Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Law & Democracy
Democratic Services

TO COUNCILLOR:

N Alam	J K Ford	P Joshi
S S Athwal (Vice-Chair)	D A Gamble	J Kaufman
L A Bentley	C S Gore	K J Loydall
G A Boulter	S Z Haq	I K Ridley (Chair)
M L Darr	G G Hunt	

I summon you to attend the following meeting for the transaction of the business in the agenda below.

Meeting:	Policy, Finance & Development Committee
Date & Time:	Tuesday, 17 June 2025, 7.00 pm
Venue:	Civic Suite 2, Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ
Contact:	Democratic Services
	t: (0116) 257 2775
	e: democratic.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

Council Offices
Oadby
09 June 2025

Anne Ecourt.

Anne E Court
Chief Executive

Meeting ID: 2887

ITEM NO.	AGENDA	PAGE NO'S

Meeting Live Broadcast | Information and Link

This meeting will be broadcast live.

Press & Public Access:

A direct link to the live broadcast of the meeting's proceedings on the Council's Civico platform is below.

https://civico.net/oadby-wigston/22114-Policy-Finance-Development-Committee

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   To receive apologies for absence from Members to determine the quorum of the meeting in accordance with Rule 7 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

Postal Address: Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ
Refuse & Recycling Centre: The Depot, Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JE
Telephone: (0116) 288 8961   **Email:** customer.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

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2. Appointment of Substitutes

To appoint substitute Members in accordance with Rule 26 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Substitution Procedure Rules.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that any declaration of interest should be made having regard to the Members' Code of Conduct. In particular, Members must make clear the nature of the interest and whether it is 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary'.

5. Action List Arising from the Previous Meeting

To read, confirm and note the Action List arising from the previous meeting.

6. Petitions and Deputations

To receive any Petitions and, or, Deputations in accordance with Rule(s) 11 and 12 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Petitions Procedure Rules respectively.

Access all available public meeting information, documents and live broadcasts on:

Policy, Finance & Development Committee
Tuesday, 17 June 2025, 7.00 pm

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Agenda Item 4

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT CIVIC SUITE 2, BROCKS HILL COUNCIL OFFICES, WASHBROOK LANE, OADBY, LEICESTER, LE2 5JJ ON TUESDAY, 25 MARCH 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.02 PM

PRESENT

I K Ridley	Chair
F S Broadley	Vice-Chair

Meeting ID: 2750

COUNCILLORS

N Alam
L A Bentley
G A Boulter
M L Darr
D A Gamble
F S Ghattoraya
S Z Haq
R V Joshi
J Kaufman
K J Loydall

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

C Eyre	Housing Manager
D M Gill	Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer
C Warren	Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
J Wells	Senior Strategic Development Manager
S Wheeliker	Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer

67.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors J K Ford, C S Gore, G G Hunt and P Joshi.

68.   APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

Councillors F S Ghattoraya and R V Joshi substituted for Councillors J K Ford and P Joshi respectively.

69.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

70.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 February 2025 be taken as read, confirmed and approved.

71.   ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Policy, Finance & Development Committee
Tuesday, 25 March 2025, 7.00 pm

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None.

72. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None.

73. BUDGET MONITORING (Q3 2024/25)

Councillor M L Darr entered at 7:08pm.

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 6 – 22 of the agenda reports pack), which provided the Committee with the forecast outturn position for the Council for Q3 2024/25.

The Chair requested it be put on record that the homelessness crisis this Council is facing is also affecting many other Councils, that the grant provided for this issue is insufficient to tackle it, and that central government must provide further help to local Councils.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

i) **The contents of the report and appendices be noted; and**
ii) **The carry forward of slippage as shown in the capital projects be approved.**

74. SUNDRY DEBTOR AND REVENUES WRITE OFFS

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (as set out at pages 3 – 7 of the agenda update pack), which provided an update on the status of debts written off under delegated powers.

By general affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The contents of the report and appendix be noted.

75. AIR QUALITY STRATEGY (2025)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 23 – 58), which asked for the Council's first ever Air Quality Strategy to be approved.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor S Z Haq, and

UNANIMNOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The Air Quality Strategy (2025-2029) provided at Appendix 1 be approved.

76. HOUSING POLICY AND STRATEGY: HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY (2025-2030); TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY; AND RENT SETTING POLICY

Policy, Finance & Development Committee
Tuesday, 25 March 2025, 7.00 pm

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The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 59 – 100 of the agenda reports pack), which sought approval for the Homelessness and Rought Sleeping Strategy (2025-2030), the Temporary Accommodation Policy, and the Rent Setting Policy.

It was moved by Councillor G A Boulter, seconded by Councillor K J Loydall, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

    i) **The Homelessness and Rought Sleeping Strategy (2025-2030) be approved;**
    ii) **The Temporary Accommodation Policy be approved; and**
    iii) **The Rent Setting Policy be approved.**

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.20 pm

Policy, Finance & Development Committee
Tuesday, 25 March 2025, 7.00 pm

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	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	**Tuesday, 17 June 2025**	**Matter for Information and Decision**

Report Title:	**Budget Monitoring Report (Q4 2024/25)**
Report Author(s):	**Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer)** **Simon Ball (Finance Manager / Deputy S151 Officer)** **Aseel Qassim (Finance Business Partner)**

Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with the Outturn position for the Council for the financial year 2024/25, at the end Quarter 4, April – March.
Report Summary:	The outturn position for the year on the General Fund is a **£146k** underspend compared to the budget of £7.677m for 2024/25. The outturn for the HRA is an underspend of **£240k,** compared to the budgeted underspend of £99k. Spending on the Council's HRA and General Fund Capital Programmes currently show slippage.
Recommendation(s):	**That the Committee:** 1. **Notes the contents of the Quarter 4 report and the Appendices and forward on for Full Council to note;** 2. **Approves the carry forward of slippage as shown in the Capital projects;** 3. **Approves the carry forward of budgets as shown in the Appendices;** 4. **Notes the percentages to be applied to bad debt provisions in the accounts; and** 5. **Approves the minimum HRA Balance to be 15% of Gross Budgeted Income for 2025/26.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer) (0116) 257 2759 colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Simon Ball (Finance Manager / Deputy S151 Officer) (0116) 257 2624 simon.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1)
Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place to Be" (Vision) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications: -	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out in this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) Reputational Damage (CR4)

	Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments: -	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	• Senior Leadership Team • Heads of Service • Budget Managers
Background Papers:	2024/25 Revenue Budgets, Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 Capital Programmes – Full Council February 2024
Appendices:	1. General Fund Variance Detail 2. Sustainability Programme 3. HRA Detailed Variances 4. Capital Programmes (General Fund and HRA) 5. Reserves

1. Introduction

1.1 This is the Quarter 4 monitoring report for the 2024/25 financial year and this report details the outturn position for the year.

1.2 In February 2024, the Council approved its revenue and capital budgets for the general fund and the HRA for the 24/25 financial year. In previous years reserves were utilised to fill any budget gaps; significant work has taken place during 23/24 and 24/25 to reduce spending and deliver a balanced budget without the use of balances.

1.3 Although economic conditions and inflationary pressures have started to ease, there is still considerable pressure on the Council's budgets in areas such as Homelessness, Leisure provision and Insurance costs, these issues are affecting Councils nationwide and the level of support from the Government cannot be forecast.

2. Summary

2.1 This report covers the General Fund Revenue, Housing Revenue Accounts and the Capital Programmes for the current financial year.

2.2 The General fund outturn, subject to finalisation of the Statement of accounts is a £146k underspend, which relates to a ring-fenced Local Plan Grant which is to be transferred to earmarked reserves for future use (see Table 1). The net effect on the General Fund Balance is Nil.

2.3   The Council has made considerable efforts to achieve the savings target set as part of the budget process and whilst these have been largely successful the council has seen overspends due to the national homelessness crisis and the cost of the Council providing temporary accommodation to the homeless in our area, with the remaining variances mainly due to underachievement of income.

2.4   Overspends have been offset by savings and the additional income received as part of NNDR pooling. This has enabled us to achieve a breakeven position with the balance remaining from pooling being transferred to the NNDR Equalisation Reserve to offset any future peaks and troughs.

Table 1

Service	Original Budget 24/25	Revised Budget 24/25	Outturn 24/25	Variance 24/25
	£	£	£	£
Senior Leadership Team	407,620	407,620	373,804	(22,616)
Finance & Resources	3,327,704	3,432,504	4,122,924	544,150
The Built Environment	1,173,948	1,069,148	446,899	(487,179)
Law & Democracy	813,940	815,940	621,841	(194,099)
Community & Wellbeing,	(335,820)	(337,820)	(356,758)	(18,938)
Corporate Assets	273,885	288,535	371,201	82,666
Depot	985,100	985,100	1,004,708	19,608
Customer Services & Business Transformation	1,030,428	1,034,328	965,034	(69,294)
Net Revenue Expenditure	**7,676,805**	**7,695,355**	**7,549,654**	**(145,701)**

Financed by:				
Funding	7,676,805	7,676,805	8,270,733	(593,928)
Earmarked Reserves	0	18,550	(721,079)	736,629
Total Financing	**7,676,805**	**7,695,355**	**7,549,654**	**145,701**

2.5   The HRA has seen a reduction in expenditure resulting in a favourable variance of £240k as shown below in Table 2**.**

Table 2

HRA	Revised Budget 24/25	Outturn 24/25	Variance
	£	£	£
Housing Revenue Account	(4,342,020)	(4,565,395)	(223,375)
Estate Management	2,029,703	2,238,750	209,047
Repairs & Maintenance	1,253,750	1,165,089	(88,661)
Older Persons Service & Community Care	118,640	94,096	(24,544)
Cleaning	104,800	101,060	(3,740)
Capital Charges	735,760	627,279	(108,482)
Net Revenue Expenditure	**(99,367)**	**(339,122)**	**(239,755)**

Financed by:				
Housing Revenue Reserve		(99,367)	(347,908)	(248,541)
Earmarked Grants		0	8,786	8,786
Total Financing		**(99,367)**	**(339,122)**	**(239,755)**

3.   General Fund and HRA Balances

3.1   The General fund outturn is a break-even position, which will leave our General Fund balances unchanged, **Table 3** shows the expected movements in reserves.

3.2   The HRA outturn shows a favourable variance, increasing the Housing Revenue balances by £348k being the Budgeted amount of £99k and the additional variance of £249k, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3

Balances	Opening Balances 2024/25	Adjustments	Outturn 2024/25	Closing Balances 2024/25
	£	£	£	£
General Fund Balances	(1,765,066)	225,000	0	(1,540,066)
Housing Revenue Account Balances	(1,410,793)	0	(347,908)	(1,758,702)

4.   General Fund Revenue Outturn Position 2024/25

4.1   Table 4 below shows the major variances. Detailed analysis of the variances are shown in **Appendix 1**.

Table 4 – Major Variances over £30k

Service Area	Team	Q4 Under/ Over spends	Q4 Key reasons for variance
Corporate Assets	Cemeteries	35,185	£27k reduction in income, £5k increase in salary costs
Customer Services	Customer Services	(43,829)	Software savings on Customer Relationship Management system
Depot	Garden Waste Collection	80,695	£37K unbudgeted hired staff, offset by savings elsewhere in depot and underachievement of income.
	Food Waste	(43,999)	Food waste implementation grant not used in-year. Appropriated to earmarked grant reserve
Finance & Resources	Corporate Management	(61,508)	£51K saving on audit fees; budget carried forward requested. £33K reduction in provision for bad debts due to review of percentages provision. £16K higher insurance charge. £18K higher banking charges. £18K grant income.
	Corporate Management Non-Financial	(158,293)	£132K due to change in the insurance contract period, £20K saving due to increase in pension lump sum recharged to HRA.

