Minerals</u></p> <p>Figure 13.1 – Recommendations for Objective 5.</p> <p>Paragraph 7.5.3 and the SA objective 6 include references to historic building materials to ensure they are scoped in to the considerations of the Plan.</p>	<p>Suggested additions included.</p>
<p>Historic England</p> <p><u>14. Methodology</u></p> <p>Add</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ‘uncertain’ effect element should be added to the methodology scale 	<p>An additional category has been included for ‘uncertain effects’. This covers the situation where it is unknown what the effects would be. The scale still includes uncertain positive and uncertain negative effects. This reflects a situation whereby it is known that effects would be positive, but there is uncertainty about the likelihood. It gives an indication of the general performance but outlines that there is a need to remove uncertainties.</p>
<p>Natural England</p> <p>No comments at this stage</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Environment Agency</p> <p>suggest amendments to the wording of an objective -</p> <p><u>5. Biodiversity and Geodiversity</u></p> <p><i>5.1 Context</i></p> <p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive alien species regulations Leicestershire county council environmental strategy 2018-2030 	<p>Suggested additions included.</p> <p>With regards to SSSIs, it is unclear what management practices are being carried out for each of the SSSIs and how this will affect the future baseline position.</p>

Comments	Response
<p><i>5.3 Future trends</i></p> <p>Amend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of the SSSI to reflect current Environment Agency records <p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management practices for the SSSIs could be included 	
<p>Environment Agency</p> <p><u>7. Waste and Minerals</u></p> <p><i>7.1 Context</i></p> <p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 	Suggested additions included.
<p>Environment Agency</p> <p><u>9. Environmental Protection</u></p> <p><i>9.1 Context</i></p> <p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context on the WFD <p>Amend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to RBMP <p><i>9.2 Baseline Position</i></p> <p>Amend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the rating as 'poor/ moderate' where necessary <p><i>9.5 Key sustainability issues</i></p> <p>Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste water and sewage effluent comments • Water resource comments relating to the STW, WRMP and the Strategic Grid Water Resource 	Suggested additions included and amendments made.
<p>Environmental Agency</p> <p><u>10. Climate Change and Flood Risk</u></p> <p><i>10. 1 Context</i></p> <p>Add</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RBMP Next phase of consultation due Oct 2019, to April 2020. <p><i>10.3 The baseline position</i></p> <p>Add</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Sence being re-modelled due for release towards the end of 2021. • Summary of importance of utilising appropriate flooding modelling for residential development within zones 2 and 3. 	Suggested additions included.