	Council Tax	112,067	£30K lower court costs income against budget, £55K creation of court costs bad debt provision, £14K hired staff, £10K additional postage.
	Housing Benefits	660,256	£546K cost of providing Homelessness, £76K cost of housing benefit over grant, £40K write-off of overpayment of benefit
	Council Tax Benefits	46,436	Cost of providing discretionary care leaver discount
	Finance	(52,314)	£75k Salary savings and £6k saving on hired staff, offset by £29k overspend on software.
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	69,362	£35k cost of interim Revenues & Benefits Manager, £8k salary saving, £17k additional postage costs, £15k increase in software costs, £12k Capita training costs
	Corporate Projects	(85,031)	£39k saving on Procurement contract, £9k saving on salaries, £13k recharge of staff time to Blaby, £6k recharge of staff time to UKSPF, £18k recharge of staff time to food waste project
Law & Democracy	Legal & Admin Section	(38,022)	Vacancy savings
	Taxi Licences	(59,542)	Additional Taxi Licence income
The Built Environment	Homelessness	(133,260)	£93K additional government grants after Q3. £33K additional weekly personal charges due to homelessness pressures. £6K additional rent
	Development Control	(98,782)	£32K salary savings due to vacant posts. £80K in additional government grants. £26K income raised from Planning Performance Agreements for the Wigston direction for growth. £33K shortfall in pre-application and planning application income. £7K overspend on computer software, advertising and other supplies and services.
	Forward Planning	(246,796)	£11K overspend on local plan. £250K grant to fund implementation of changes in the National Planning Policy Framework, taken to earmarked reserve.

4.2   Inflationary pressures continue to affect services across the Council, as noted below-

- Inflationary pressures continue to affect services across the Council.
- Homelessness- as noted in paragraph 2.3.
- Leisure Services- Leisure has not fully recovered since pre-covid times, the Leisure contract has been renegotiated to include a profit/loss split which is nil for 2024/25.
- Utilities, especially electric is still very high; discussions are being held with suppliers to ensure that meter readings are taken, and actual costs are reported.

4.3   Income – The table below details the income as at Quarter 4.

(Continues overleaf)

Table 5

	Prior Year Outturn £	Actual Income 24/25 £	24/25 Budget £	Variance
Law & Democracy				
Environmental Protection	(1,367)	(1,141)	(2,000)	859
Dog Control Service	(1,240)	(456)	(1,500)	1,044
Legal and Admin Fees	(12,325)	(19,676)	(25,000)	5,324
Taxi Licenses	(239,109)	(236,509)	(176,700)	(59,809)
Other Licences	(14,030)	(22,438)	(13,200)	(9,238)
Alcohol and Entertainment Licences	(62,249)	(22,736)	(34,700)	11,964
Gambling Act Licenses	(1,915)	(3,116)	(4,600)	1,484
Selective Property Licence Scheme	(40,970)	(33,530)	(25,000)	(8,530)
The Built Environment				
Planning Application Fees	(170,253)	(165,810)	(195,000)	29,191
Pre Application advice	(19,284)	(18,598)	(22,500)	3,902
Corporate Assets				
Allotment Rent	(13,727)	(12,601)	(13,700)	1,099
Bowls Season Tickets	(6,776)	0	0	0
Cricket Pitch	(1,521)	0	0	0
Football Rugby	(14,108)	(19,110)	(14,100)	(5,010)
Pavilion Hire	(55,907)	(37,263)	(33,910)	(3,353)
Cemeteries	(137,056)	(150,650)	(177,250)	26,600
Parking Income	(585,469)	(767,181)	(834,000)	66,819
Parking Penalties	(18,603)	(51,921)	(11,000)	(40,921)
Depot				
White Goods & Special Collections	(24,917)	(30,312)	(35,000)	4,688
Green Waste	(530,880)	(601,555)	(660,000)	58,445

5. Sustainability Programme 2024/25

5.1 The Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring report detailed the £996k of savings that were expected to be delivered within year, as approved within the sustainability programme.

5.2 **Appendix 2** shows projects, savings and pressures that were within budget during 24/25 and their performance against the budget.

- The budget for the pay award was reduced to 3% to give a potential saving of £76,000, however, due to the agreed pay rise of £1,290 per FTE, this saving was not achieved, and there was an additional pressure on the budget of £6k.
- The Contingency budget will now not result in any savings as it is required to be fully utilised to offset unrealised savings.

5.3 Savings based on increasing income continued throughout the year:

- Green waste underachieved the target by £58k

- Car Parking underachieved the target by £67k, partly offset by an additional £41k on parking fines
- Taxi Licensing is expected to achieve an additional £59k.

5.4 The alternate weekly waste collection project has been delivered and reductions in staffing and vehicle repair and maintenance costs have been implemented to achieve the required savings.

5.5 At Quarter 4 these savings amounted to £807k of the £996k savings identified. This is a success rate of 81%.

6. Business Rates

6.1 The only element of the Council Funding that is not fully fixed for the year at budget stage is Business Rates. The table below shows the outturn in respect of Business Rates for 2024/25.

Table 6 – Business Rates 2024/25

	Original Budget 2024/25	Outturn	Variance
	£	£	£
NNDR Income	(5,048,987)	(5,055,234)	(6,247)
Tariff	3,847,539	3,847,539	0
Section 31 Grants - Funded Reliefs	(1,523,124)	(1,493,253)	29,871
Levy	321,977	146,011	(175,966)
Renewable energy	(8,564)	(8,564)	0
NNDR Adjustment	0	(102,135)	(102,135)
Total Financing	**(2,411,159)**	**(2,665,636)**	**(254,477)**

6.2 Due to the complexities of the Collection Fund, it is important to note that the largest element of this position 'NNDR income' is fixed based on the amount forecast at budget setting, any variance from the actual NNDR income impacts on the budget in 25/26 in the form of the surplus/deficit for the previous year. The cumulative deficit at the end of 2024/25, that will impact on the budget in 2025/26 is £660k but this deficit will be split within the pool.

A large part of this deficit relates to a provision held for appeals which has been decreased during the year, this provides for any successful appeals against Businesses that believe their rateable value is too high. Should the appeals be unsuccessful the provision will be reduced back down, however should the appeals be successful we have made a provision for these payments.

6.3 The Collection fund reserve at Q4 has a balance of £146,387 as shown in the table below.

Table 7

	Council Tax	NNDR	Total
Opening balance 1st April 2024	(98,553)	591,101	492,548
Movement in year	(20,638)	(325,524)	(346,162)
Closing Balance 31st March 2025	**(119,191)**	**265,577**	**146,386**

The movements in year reflect the expected surplus/deficits on the funds for 24/25, which will impact in 25/26.

7.   Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

7.1   For 2024/25 the Councils Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net revenue budget was set with a planned contribution to balances of £99k, resulting in an estimated level of general balances at the year-end of £1.527m.

7.2   The HRA underspent by £348k, giving a HRA balance of £1.758m. Members are requested to approve the following minimum working balance for 25/26 on the HRA – this is based either 5%, 10% or 15% of gross income budgeted for 2025/26. The remaining reserve will be earmarked for alternative use which will be proposed during 2025/26. Best practice indicates an average of 10% to be prudent, so therefore if a minimum balance was held of 15% this would be a risk averse position for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

HRA Gross income 25/26	% Minimum Balance	£ Minimum Balance
£6,164,300	5%	£308,215
	10%	£616,430
	15%	£924,645

7.3   The major variances over £30k for the HRA are shown below:

Table 8

Service Area	(Under)/ Overspends	Key reasons for variance
General Repairs	163,765	£24K overspend on staffing. £140K overspend on repairs.
Void Property Repairs	(142,410)	Savings are due to more of our void property costs being capitalised.
General Planned Maintenance	(136,775)	Savings due to fewer planned works were carried out this year than expected.
Housing Revenue Account	(223,375)	£30K due to write offs of former tenant arrears. £21K due to depreciation. £3K from savings on Council Tax on void properties. £175K due to a decrease in the provision for bad debts. £54K in additional rental and other income raised.
Estates Management	209,047	£19K overspend on staffing. £5K overspend on computer software. £16K on legal fees relating to disrepair claims. £180K in costs related to the stock condition survey and project management fees in relation to new housing initiatives not deemed eligible for capitalisation. £5K savings on compensation. £9K new burdens income. £3K overspend on other supplies and services.
Capital Charges	(108,482)	Reduced forecast for capital charges.

8.   Earmarked Reserves

8.1   The Council holds a number of earmarked revenue reserves over both the General Fund and HRA. These reserves are sums set aside for specific purposes and to mitigate against potential future known or predicted liabilities. A number of these reserves are budgeted for use over the period of the MTFS.

8.2   Contributions to/from reserves are noted below and detailed analysis of reserves are shown on **Appendix 5.**

Table 9

Reserves	Opening Balance 01/04/24	Increase	Decrease	Closing Balance 31/03/25
	£	£	£	£
General Fund Earmarked Reserves	(378,379)	(323,472)	10,679	(691,172)
General Fund Grants	(1,135,140)	(1,125,857)	1,228,981	(1,032,017)
Housing Revenue Reserve	(1,610,782)	(1,700,026)	2,335,862	(974,946)
1-4-1 Housing Reserve	(1,293,788)	(535,682)	408,021	(1,421,450)

9.   Capital Programme

9.1   The 2024/25 Capital Programme was set at Full Council in February 2024. Table 10 below shows a summary of the 2024/25 capital programme; the full capital programme is shown in **Appendix 4**.

9.2   The outturn for the General Fund capital programme is £1.896m with slippage of £1,097k. This is comprised principally of £132k on the invest-to-save budget, due to transformation costs being less than estimated, £314k on the vehicle replacement programme, due to long lead times on new vehicles, and £484k on the sports facility's improvement programme, due to challenges from Sport England that have now been resolved. £461k of UKSPF-funded capital projects have now been added to the budget.

9.3   The outturn for the HRA capital programme is £2.995m with slippage of £2.334m due to a delay on the New Housing Initiatives scheme as further funding options and housing options are being investigated, £125k on door replacement work and £300k of fire safety work that was delayed.

9.4   Approval is requested to re-profile the underspent capital budgets for 2024/25 thus increasing capital budgets for 2025/26 by the reported slippage amounts for the General Fund and HRA. Capital spend against the revised budgets will be monitored during 2025/26.

Table 10 – Capital Programme Summary

Fund	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance to Budget
	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Schemes			
Vehicle Refurbishment	754	440	(314)
Waste Project	440	256	(184)

Sports Facilities Improvement Programme	484	0	(484)
UKSPF	461	432	(29)
Other	1,006	768	(238)
GF Total	**3,145**	**1,896**	**(1,249)**
Housing Revenue Account			
New Housing Initiatives	2,157	408	(1,749)
Decarbonisation of Housing Stock	909	812	(97)
Central Heating	1,219	1,278	59
Other	1,043	497	(547)
HRA Scheme Total	**5,328**	**2,995**	**(2,334)**
Total	**8,473**	**4,891**	**(3,583)**

Details of the Capital Programme financing are included in **Appendix 4**.

Service Area	Cost Centre	Q3 Forecast Variations Above £5K	Q4 Reason for Forecast Variance	
Community & Wellbeing	Crime and Disorder Partnership	-8,270	Focus was on spending OPCC funding for the year. Only utilised for expenditure that fell outside of the conditions of the grant.	
	Crime and Disorder Partnership	5,925	OPCC allocation for 24/25 less than expected.	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	-16,592		-18,938
Corporate Assets	Peace Memorial Park Pavilion	5,054	No budget for water	
	Walter Charles Day Center	5,561	Estate agent's fees for sale.	
	Tythorn Hill	-20,968	Increase in commercial bookings	
	Tythorn Hill	5,328	Decrease in non-commercial bookings	
	Coombe Park	-8,057	Increase in football/rugby bookings income	
	Cemeteries	5,118	Increase in staff costs due to a career grade and an increase in electricity costs	
	Cemeteries	26,600	Reduction in income	
	Car Parks	5,925	Planned works to repair potholes and reline.	
	Car Parks	6,638	Increase in NNDR charges	
	Car Parks	-6,574	Reactive maintenance budget. Costs lower than expected.	
	Car Parks	-11,819	Credit as a result of cancelled PO from prior year on other external fees	
	Car Parks	-9,223	Credit as a result of cancelled PO from prior year on data card fees	
	Car Parks	-18,447	Refund from prior year on PayByPhone	
	Car Parks	-6,361	underspend on the Chipside MiPermit charges	
	Car Parks	36,877	overspend as actuals include Q3/4 23/24 Harborough Council enforcement contract costs	
	Car Parks	66,819	Reduction in expected parking income	
	Car Parks	-40,921	underspend as actuals include Q3/4 23/24 Harborough Council contract penalty income	
	Borough Engineering	7,021	Increase in LCC street lighting charge due to electricity costs	
	Street Cleansing	21,000	Obsolete recharge budget has been removed	
	Grounds Maintenance Holding Ac	-20,458	Vacancy savings	
	Grounds Maintenance Holding Ac	10,000	Obsolete recharge budget has been removed	
	Structural Maintenance	-16,397	Lower cost of cyclical repairs this year	
	Structural Maintenance	21,023	Higher cost of responsive repairs this year	
	Structural Maintenance	-5,366	Savings on play area maintenance due to capital improvements	
	Brocks Hill Move	7,624	Increased maintenance charges on fixtures and fittings	
	Brocks Hill Move	27,621	23/24 NNDR charge not accrued.	
	Brocks Hill Move	-6,993	No charges for water in 24/25. Under investigation	
	Brocks Hill Move	5,140	Increased annual charges for Civico meeting system	
	Brocks Hill Move	-5,848	Additional income from catering concession.	
	Brocks Hill Move	-8,840	Elections income for use of Civic Suite	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	5,590		82,666
Customer Service	Customer Services	13,436	Additiuonal staff working on Household Support Fund	
	Customer Services	-37,801	£37k software savings on Customer Relationship Management system	
	Customer Services	-16,130	Reimbursement from LCC for staff working on Hosuehold Support Fund	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	-28,799		-69,294
Depot	Refuse Collection	-33,344	Vacancy Savings	
	Refuse Collection	-18,636	Reduced use of hired staff	
	Refuse Collection	120,000	Corporate Vacancy Savings Target	
	Recycling	-12,767	Vacancy Savings	
	Recycling	-7,375	Reduced use of hired staff	
	Recycling	25,871	Cost of extra wheelie bins sold	
	Recycling	-34,162	Extra wheelie bin sales	
	Garden Waste Collection	36,557	Increased cost of hired staff	
	Garden Waste Collection	-16,187	Travelling allowance (income) from LCC for extended travel distance for disposal of garden waste	
	Garden Waste Collection	58,445	Reduced income for garden waste	
	Food Waste	86,279	Time of staff involved in food waste project recharged from other areas.	
	Food Waste	-130,277	Food waste setup grant	
	Mechanics Workshop	-20,492	Savings on Interim Fleet Manager working part-time	
	Mechanics Workshop	11,701	Increase in use of hired staff	
	Mechanics Workshop	5,731	Miscellaneous consumables, BOC safety checks	
	Oadby Depot	-9,347	Vacancy Savings	
	Oadby Depot	5,790	Overtime	
	Oadby Depot	-7,500	Rental income for hardstanding at Depot	
	Fleet Management	-12,320	Savings on tyre replacement due to waste project	
	Fleet Management	-35,921	Savings on fuel due to waste project	
	Fleet Management	-30,058	Savings on vehicle maintenance due to waste project	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	37,621		19,608
	Corporate Management	16,853	Increased cost of insurances.	
	Corporate Management	-50,613	Audit fees for 24/25 still not settled. Budget carried forward	
	Corporate Management	18,730	Increased bank charges	
	Corporate Management	-32,718	Reduction in provision for bad debts due to change in provision percentage	
	Corporate Management	8,951	Debt management charges	
	Corporate Management	-18,252	Unbudgeted grant income	
	Corporate Management non Fin	-20,380	Additional Pension Lump Sum recharge to HRA	
	Corporate Management non Fin	7,380	Slightly higher debt charges than anticipated due to reallocation of debt between GF and HRA	
	Corporate Management non Fin	22,122	Reduction in HRA recharge due to additional Pension Lump Sum recharge to HRA	
	Corporate Management non Fin	-23,140	Overachievement of corporate savings plan	
	Corporate Management non Fin	-131,996	Historically, insurance has not been accrued for. The combination of accruals with the new contract period has resulted in a large one-off saving.	
	Corporate Management non Fin	9,055	Increase in postage charges	
	Council Tax	-5,928	Vacancy savings	
	Council Tax	14,360	Hired staff covering vacancies	
	Council Tax	5,692	Cost of Nexus subscription	

Finance & Resources	Council Tax	10,031	Increased postage costs	
	Council Tax	6,000	Compensation	
	Council Tax	85,343	Reduction in court cost income plus creation of provision for court cost bad debts	
	NNDR	-11,445	Vacancy savings	
	NNDR	19,835	Hired staff covering vacancies	
	NNDR	-7,800	Underspend on professional services	
	Housing Benefits	24,000	Housing benefit audit fees fior 22/23 and 23/24 unaccrued for	
	Housing Benefits	55,847	Increased tennant rent rebate	
	Housing Benefits	716,181	Cost of providing Homelessness service	
	Housing Benefits	11,444	Increase in discretionary Housing Benefit. Offset by grant.	
	Housing Benefits	257,567	Increase in rent allowance	
	Housing Benefits	39,756	Housing benefit overpayment write off	
	Housing Benefits	-57,766	Reduction in provision for bad debts due to change in provision percentage	
	Housing Benefits	-181,108	Increase in rent allowance grant	
	Housing Benefits	-10,811	Increase in discretionary Housing Benefit grant. Offset by expenditure	
	Housing Benefits	7,521	Administration grant less than budget	
	Housing Benefits	-36,811	Increased tennant rent rebate grant	
	Housing Benefits	-170,120	Additional housing benefit attributable to homelessness	
	Housing Benefits	17,687	Grant income less than budget	
	Housing Benefits	-20,253	Improved performance on recovery of overpayments	
	Council tax Benefits	46,436	Cost of discretionary council tax relief for care leavers	
	Finance	-75,642	Vacancy Savings	
	Finance	-5,993	Savings on hired staff	
	Finance	29,322	Increased cost of software	
	Finance	20,825	23/24 asset valuation not accrued for	
	Finance	8,980	Cost of collection fund assistence.	
	Finance	-26,531	Unbudgeted grant income	
	Finance	-5,698	Recharge of finance salaries to UKSPF	
	ICT Section	-32,076	Vacancy savings	
	ICT Section	6,119	Recruitment expenses	
	ICT Section	14,235	Increased cost of software	
	ICT Section	7,997	Increased security audit costs	
	ICT Section	-18,520	Underspend on Network Connections budget (offset against telephone services)	
	ICT (Mobile Phones)	-6,219	Underspend due to reduced costs of new contract	
	ICT (Telephones)	38,955	Increase in costs of telephony services	
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	-7,688	Vacancy savings	
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	35,625	Hired staff covering vacancies	
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	28,315	Increased cost of software	
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	12,000	Increased postage costs	
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	16,567	Increased printing costs	
	Revenues and Benefits Manager	-13,498	DWP LADS grants offsetting software costs	
	Systems Administration	8,509	Salary pressure due to 3-month overlap between starter and leaver to ensure full handover	
	Corporate Projects	-27,601	Budgeted pension for staff member not in scheme, recharge of staff time to waste project	
	Corporate Projects	-39,000	Savings on Welland Procurement	
	Corporate Projects	-12,700	Recharge to Blaby for consultancy work	
	Corporate Projects	-5,730	Recharge of staff time to UKSPF	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	-28,055		544,150
Law & Democracy	Env Health Admin/Enforcement	-5,783	Vacancy savings	
	Env Health Admin/Enforcement	-6,945	Recovery of costs plus some additional income from admin charges.	
	Local Land Charges	-24,000	Land Registry LLC Transition Payment. Appropriated to earmaked grants	
	Democratic Representation &Mgt	-5,768	Members allowances unclaimed	
	Register of Electors	5,804	Increase in canvass cost due to an increase in digital responses.	
	Register of Electors	-7,258	Response licence for letters sent out by Civica. Savings due to a greater number of online responses.	
	Register of Electors	-22,512	Electoral integrity grant funding	
	Register of Electors	-5,999	Settlement from PCC 2021 election to be spent on storage of election supplies	
	Election Expenses	-17,500	Appropriation to election reserve does not appear in net cost of services.	
	Legal and Admin Section	-37,392	Vacancy savings	
	Legal and Admin Section	-14,368	Less external legal advice required.	
	Legal and Admin Section	5,324	Less legal fees received than expeceted	
	Legal and Admin Section	8,850	No services recharges expected this year	
	Taxi Licences	-51,160	Higher number of taxi license renewals and new applications than expected.	
	Taxi Licences	-5,237	Higher number of hackney carriage license renewals and new applications than expected.	
	Taxi Licences	-6,849	Additional income raised from competency tests	
	Other Licences	-7,796	Additional income from street trader licences	
	Alcohol and Ent Licence	11,804	Reduced premises license income	
	Selective Property Licence Sch	-8,530	More income than expected in Q3.	
	Selective Property Licence Sch	5,643	Salary recharge to SHDF less than budgeted for,	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	-4,429		-194,099
SLT	Senior Management Team	-9,106	Corproate Management costs recharged to Food Waste roject.	
	Other Variances Less than £5K	-13,510		-22,616
	Environment Strategy	21,473	Return of unspent HUG2 grant income	
	Homelessness	9,827	Costs of getting HRA properties up to standard to use as temporary accomodation.	
	Homelessness	712,036	Temporary accomodation costs from increased pressures from homelessness	
	Homelessness	-93,677	Additional government grants relating to homelessness	
	Homelessness	-718,613	Housing benefit received relating to temporary accomodation	
	Homelessness	-33,831	Weekly personal charges for temp accommodation	
	Homelessness	-6,400	Income from renting out leased properties. Fewer voids and under budgeted for.	
	Belmont House Hostel	-5,909	Longer tenancies reducing void maintenance costs	

The Built Environment	Belmont House Hostel	-7,284	Income from additional room	
	Building Control Section	-5,258	Year end deficit reported by the partnership lower than the forecasts they shared with us at Q3.	
	Development Control	-31,648	Vacancy savings	
	Development Control	-80,500	Unbudgeted grant income	
	Development Control	-26,232	£25K income raised from Planning Performance Agreements for the Wigston direction for growth. £1K miscellaneous planning income.	
	Development Control	29,191	Reduction in planning application income	
	Forward Planning	10,679	Additional local plan work	
	Forward Planning	-6,117	Savings on cost of transport study	
	Forward Planning	-250,000	Unbudgeted grant income from local plan changes. Appropriated to reserve	
	Economic Development	-7,000	Unused this year due to focus on UKSPF	
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	16,908	UKSPF expenditure and income. Aggregate cost £11K, to be funded from unspent UKSPF in earmarked grants reserve.	
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	21,829		
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	38,864		
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	18,665		
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	72,983		
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	83,379		
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	89,344		
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	-331,459		
	Other Variances Less than £5K	-8,428		-487,179
	TOTAL	-145,701		
		0		

Service Area	Description	Item	23/24 Budget	Saving Identified	24/25 Budget	Outturn	Variance	Comments
Finance	Saving	Service Transformation	-50,000.00	-534,000.00	-584,000.00	-607,140.00	-23,140.00	Recruitment has now been completed and a saving made.
	Pressure	Local Government Pay Award	0.00	-76,000.00	-76,000.00	6,000.00	82,000.00	Pay Award confirmed with an additional pressure of £82k.
Depot	Saving	Alternate weekly waste collections	0.00	-120,000.00	-120,000.00	-120,000.00	0.00	Savings target has been achieved.
	Income	Bin Swaps	-200.00	-12,000.00	-12,000.00	-12,000.00	0.00	Waste project is still on-going bin swaps are included within project costs.
	Income	Increase in Green waste charges	-550,000.00	-110,000.00	-660,000.00	-601,555.00	58,445.00	Increased uptake of the service not achieved.
	Income	Increase in Bulky Waste charge	-30,000.00	-15,000.00	-35,000.00	-30,312.00	4,688.00	Increased uptake of the service not achieved. Growth included in budget
The Built Environment	Pressure	Contingency	0.00	130,000.00	130,984.00	130,984.00	0.00	Contingency to cover additional costs of homelessness.
	Income	Increased car parking charges	-575,000.00	-259,000.00	-834,000.00	-767,181.00	66,819.00	Underachievement of parking income.
			-1,205,200.00	-996,000.00	-2,190,016.00	-2,001,204.00	188,812.00	

-807,188.00

0.81

Housing Revenue Account Detailed Variances

Cost Centre	Under/ Over spends	Key reasons for forecast variance
General Repairs	163,765	£24K overspend on staffing. £140K overspend on repairs.
Void Property Repairs	-142,410	Savings are due to more of our void property costs being capitalised.
General Planned Maintenance	-136,775	Savings due to fewer planned works were carrried out this year than expected.
Adaptations for Disabled Persons	-943	
Planned Maint larger schemes	31	
Service Repair Contract	27,671	Overspend is due to inflationary increases and additional costs beyond annual gas servicing and maintenance.
Churchill Close older Persons	-15,531	Savings on heating costs due to new boiler installation
Marriott House Older Person	-10,152	Savings on heating costs offset by increases in water charges
Kings Drive Older Person	-11,784	Savings on heating costs offset by increases in water charges
Communal Services	12,873	£20K increase in electricity charges for the year offset by £(7)K savings from day-to-day repairs of door entry systems and maintenance of fire alarms.
Housing Revenue Account	-223,375	£30K due to write offs of former tenant arrears. £(21)K due to depreciation. £(3)K from savings on Council Tax on void properties. £(175)K due to a decrease in the provision for bad debts. £(54)K in additional rental and other income raised.
Estates Management	209,047	£19K overspend on staffing. £5K overspend on computer software. £16K on legal fees relating to disrepair claims. £180K in costs related to the stock condition survey and project management fees in relation to new housing initiatives not deemed eligible for capitalisation. £(5)K savings on compensation. £(9)K new burdens income. £3K overspend on other supplies and services.
Elizabeth Court Ctaker Serv	51	
Social Housing Decarbonisation	0	
HRA Cleaning	-3,740	Savings on salaries and cleaning materials.
Capital Charges	-108,482	Reduced forecast for capital charges.
	-239,755	

OADBY AND WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Project Code Reference	Scheme	Budget Holder	Responsible Person	2024-25 Proposals	2023-24 Budgeted C/F	2023-24 Budgeted Addition	2024-25 Approved Budget	2023-24 Final C/F	Additions/Removals/Transfers	2024-25 Total Budget	Actual to 31st March 2025	Variance to Budget	Comments	Variance to Budget
	Funding Available B/F Estimated Additions In Year			£	£		£	£	£	£	£			
	Total Funding Available													
	Housing Revenue Account													
50029	New Housing Initiatives	Chris Eyre	Chris Eyre		2,178,225		2,178,225	0	(20,726)	2,157,499	408,021	(1,749,479)	This budget includes match funding to enable the council to spend its Right to Buy receipts. Budget allocated to the provision of additional new housing stock at Horsewell Lane and the purchase of existing properties. Forecast covers the costs of purchasing 3 properties as well as the capitalisation of project management fees.	(1,749,479)
50049	Horsewell Lane housing development, Modular Build	Chris Eyre	Chris Eyre		0		0	(20,726)	20,726	0	0	0	Capitalisation of project management fees in 23/24.	0
	Acquisition of Existing Property				0		0	(9,158)	9,158	0	0	0	Stamp duty tax for acquisition of a property in 23/24.	0
	New Housing Initiatives - Subtotal			**0**	**2,178,225**	**0**	**2,178,225**	**(29,884)**	**9,158**	**2,157,499**	**408,021**	**(1,749,479)**		**(1,749,479)**
	Decarbonisation of Housing Stock	Chris Eyre	Chris Eyre	500,000	761,142	269,000	1,530,142	0	(621,306)	908,836	811,942	(96,894)		(96,894)
50003	Central Heating	Chris Eyre			0		0	315,062	904,023	1,219,086	1,277,991	58,906	Chartwell House Boiler Phase 1 works (£385K) upgrading the boiler plant room and replacement boiler has concluded. Phase 2 works (£755K) associated with the heating and hot water components being upgraded in individual flats has started. In addition to this work we are also replacing all pipework and components associated with the heating and hot water system located in communal areas.	58,906
50006	Front & Rear Doors	Chris Eyre			0		0	(4,868)	154,868	150,000	23,736	(126,264)	Door replacement programme at Chartwell House. Communal door replacement to be carried out this financial year. The door replacements for tenants has been suspended until April 2025 due to the winter.	(126,264)
50009	Fire Safety Marriott House	Chris Eyre			0		0	0	0	0	12,077	12,077	Moved to 50019	12,077
50016	Decent Homes Work	Chris Eyre		1,000,000	195,016		1,195,016	9,473	(1,079,489)	125,000	184,358	59,358	This will be used on bringing void properties up to decent homes standards which will enable us to let properties e.g. kitchens, bathrooms and electrical upgrades.	59,358
50017	Major Adaptations	Chris Eyre			14,997		14,997	(31,527)	216,530	200,000	108,518	(91,482)	This is for work generated by an occupational therapist referral making recommendations for stairlifts, level access showers etc. Slippage is due to certain work being moved into 25/26 as it requires planning permission.	(91,482)
50019	Fire Safety	Chris Eyre			80,000		80,000	58,432	300,000	438,432	142,138	(296,294)	Compliance work to communal schemes and blocks to implement remedial works identified in fire risk assessments.	(296,294)
50024	Ventilation Insulation	Chris Eyre			0		0	(2,041)	2,041	0	13,394	13,394	POs raised in the wrong place. Will be moved to Decent Homes Works when invoices in. Forecasts are on Decent Homes.	13,394
50041	Stock Condition Survey	Chris Eyre			100,000		100,000	0	30,000	130,000	0	(130,000)	The stock condition survey started in July 2024 and is expected to be completed by year end.	(130,000)
50046	Kitchen Replacements Decent Homes, incl Bathrooms	Chris Eyre			0		0	0	0	0	12,490	12,490	The stock condition survey started in July 2024 and is expected to be completed by year end.	12,490
50047	Housing Block Improvements	Chris Eyre			0		0	(83,966)	83,966	0	0	(0)	POs raised in the wrong place. Will be moved to Fire Safety when invoices in. Forecasts are on Fire Safety.	(0)
	HRA Other Subtotal			**1,000,000**	**390,013**	**0**	**1,390,013**	**260,566**	**611,940**	**2,262,518**	**1,774,702**	**(487,816)**		**(487,816)**
	Total - HRA			**1,500,000**	**3,329,380**	**269,000**	**5,098,380**	**230,682**	**(208)**	**5,328,854**	**2,994,665**	**(2,334,188)**		**(2,334,188)**
	General Fund													
54133	Replacement RCV	David Gill	Brian Kew		0		0	0	238,511	238,511	239,016	505	Replacement RCV Vehicle delivered. Cost includes chassis, body, bin lift & registration.	505
54162	Vehicle Refurbishment	David Gill	Brian Kew/Mark Westkamp	400,000	284,924		684,924	0	(493,045)	191,879	20,390	(171,489)	Order placed. Long time on vehicles, so delivery of the RCV truck will slip into the next FY. Specifications for a new truck provided & estimated at about £240k. FD15 HSV (75028) and FD15 HSN (75025)sent to auction week beginning 22/01/24. RCV truck FD15 HSO & FD15 HSU,refurbished and returned.	(171,489)
54170	2 Isuzu 4WD Pickups	David Gill	Brian Kew		0		0	0	61,238	61,238	61,238	0	Complete	0
54171	Ford Transit Tipper	David Gill	Brian Kew		0		0	0	34,060	34,060	34,060	0	Complete	0
54172	2 Transit Connect Trend L2 250	David Gill	Brian Kew		0		0	0	47,916	47,916	47,916	0	Complete	0
54591	Wessex RMX500 Mower	David Gill	Sally Moseley		0		0	0	37,320	37,320	37,320	0	Complete	0
	Replacement of Grounds Maintenance Dennis bowling green mower	David Gill	Brian Kew	6,000			6,000	0	9,000	15,000	0	(15,000)	Husqvarna mower to be replaced as priority	(15,000)
	Replacement of Grounds Maintenance Vehicle FE09 XOT	David Gill	Brian Kew	30,000			30,000	0	7,000	37,000	0	(37,000)	Transit tipper to be replaced as priority	(37,000)
	Replacement of Grounds Maintenance Vehicle FG12 MVN	David Gill	Brian Kew	33,000			33,000	0	11,000	44,000	0	(44,000)	Replacement of small diesel van x2	(44,000)
	Replacement of cemetaries vehicles- 3 way tipper	David Gill	Sally Moseley		0		0	0	22,000	22,000	0	(22,000)	Service are in the process of sourcing a suitable vehicle which is proving challenging	(22,000)
	Replacement of cemetaries vehicles- Mower trailor	David Gill	Sally Moseley		0		0	0	25,000	25,000	0	(25,000)	Services looking at quotations and demos; expect to be purchased in 24/25	(25,000)
	Vehicle Refurbishment Subtotal			**400,000**	**353,924**	**0**	**753,924**	**0**	**0**	**753,924**	**439,940**	**(313,984)**		**(313,984)**
54147	Recycling Wheelie Bins	David Gill	Brian Kew		0		0	0	273,600	273,600	151,989	(121,611)	Acts relate to the purchase of new bins for Waste Transformation project (moving to alternate waste collections wef 2 Sept 24). Expected that cost will be funded from sale of larger bins (see 54168/9)	0
54168	Refuse Route Optimisation	David Gill	Ben Wilson		0		0	0	14,850	14,850	14,850	0	Integrated Skills Ltd route optimisation software. Waste Transformation project (moving to alternate weekly collections), now complete. Funded from sale of larger bins (see 54169)	0
54169	Waste Transformation	David Gill	Ben Wilson		0		0	0	151,820	151,820	89,640	(62,180)	Waste Transformation project - funded by larger bin sales. This project completed in Sept when the alternate waste collections commenced and as such there have been no further costs (other than James Hodgkin is still coded here). Continuing wheelie bin income should now be coded to revenue	0
	Waste Project Subtotal			**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**440,270**	**440,270**	**256,479**	**(183,791)**		**0**
54522	New Facility at Uplands Park	David Gill	Sally Moseley		135,525		135,525	(1,162)		134,363	0	(134,363)	Refurbishment of tennis courts at Uplands Park. Planning permission has been granted and service are now identifying contractors/consultant who can manage the project. As such expect scheme to be completed in 25/26. Will have more details (costings/timings) when contractor appointed and can then revise forecast.	(134,363)

Project Code Reference	Scheme	Budget Holder	Responsible Person	2024-25 Proposals	2023-24 Budgeted C/F	2023-24 Budgeted Addition	2024-25 Approved Budget	2023-24 Final C/F	Additions/Removals/Transfers	2024-25 Total Budget	Actual to 31st March 2025	Variance to Budget	Comments	Variance to Budget
				£	£		£	£	£	£	£			
	Cricket Nets at Uplands Park	David Gill	Sally Moseley		40,000		40,000	0		40,000	0	(40,000)	Original bid 21-22 for Sports Facility improvement, approval to transfer to range of new schemes given at committee Nov 22. Currently on-hold pending completion of Uplands Park project; potential for re-allocation	(40,000)
	Football Goals	David Gill	Sally Moseley		7,221		7,221	0		7,221	0	(7,221)	Original bid 21-22 for Sports Facility improvement, approval to transfer to range of new schemes given at committee Nov 22. Currently on-hold pending completion of Uplands Park project; potential for re-allocation	(7,221)
	Pitch Improvement Equipment	David Gill	Sally Moseley		30,000		30,000	0		30,000	0	(30,000)	Original bid 21-22 for Sports Facility improvement, approval to transfer to range of new schemes given at committee Nov 22. Currently on-hold pending completion of Uplands Park project; potential for re-allocation	(30,000)
	Skatepark and Parkour or BMX facilities	David Gill	Sally Moseley		220,000		220,000	0		220,000	0	(220,000)	Willow Park: Current area in disrepair, ongoing discussions around the development of area. Some concerns raised from members.	(220,000)
	Residue of reassigned sports budgets held as hedge against cost inflation.	David Gill	Sally Moseley		52,779		52,779	0		52,779	0	(52,779)	Original bid 21-22 for Sports Facility improvement, approval to transfer to range of new schemes given at committee Nov 22. Currently on-hold pending completion of Uplands Park project; potential for re-allocation	(52,779)
	Sports Facilities Improvement Programme Subtotal			0	485,525	0	485,525	(1,162)	0	484,363	0	(484,363)		(484,363)
53908	UKSPF Digital Highstreets	Adrian Thorpe	Adrian Thorpe	0	0		0	1,652	(1,652)	0	0	(0)	Project concluded in 23/24.	(0)
53909	UKSPF Shop Front Scheme	Adrian Thorpe	Adrian Thorpe	0	0		0	9,786	10,214	20,000	30,210	10,210	Grants to small businesses to improve their shop front. All application have been received. We are on track for all payments to be made by the end of February.	10,210
	UKSPF Green Spaces	Adrian Thorpe	Adrian Thorpe	0			0	0	201,516	201,516	203,715	2,199	Installation of an infant play area at Brocks Hill. Contractor will start work in February and this is expected to take 3 weeks to complete. Work has started on Kilby Bridge towpath in January and it will take 4 weeks to complete. Expected to finish at the end of February. Additional £9.5K of costs to be covered by business rates pool funding.	2,199
	UKSPF Town Centres	Adrian Thorpe	Adrian Thorpe	0			0	0	239,000	239,000	197,630	(41,370)	Plans for the signage at Wigston Town Centre has been submitted. Installation is conditional upon planning permission being granted. The first mural at Wigston Town Centre is complete. Work is ongoing to complete 3 more murals at Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston Town Centres before year end. All street furniture has now been delivered. Installation of new furniture is currently ongoing and will be completed by the end of March.	(41,370)
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund Subtotal			0	0	0	0	11,438	449,078	460,516	431,555	(28,961)		(28,961)
52092	Oadby Pool Housing Project	Adrian Thorpe	Adrian Thorpe		0		0	0		0	17,369	17,369	Awaiting planning decision. Sale is conditional upon planning permission being gained.	
54003	Brocks Hill Drainage	David Gill					0		5,000	5,000	9,130	4,130	Preliminary drainage improvement works at Brocks Hill. Further works expected in 25/26	
54010	Play Area Refurbishments	David Gill	Sally Moseley		8,400		8,400	0		8,400	44,661	36,261	Repairs carried out to BH snake swing - further refurb work to be carried out across Council Play Areas as H&S requirement per Crimson Report	
54017	Xmas Decoration Infrastructure	Adrian Thorpe	Mark Hryniw	7,500	0		7,500	0		7,500	7,500	0	New Christmas lights. A rolling cycle of replacements is in place. These have now all been replaced.	
54094	Website accessibility	Trish Hatton	Robert Helliwell		5,000		5,000	0		5,000	0	(5,000)	Website improvement project will take place in 25/26 (funded from revenue budget) and website accessibility remains an element of it so this budget will be required in 25/26	
54114	Car Park Resurfacing	David Gill	Sally Moseley		8,976		8,976	(8,976)		0	0	0	Complete. No c/fwd from 23/24.	
54150	CCTV Cameras	David Gill	Mark Smith		0		0	0	22,172	22,172	22,172	0	Purchase of CCTV cameras for the CSP using grant funding.	
54155	Replacement Shredder/Chipper	David Gill	David Gill/ Sam Holmes		0		0	0	32,723	32,723	32,723	0	Project complete	
54159	Pay & Display Scheme	David Gill	David Gill/ Sam Holmes		0		0	0	(6,250)	(6,250)	(6,250)	0	Reversed GRN from previous year.	
54566	Brocks Hill Additional Play Equipment	David Gill	Sally Moseley		82,000		82,000	0		82,000	85,643	3,643	Brocks Hill Country Park; senior play area upgrade and new equipt. Kompan works complete. RPI inspection carried out and passed, as a result we have now taken ownership of the play area. No further spend expected	
54576	Repairs to play area surface various play areas	David Gill	Sally Moseley		12,730		12,730	0		12,730	3,220	(9,510)	GB Sport & Leisure are carrying out the works. Slippage into 25/26 where it is expected to be completed	(9,510)
54578	Town Centre Wi-FI	Adrian Thorpe	Mark Hryniw		23,752		23,752	0		23,752	(8,599)	(32,351)	Project has concluded. No plans are in place to spend the remaining budget. 50% pool funded.	
54584	Uplands Pavilion Boiler	David Gill	David Gill/ Sam Holmes		0		0	0	(9,176)	(9,176)	(9,176)	0	Reversed GRN from previous year.	
54585	Wigston Cemetery – entrance drive resurfacing and disabled parking	David Gill	Sally Moseley		12,000		12,000	(12,000)		0	0	0	Scheme completed in 22/23	
54588	Tree Works – All Saints and St Wistans Churchyards	David Gill	Sally Moseley		15,000		15,000	0		15,000	12,415	(2,585)	Project complete	
54589	Multi use basketball / football court at Freer Park, Carlton Drive, Wigston	David Gill	Sally Moseley		35,000		35,000	0		35,000	37,583	2,583	Works have been completed	
54590	Wigston Pool Photovoltaics	David Gill	Sally Moseley		0		0	0	184,050	184,050	184,050	(0)	Project complete	
54592	Brocks Hill Barn	David Gill						0	18,000	18,000	0	(18,000)	Will slip into early 25/26	(18,000)
54594	Wigston Cemetery Mess Room	David Gill						0	15,000	15,000	0	(15,000)	Will slip into early 25/26	(15,000)
56055	Document Management System Software	Colleen Warren	Ben Wilson		3,454		3,454	3,000		6,454	0	(6,454)	Will slip into early 25/26	(6,454)
56069	Licensing Software Review	David Gill	Jon Wells		0		0	0	10,371	10,371	10,371	0	Licensing software review of forms and processes with NWLDC support. Work is ongoing on our systems to resolve issues that have been flagged up. Expected to be completed by year end. Invest to save project.	
56072	South Wigston Shop Fronts	Adrian Thorpe	Mark Hryniw		1,992		1,992	0		1,992	1,992	0	We have received a few shop front applications. Expected to be fully spent by year end.	
56084	IDOX Upgrade				0		0	0	6,600	6,600	6,600	0	Futher upgrades required.	
56085	New Council Offices	Adrian Thorpe	Ben Wilson	10,000	0		10,000	0		10,000	4,723	(5,277)	Misc capital works at Brocks Hill	(5,277)
56092	Laptop Renewal	Sal Khan	Ben Wilson		2,710		2,710	850		3,560	0	(3,560)	Ad-hoc in-year replacements.	(3,560)
56096	Capital Maintenance Brocks Hill	David Gill	Sally Moseley		0		0	1,279		1,279	0	(1,279)	Works complete 23/24	
56097	Depot Health & Safety Works	David Gill	Brian Kew		0		0	1,566		1,566	0	(1,566)	Completed 23/24.	
56099	Public Access Upgrade	Trish Hatton	Ben Wilson		0		0	0		0	7,150	7,150	Supplementary Budget Request approved by CX&S151. The software requires upgrading to a version which will continue to be supported. Was previously paid for by services that require public access (Planning and Licensing) but there was no budget. Cost will be £7.15k, no further spend expected	
56100	Compliance Software	David Gill	Sally Moseley		0		0	0		0	3,675	3,675	Compliance management system needed to ensure statutory deadlines met. Supplementary submitted.	
56102	Webpay 2 Implementation				0		0	0	8,000	8,000	8,000	0	Initial stages of the scheme brought forward from 25/26.	

Project Code Reference	Scheme	Budget Holder	Responsible Person	2024-25 Proposals	2023-24 Budgeted C/F	2023-24 Budgeted Addition	2024-25 Approved Budget	2023-24 Final C/F	Additions/Removals/Transfers	2024-25 Total Budget	Actual to 31st March 2025	Variance to Budget	Comments	Variance to Budget
				£	£		£	£	£	£	£			
	Invest to Save	David Gill	Ben Wilson	300,000			300,000	135,649	(10,371)	425,278	293,054	(132,224)	Capitalisation of restructure costs under flexible use of capital receipts regulations, costs of service transformation officer.	(132,224)
	Finance System Upgrade	Colleen Warren	Simon Ball		80,000		80,000	0		80,000	0	(80,000)	Will need to be carried forwards to 25/06.	(80,000)
	GF Other Subtotal			**317,500**	**291,014**	**0**	**608,514**	**121,368**	**276,119**	**1,006,000**	**768,006**	**(237,994)**		**(270,026)**
	Total - General Fund			**717,500**	**1,130,463**	**0**	**1,847,963**	**131,644**	**1,165,467**	**3,145,074**	**1,895,980**	**(1,249,094)**		**(1,097,334)**
	PLANNED EXPENDITURE GRAND TOTAL			**2,217,500**	**4,459,843**	**269,000**	**6,946,343**	**362,326**	**1,165,258**	**8,473,928**	**4,890,645**	**(3,583,282)**		**(3,431,522)**

Statement of Movement on Reserves

	Opening Balance at 1st April 2024	Corrections to 2023/24	Budgeted Usage 2023/24	Revised Balance	Additions in 2024/25	Useage in 2024/25	Closing Balance as at 31 March 2025
	£						
General Fund Earmarked Reserves							
90017 7751 Contingency Reserve	-139,207			-139,207			-139,207
90019/7751 Budget C/F Reserve	0			0	-50,613		-50,613
90038 7751 Land Valuation Reserve	-1,000			-1,000			-1,000
90045 7751 Local Elections Reserve	0			0	-17,500		-17,500
90047 7751 GF Cost Of Living Reserve	-41,738			-41,738			-41,738
90049 7751 Lottery Reserve	-6,349			-6,349	-5,359		-11,708
90015 7751 Local Plan Reserve	-190,085			-190,085	-250,000	10,679	-429,406
Total GF	**-378,379**	**0**		**-378,379**	**-323,472**	**10,679**	**-691,172**
General Fund Grants							
90044 7751 Collection Fund Reserve	-446,000	446,000		0			0
90046 7751 Business Rates Retention Reserve	0	-306,000	306,000	0			0
NNDR Equalisation Reserve	0	-365,000	365,000	0	-382,358		-382,358
90013 7751 Earmarked Revenue Grants Reserve	-225,783			-225,783	-72,499	62,531	-235,751
90027 7751 Grounds Maintenance Reserve Balance	-463,357		34,800	-428,557		14,650	-413,907
Total GF Grants	**-1,135,140**	**-225,000**	**705,800**	**-654,340**	**-454,857**	**77,181**	**-1,032,017**
90001 7751 **General Fund Reserve**	**-1,765,066**	**225,000**		**-1,540,066**	**0**		**-1,540,066**
Total General Fund Revenue Reserves	**-3,278,586**	**0**	**705,800**	**-2,572,786**	**-778,329**	**87,860**	**-3,263,255**
90005 7751 **General Fund Capital Receipts Reserve**	**-443,105**	**0**	**0**	**-443,105**	**-935,192**	**1,019,535**	**-358,762**
HRA Revenue Reserves							0
90009 7751 Major Repairs Reserve Balance	-1,190,839			-1,190,839	-1,700,026	2,335,862	-555,003
90011 7751 Regeneration Reserve	-361,443			-361,443			-361,443
90042 7751 Budgets Carried Forward HRA Reserve Balance	-8,500			-8,500			-8,500
90048 7751 HRA Cost Of Living Reserve	-50,000			-50,000			-50,000
Total HRA	**-1,610,782**	**0**		**-1,610,782**	**-1,700,026**	**2,335,862**	**-974,946**
90002 7751 **HRA Reserve**	**-1,410,793**	**0**		**-1,410,793**	**-347,908**	**0**	**-1,758,702**
Total HRA	**-3,021,576**	**0**		**-3,021,576**	**-2,047,934**	**2,335,862**	**-2,733,648**
HRA Capital Reserves							
90012 7751 1-4-1 Housing Reserve	**-1,293,788**	**0**		**-1,293,788**	**-535,682**	**408,021**	**-1,421,450**
	-8,037,054						-7,777,114
	-8,037,054						-7,777,114
	-0						-0

Agenda Item 8

	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 17 June 2025	Matter for Information and Decision

Report Title: **Sundry Debtor and Revenues Write Offs (Q1 2025/26)**

Report Author(s):   **Joy Burton (Revenues & Benefits Manager)**
Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer)

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the status of debts written off under delegated powers.
Report Summary:	Under delegated powers the Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer can write off amounts up to and including £5,000, and amounts between £5,000 and £10,000 in consultation with the Chair of PFDC. This report highlights the amounts written off up to Quarter 1 of 2025/26.
Recommendation(s):	**That the Committee notes the contents of the report and appendix, and approves the write offs over £10k.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer) (0116) 257 2759 colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Joy Burton (Revenues & Benefits Manager) (0116) 257 2681 joy.burton@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1)
Vision and Values:	Customer & Community Focused (V1) Proud of Everything We Do (V2) "Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out at paragraphs 2-6 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) Reputation Damage (CR4) Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	

Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	**1.** Write Offs over £10k as at Q1 2025/26

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of debts written off under delegated powers.

1.2 Under the policy, amounts owed by a single debtor under £5,000 may be written off by the Chief Finance Officer. Amounts above £5,000 but below £10,000 are delegated for write off to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Policy, Finance and Development Committee (PFDC) Chair. The writing off of debts above £10,000 may only be approved by PFDC.

1.3 Every effort is made to recover a debt owed to the Council before it is considered for write off. Where appropriate, recovery and enforcement options have been taken or where the Council is legally prohibited from pursuing, debts are considered for write off in line with the Council's Corporate Debt Policy. Examples where debt recovery is prohibited by law include:

• Bankruptcy or a Debt Relief Order is in place,
• Deceased – No assets within the estate,
• Debtor Absconded/no trace,
• Company in liquidation/dissolved or ceased trading with no assets,
• Severe hardship and/or serious health issues or
• Statute barred i.e. the Council cannot legally pursue the debt as there has been six years since the debt fell due and no action has been taken to collect the debt.

1.4 In some cases, it is uneconomical to collect an outstanding debt because the costs associated with recovering the debt exceed the income recoverable.

2. Current Position

Write offs relating to Quarter 1 (2025/26) as approved by the Chief Finance Officer (S151) are set out below.

Type of Debtor	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by S151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Amounts written off over £10,001 approved by Members	TOTAL
Council Tax	£69,700.52	£12,525.48	£0.00	£82,226.00

Non-Domestic Rates	£7,301.90	£9,861.16	£160,034.36	£177,197.42
Sundry Debtors	£20,354.13	£0.00	£0.00	£20,354.13
Total	**£97,356.55**	**£22,386.64**	**£160,034.36**	**£279,777.55**

The amounts detailed in the above table are shown below by category and the reason for write off.

3. Council Tax

3.1 In Q1 (2025/26) there are currently no Council Tax Debts over £10,000 for which Committee's approval for write off is sought.

3.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds are outlined in the Corporate Debt Policy are as follows:

Council Tax	Total No of cases	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date less than £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Total
DRO	13	£16,236.96	£5,073.38	£21,310.34
Closed Account – Recovery Exhausted	12	£10,576.85		£10,576.85
Execs/Sols Confirmed - No funds Available	3	£1,916.89		£1,916.89
IVA	24	£27,336.68	£7,452.10	£34,788.78
Old Debt – Unable to Trace	11	£2,957.64		£2,957.64
Small Balance	623	£4,510.61		£4,510.61
Statute Barred	44	£1,062.41		£1,062.41
Unable to Trace	6	£2,500.38		£2,500.38
Uneconomical/Unethical to Pursue	22	£2,602.10		£2,602.10
TOTAL	**758**	**£69,700.52**	**£12,525.48**	**£82,226.00**

4. Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

4.1 There are currently 5 NDR cases of over £10,000 for which Committee's approval for write off is sought. See **Appendix 1**.

4.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds outlined in the Corporate Debt Policy are as follows:

Non-Domestic Rates	Total No of cases	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Amounts written off over £10,001 approved by members	Grand Total
Debt over 6 years old	1	£2,526.90			£2,526.90
Deceased	1	£1,959.99			£1,959.99
Insolvent Dissolved	7	£322.09	£9,861.16	£160,034.36	£170,217.61
Liquidation	1	£2,217.73			£2,217.73
Small Balance	14	£30.00			£30.00
Un-Economic to Collect	9	£245.19			£245.19
TOTAL	**33**	**£7,301.90**	**£9,861.16**	**£160,034.36**	**£177,197.42**

5.   Sundry Debtors

5.1   There are no Sundry Debtor write offs over £10,000 for which Committee approval for write off is sought.

5.2   The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds outlines in the Corporate Debt Policy are as follows:

Sundry Debtor	Total No of cases	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)
No Trace/Recovery Exhausted	29	£20,354.13	0
TOTAL	**29**	**£20,354.13**	**0**

Appendix 1
NDR Write Offs for Approval Over £10,000

Account Ref	Period Covering Write Off	CVA Approved	Insolvent Dissolved	Liquidation	Grand Total
90423040	01.10.2019 - 26.02.2021		£14,549.37		£14,549.37
90419638	01.04.2019 - 10.09.2024		£15,632.98		£15,632.98
90418284	01.04.2020 - 30.09.2021		£23,162.30		£23,162.30
90419027	01.01.2019 - 30.09.2021		£30,099.97		£30,099.97
90430369	01.01.2022 - 10.09.2024		£76,589.74		£76,589.74
TOTAL					**£160,034.36**

Account Ref	Period Covering Write Off	CVA Approved	Insolvent Dissolved	Liquidation	Grand Total
90423040	01.10.2019 - 26.02.2021		£14,549.37		£14,549.37

	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	**Tuesday, 17 June 2025**	**Matter for Information and Decision**

Report Title:	**Adoption of Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (2025)**

Report Author(s):	**Lisa Chevallereau (Planning Policy & Monitoring Officer)**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to highlight to Members the comments that were received during the Design Code public consultation that took place between midday Friday 10 January 2025 until midday on Friday 21 February 2025. This report highlights how the comments have been taken into account in the final Design Code SPD which is now recommended for approval.
Report Summary:	The Design Code is a new planning document required under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The Design Code sets out clear principles and expected standards for how development should be designed in the Borough. All residential development, including minor and major development, will be subject to the Design Code. A total of 13 bodies submitted representations to the Council during the consultation process. Having considered the amendments suggested in representations, some minor changes to the report were made. There have been no significant changes made to the consultation document.
Recommendation(s):	**That Committee approves the Design Code Supplementary Planning Document for adoption (as set out in Appendix 1).**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 2645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Jamie Carr (Planning Policy & Development Manager) (0116) 257 2652 jamie.carr@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Ed Morgan (Principal Planning Policy Officer) (0116) 257 2650 ed.morgan@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Lisa Chevallereau (Planning Policy & Monitoring Officer) (0116) 2572 636 lisa.chevallereau@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Economy (SO3) Our Environment (SO4)

	Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Customer & Community Focused (V1) Proud of Everything We Do (V2)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Regulatory Governance (CR6)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	• Duty to Cooperate Partners • Specific Consultation bodies • General Consultation bodies • Other stakeholders held on the Local Plan consultation database
Background Papers:	• National Design Guide • National Model Design Code • Manual for Streets • Building for a Healthy Life • Building with Nature • Leicestershire Highways Design Guide • Secured by Design Homes Guide • Green & Blue Infrastructure • Active Design
Appendices:	**1.** Design Code Supplementary Planning Document 2025 **2.** Public Consultation Statement 2025 Design Code

1.   Information

1.1   Following the publication of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, every local planning authority is required to produce a Design Code for its area. The Design Code sets out clear principles and standards for how new development should be designed in the Borough. The document is to be used by stakeholders to understand the design expectations held by the Council and ensure that forthcoming proposals are designed and

delivered to a high standard.

1.2   The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) focuses on the quality of homes provided, emphasising on the granting of permission for well-designed development and the refusal of poor-quality schemes. The Design Code therefore includes a checklist in the appendix, to be used by applicants in a self-assessment of their proposal, and by the Case Officer to decide if the Code has been fulfilled. It is intended that the Design Code will result in higher quality design proposals coming forward.

1.3   Due to ongoing changes to the planning system at the time of consultation, it was unspecified if the Design Code would be incorporated into the Local Plan or be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Post consultation, the Council has decided that the most appropriate route is that the Design Code is to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The document will have material weight in the assessment of planning applications by the Council as the Local Planning Authority, as well as in planning appeals. The Planning System is anticipated to undergo further change and so the Design Code's status may alter in response to how central Government amends the planning system in England in the future.

1.4   The Design Code is informed by a wealth of Government guidance and has been developed in consultation with the wider Planning Department, Regulatory Services Department and Health and Wellbeing colleagues. All Codes are justified with supporting text.

1.5   The Design Code is split into two sections. Section A contains codes that all residential development, including major development, changes of use, urban infill development and demolition rebuilds will be required to follow.

1.6   Section B contains codes that apply specifically to major development. Due to the nature of the Borough area, in general major development will be located on greenfield areas, and the Code enables areas with no existing built character to be developed to higher quality standards than that currently being delivered across the Borough.

1.7   Applications in a Conservation Area will be subject to the Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document. Every application is slightly different, and not all elements of the Design Code will apply to every application.

1.8   The requirements of the Design Code have been created on the 'comply or justify' principle, meaning variations from the Code are acceptable if an appropriate alternative approach has been justified.

1.9   On Tuesday 17 December 2024, Policy, Finance and Development Committee approved the Design Code for public consultation. On Friday 10 January 2025, the Council undertook a 6-week public consultation on the Design Code, ending on Friday 21 February 2025.

2.   Consultation Response and Next Steps

2.1   To ensure that there was an opportunity for the whole community to get involved, the consultation was advertised as widely as possible. In addition to a notification letter being sent out to every contact on the Local Plan Database, the Council: made all elected Council Members aware of the consultation; advertised the consultation on the Council's website; made available for inspection hard copies of all relevant information and documentation at public libraries across the Borough and at the Brocks Hill Council Offices; and, made available for inspection electronic copies of all relevant information and documentation on the Council's website.

2.2   A total of 13 bodies submitted representations to the Council on the Design Code.

Representations were received from Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Arboricultural Officer, Climate Action Leicester & Leicestershire, Define on behalf of Bloor Homes, Environment Agency, Fisher German on behalf of David Wilson Homes, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Historic England, Mulberry Land, National Highways, Natural England, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Regulatory Services, Sport England and Swifts Planning Ltd.

2.3   The key topics and issues that stakeholders commented on were:

- Requirements for Net-Zero and climate change mitigation;
- Driveway layout, street parking and road materials;
- Higher densities for mixed housing;
- Further reference to the historic environment and heritage assets;
- The building and integration of alleyways;
- Planning for future bin arrangements;
- Support for design relating to active travel; and
- Further clarity on tree and ecology mix.

2.4   Taking account of the consultation comments received, some minor changes to the SPD were made. These are:

- Amended wording to be more consistent with Building Regulations;
- Enhanced reference to the need to consider the local highways design guide;
- More references to policies on the historic environment;
- Further references on heritage resources and assets;
- Clarification on the relevance of the Design Code to Outline applications;
- More reference to Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework;
- Further clarity on access to plots by service vehicles, issues associated with alleyways, the accommodation of future bins and materials appropriate for the roadway;
- Reference to Sport England guidance on how design can promote healthy lifestyles; and
- Reference to bricks rather than boxes when planning for wildlife.

2.5   There have been no other significant changes made to the consultation document.

2.6   Further information relating to the consultation is contained within the Public Consultation Statement.

2.7   Subject to Member approval, the Design Code Supplementary Planning Document will be made freely available to the public on the Council's website.

3.   Conclusion

3.1   In conclusion, Committee is recommended to approve the Design Code Supplementary Planning Document as drafted and appended to this report.

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Design Code

Supplementary Planning Document

2025

Oadby & Wigston | Our borough - the place to be

Contents

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1. Why do a Design Code?

1.1. The Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires every local planning authority to produce a Design Code for its area. These codes will have full weight in making decisions on development. It allows local planning authorities to set design requirements at other scales either as part of their local plan or a supplementary plan (15C and 15CC in schedule 7). This Design Code has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

1.2. The National Planning Policy Framework states that *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."* It goes on to advise about the use of Design Codes where it states *"To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety."*

1.3. The Design Code is intended to set out clear principles and standards for how development should be designed in the Borough, focusing on the priority aspects of design. The code is meant to be a positive document about what should be encouraged and not a negative document about what should be prevented. A clear and logical account of the design process should be set out in the Design Code checklist and evidenced by the applicant to accompany the planning application. Every application is slightly different so not all elements of the Design Code will apply to every application.

1.4. The Local Plan sets out a dwelling figure for the Borough going forward. Through a series of call for sites exercises, a number of possible allocations are put forward. These sites are overwhelmingly greenfield sites in the south and east of Borough. Those sites that end up as adopted allocations will be those areas of the Borough subject to greatest change and they will require compliance with the Design Code to ensure this new development meets the vision and objectives of the review local plan.

1.5. The authority undertakes annual monitoring of development within the Borough and the Design Code can evolve to reflect changes identified via its monitoring framework.

1.6. There is an existing [SPD on extending residential dwellings](#) (adopted April 2019), and a [SPD on improving the public realm](#) (adopted March 2021). The Design Code does not replace these documents but sits alongside them as they are focussed on different types of development.

1.7. The Design Code complements, but does not supersede, the Local Plan. Policies such as those on sustainable development, housing choices, improving health and wellbeing, climate change, historic environment and green and blue infrastructure are likely to be important considerations for the residential development of greenfield sites although any policy may apply.

Status of the Design Code

1.8. The Design Code Supplementary Planning Document will have material weight in the assessment of planning applications by the Council as the Local Planning Authority, as well as in appeals. The Planning System is anticipated to undergo further change so the Design Code's status may alter in response to how central Government amends the planning system in England.

How to use the Design Code

1.9. This document builds on Local Plan design policies and sets out the expectations from all future development in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. The document is designed to be used by stakeholders to understand the design expectations held by the Council and ensure that forthcoming proposals are designed and delivered to a high standard.

1.10. All residential development, including major development, changes of use, urban infill development and demolition rebuilds will be subject to the Design Codes set out in Section A (Borough wide, all-covering codes). Demolition rebuild projects and urban infill development will be held to design principles set out in the Local Plan and subject to the Local Character Assessment. New commercial developments will be assessed on their individual merits.

1.11. Development coming forward on land allocated for housing in the most recently adopted Local Plan will be subject to Section A and Section B of the Design Code. Major development on unallocated sites on current countryside and green wedge land in the Local Plan will also be held accountable to Section A and Section B of the Design Code. Applications on cross-boundary sites will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Applications in a conservation area will be subject to the Conservation Area SPD.

1.12. A site delivered by multiple housebuilders can have brand distinction as long as all housebuilders comply with the minimum standards set out in this Design Code.

1.13. The Reserve Matters or details following applications must reflect the design quality in the original Outline (where known) or Full permission. Outline applications often lack the level of detail that would allow a fully rounded judgement against a design code. The Council will take a pragmatic view on the level of detail it expects from an outline application.

1.14. Requirements and recommendations in this document have been created on the 'comply or justify' principle. Variations from the code can be accepted by the Council where a developer has justified the appropriateness of an alternative approach on that particular site. Where a developer is seen to exceed an aspect of design, the Council may be flexible in the delivery of other aspects of design. In general, developments that follow the 'comply or justify' approach are more likely to enjoy quicker progression through the planning system.

1.15. The codes contained within this document are not in any order of importance, and all codes should be adhered to with the same value in contributing to good design for new developments.

1.16. Key indicators and requirements for successful design are illustrated in bold text. Guidelines for good design specified within these bold sections should be studied closely as they are part of the Design Code checklist required at planning application stage. In this checklist, applicants

will be expected to show they have complied with, or justified deviation from, the code. A copy of the checklist can be found in Appendix 1.

How the Design Code has Been Developed

Stage	Date
Evidence gathering, scoping of local historic context and analysis of current major development being delivered across the Borough.	Spring 2024
Workshop with the wider Planning Department and Community Health and Wellbeing Team on the key vision and expectations	July 2024
First draft of Design Code	August 2024
Further internal comment on first draft	September 2024
Presentation and discussion with members	October 2024
Final draft document	November 2024
Public Consultation for 6 weeks	6 weeks from January 2025 until February 2025
Consideration of consultation responses	March 2025
Presentation to Members at Committee	Spring 2025
Publication of Code	Summer 2025

1.17. The Design Code has been developed through consultation and engagement with statutory bodies, stakeholders, and representatives of the local community. Communication with the wider Planning Department and Health and Wellbeing colleagues in the Council was essential throughout the code writing process. A workshop was held in the Summer of 2024 with the wider Planning Department, including Enforcement, Arboricultural and Development Control Officers to analyse recent development in the Borough and to outline key standards and expectations of good design for future development.

2. Landscape Character and Flood Risk

2.1   The character of the Borough is derived from a number of factors such as landscape, geology and human activity. A range of documents should be consulted to understand the landscape context for development proposals in the Borough, including:
   • Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation (2019)
   • Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment (2018) (this study is in 3 parts)

2.2   The Borough includes a number of important landscape and green infrastructure designations, such as:
   • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
   • Local Wildlife Sites, Veteran Trees and other designations such as Regionally Important Geological Sites.

2.3   The relevant policy and guidance should be consulted and followed for sites which lie within, or will affect, these designated areas. Further advice is available via the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre.

2.4   The Borough includes fluvial flood risk zones. Areas of the Borough are also sensitive to surface water flooding. The following should be consulted to understand flood risk in the Borough:
   • Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)

Landscape

2.5   The landscape Character Assessment (2018) found that changes in the landscape are subtle, *"the Borough is a transition zone between the more distinct plateau and steep sided valley landscapes to the north and east and the more open, rolling landscapes to the south and west." (para 1.7.1)* It goes on to note *"the urban edge is reasonably well integrated into the landscape. Generally, hedgerows, trees and subtle changes in landform help to mitigate views of the urban edge from the countryside. This is considered to be an important positive characteristic of the rural-urban fringe in the Borough, and one that should be protected and strengthened where necessary." (para 1.7.3)* It concludes that *"the overriding aim should be to retain a predominately open, natural, rural transitional area between urban area and country, which is well integrated with the countryside, and which allows good public access to it and through it." (para 1.7.4)*

Historic Development

2.6   The form and pattern of development in the Borough is strongly influenced by human shaping of the landscape that continues today.

Oadby

2.7   Oadby is a historic settlement dating from before the Viking era. The settlement is believed to be the site of at least one important Viking battle. Historic maps show that the settlement originally grew along the alignment of London Road and The Parade which formed a connection from southeast Leicestershire to Leicester. This was the focal heart of Oadby and is reflected in its high street use and the conservation area status of London Road today. The introduction of the A6 in the mid-20th century cut the settlement of Oadby in two and

became the main vehicular route, downgrading The Parade and London Road in the local movement hierarchy. London Road and Saint Peters Conservation Area covers almost entirely the lower part of the town centre, centred on London Road, and includes a number of Grade II listed buildings. Oadby was a small settlement until the late 19th century, when it became a fashionable suburb for businessmen of Leicester. Some of the large substantial houses from that time are now occupied by the University of Leicester. Around 1930-1938 the A6 was built to by-pass the town centre of Oadby, with the Parade downgraded to local traffic only. In the 20th century, Oadby saw rapid expansion as a Leicester suburb.

South Wigston

2.8   South Wigston was developed as a 'model' settlement by the owner of a large brickworks in the late 19th century. From the beginning it was not intended to only house workers of brickyard, but also other commercial premises, primarily associated with the clothing industry. Like other 'model' towns, South Wigston street pattern generally follows a grid with terraced housing being the dominant type. Some larger houses with front gardens line Orange Street, Blaby Road and Saffron Road. Historically, Blaby Road was the local high street with shops and public buildings, while industry and manufacturing concentrated along Canal Street.

2.9   By 1883, the settlement of South Wigston had been well established and continued to grow over the following years. The settlement was primarily structured around the railway infrastructure, the brickworks developing next to the north-south railway line and worker housing to the adjacent streets. Blaby Road was developing as local high street. In 1893 St Thomas' parish church was built at the junction of Blaby Road and Saffron Road, and most settlement development was completed by 1913. After the brickworks ceased production in the early 1930s, there was still a significant number of other major employers in the area keeping the town active. In the late 20th century, a demolition process started covering most of the post-industrial buildings to make space for shops and housing.

Wigston

2.10   After the XVII century, with the advent of the knitting frames, the first signs of industry other than agriculture began to appear in Wigston, followed by the opening of the Grand Union Canal in 1798, and the coming of the railway, with the Leicester to Rugby line being opened in 1840. By the end of the century, there were "handsome engine sheds", several factories and a cast-iron church - since rebuilt in brick, as well as gas lighting. Numerous other trades, besides the railway works, have since been introduced into the Borough.

2.11   In 1754 an Act was passed making a turnpike road from Welford to Leicester, which became the main route of the mail coach from Leicester to London. The Blue Bell Inn, which stood in Bell Street, was a noted coaching hostelry. There are three conservation areas in Wigston and several listed buildings, including the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints located just outside the town centre boundary to the south on Moat Street - Newgate End.

2.12   Studying historic maps has helped to understand the growth of the town centre over the past century and they show how the structure of the northern edge changed when Bull Head Street was introduced. It is also clear that east west streets have been severed to allow for car parking and servicing of large retail units. The result is a less permeable and traffic-dominated town centre. The resultant environment has led a number of areas which are 'back of house' with little or no active frontages as shown by the limited internal streets and development surrounded by roads.

Heritage Designations and Assets

2.13   The Borough has 39 listed buildings and 10 Conservation Areas. These heritage assets can be enhanced by development within their settings but can also be harmed by inappropriate design. Where relevant, character area descriptions and the relevant guidance and information should be consulted. Conservation Area Appraisals have been adopted, these should also be considered as part of the process for informing future planning applications within those specific areas.

2.14   Heritage resources should be consulted as part of understanding the context and local identity of sites for development proposals affecting designated heritage assets. These include:
- Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record
- Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation (2019)
- Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment (2018) (this study is in 3 parts)
- Oadby and Wigston Conservation Area SPD
- National Heritage List for England

2.15   There is important archaeology below ground in the Borough, and the County Council's archaeological team may need to be consulted as part of the planning process.

3. Vision

3.1.   The Local Plan has a vision for how the Council would like to see the Borough evolve up to 2041. The Vision has a number of elements that development will need to address in order to contribute to delivering the vision. The Design Code reflects the vision and as such following the Design Code should help developers contribute to meeting the Council's overarching vision. The Vision seeks:
- Safe, clean and attractive places
- Promoting health and well-being through high quality design
- Promoting active travel
- Progressing towards net zero and being resilient to climate change
- A network of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure, enhancing the historic environment.

4. Guidance

4.1   A Design Code is not developed in a vacuum, it is supported by a wealth of Government and non-Government guidance. It will be for the applicant to decide the content of their scheme but schemes that can demonstrate they have reflected the principles of the following pieces of guidance are more likely to be acceptable.

National Design Guide

4.2   The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It sets out ten characteristics and a number of related principles that are common to well-designed places.

4.3 More detail on good design practice under the National Design Guide's characteristics is provided in the National Model Design Code. Part 2 of this document is a good place to understand the Government's detailed expectations on design.

Manual for Streets

4.4 Major development should also show compliance with the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design both new and existing residential streets. It promotes development that seeks to place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

Building for a Healthy Life

4.5 Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The toolkit sets out a series of questions to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed developments.

Building with Nature

4.6 The Building with Nature Standards (BwN) provide a national framework of evidence-based, industry-tested standards that define high-quality green infrastructure.

Leicestershire Highways Design Guide

4.7 County-specific advice is set out in this document. There may be situations where there is a conflict between the advice in the Highways Design Guide and this design code. The position of the local highways authority on highways matters will be the primary consideration.

Secured by Design Homes Guide

4.8 Secured by Design is the Official Police Security Initiative and has produced a set of Design Guides advising how new build development can reduce opportunities for crime and fear of crime for the building of safer and sustainable environments.

Green & Blue Infrastructure

4.9 Natural England have produced guidance on ensuring new development delivers high quality infrastructure Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles and Standards, GI Planning and Design Guide as well as the Borough's own Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

Active Design

4.10 Sport England have produced recent guidance on how design can be used to promote healthy lifestyles.

5. Understanding and Responding to the Context

5.1. The Council will expect to see how the design of proposals in planning applications have been developed in response to their context. Development does not happen in isolation, it has to respond to its surroundings in a variety of ways. The first step to consider before designing a development is to look beyond the red line of the application site. This is the site context. A contextual analysis should be undertaken to identify and understand the wider context and site features and how these will contribute or influence the design proposals.

Landscape
- *Landscape character, setting and history;*

- *Topography;*
- *Views into and out of site and visual impact;*
- *Urban – rural interface;*
- *History and heritage assets, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, and their settings*
- *Ecology and biodiversity, including biodiversity opportunity mapping;*
- *Green space, trees, hedgerows (green infrastructure);*
- *Hydrology and drainage (SuDS, existing flow paths, watercourses - blue infrastructure);*
- *Environmental risks, such as flooding and noise, air and water quality;*
- *Microclimate - Light, shade, sunshine and shadows; and colours, textures, shapes and patterns.*

Townscape
- *Views, vistas and landmarks;*
- *Edges, nodes of activity, gateways, eyesores;*
- *Land uses and mix of uses around the site;*
- *Local character (positive examples nearby if nothing adjacent to site);*
- *History and heritage assets, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, and their settings;*
- *Built form, layout, urban grain, density - the scale and proportions of streets and spaces;*
- *Street character - boundary treatments, building lines and the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements;*
- *Building heights, massing and proportions of buildings;*
- *Relationships between buildings;*
- *Materials;*
- *Architectural features;*
- *Roofscapes;*
- *Façade design, such as the degree of symmetry, variety, the pattern and proportions of windows and doors, and their details.*

Movement
- *Access;*
- *Footpaths (particularly Public Rights of Way);*
- *Existing and proposed cycle paths;*
- *Links to and from the site, including public transport and proximity of local services;*
- *Approaches to the site – how do views of the site unfold as you approach?*

People – human behaviour and function of places
- *Desire lines (pedestrian and cycle);*
- *Gathering places and activity centres;*
- *The pattern of uses and activities, including community facilities and local services;*
- *Social characteristics, including demographics;*
- *Aspirations, concerns and perceptions of local communities;*

Has your site analysis:
- *Taken account of what is around the site, not just on it?*
- *What it is that defines the special character of the locality in question, including the landscape, the buildings and how the buildings are arranged?*
- *Included non-physical features of the site and the wider area?*
- *Reviewed historic mapping, environmental/biological records and other existing documents?*

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Design Code –2025

Design Development

5.2.   To support the vision, it will be helpful to establish a set of clear site-specific development principles and to set the design intent of the scheme. A simple concept plan can also be helpful to illustrate vision and design intent. Depending on the size of the site and the scheme's complexity, it can be useful in demonstrating how you intend to address the site's strategic issues. A framework can be developed with a broad structure that considers the distribution of land uses, blue and green infrastructure and the movement network, as well as the relationship between each of these elements and the surrounding area.

Has your design:
- *Directly responded to the site analysis, including its surroundings, topography, geology, biodiversity, watercourses and relationship to open spaces, nearby settlements, and routes?*
- *Protected and enhanced existing views into, through and out of the site?*
- *Connected into and enhanced existing local networks – transport, social, environmental?*
- *Established a vision based on principles that create a unique vision for the site?*
- *Created a community that uses natural landscape assets and allows residents to benefit from them?*

Section A

Section A contains codes that all residential development, including major development, changes of use, urban infill development and demolition rebuilds will be subject to following.

6. Codes for all Development

Windows and Detailing

6.1. Windows play an important role in the overall high-quality design of a building. Their size, position, proportion, style and detailing can achieve depth and variety in the landscape and play an important role in animating but also supervising the street. The most successful window placements will be achieved by dwellings that positively balance daylight and privacy requirements of occupants, whilst also having a proportionate relationship to the entire building. Proposals must not create poor quality copies of existing architecture and layouts in the Borough, such as flat roof dormers.

6.2. **Successful developments will:**
- **Ensure opening windows are not of significant visual difference, for example in size, to non-opening windows;**
- **Ensure all windows are of the same style;**
- **Ensure all windows are well proportioned and well distributed across a dwelling;**
- **Ensure top storey windows are at least two brick courses below the eaves;**
- **Use detailing to create character and add visual interest to a dwelling;**
- **Ensure all main/larger windows are side opening, with the exception of sash windows;**
- **Ensure all windows positively contribute to the visual interest of a building. Bay windows on the ground floor are encouraged to achieve this;**
- **Where parking is located to the side of the dwelling, have surveillance provided by at least one window from a habitable room. This is best achieved by ground floor windows; and**
- **Avoid long stretches of blank faces. This can be achieved with fenestration or faux windows for example.**

Are windows consistent in their style and design across the whole building?
Do windows positively contribute to natural surveillance of the street?

6.3. Differences in texture, detailing and materials can create character and add visual interest to the street. Materials should be chosen for their longevity and be drawn from those in the local area to compliment surrounding elevation materials. Examples of acceptable materials include timber and aluminium slim frame. The use of uPVC is restricted and only acceptable when imitating traditional materials.

6.4. The detailing and colour pallet used should be well-balanced and consistent across a dwelling and avoid individual windows having a top-heavy appearance. Distinctive detailing should be consistent across a dwelling. Shared sills across multiple windows and full window surrounds are not appropriate. If trying to imitate existing positive local character, detailing should respond to aspects with the most value and be correct and appropriate to that location.

Are features evenly placed and evenly distributed across the property?
Have window and window detailing materials of high quality and compliment surrounding elevation materials?

Plot Boundary Treatments

6.5.   The integration of planting for street facing boundary treatments can have positive contributions to good design, especially in edge of urban area development, and is in line with the NPPF in planning for active street frontages.

6.6.   **Successful developments will:**
- **Use hedgerows, trees and soft landscaping as boundary treatments as they protect existing biodiversity, encourage new wildlife movement and help establish local character;**
- **Where there are continuous boundaries of 30 metres or more, have established planting and shrubbery either side, and for boundaries of this size between gardens, a tree must be planted in the rear garden of every 4ᵗʰ dwelling;**
- **Where the landscaping is used as a contribution towards biodiversity net gain, the land will need to be maintained for at least 30 years. If the landscaping is not counting towards biodiversity net gain, then a 10 year replacement plan for loss will be required;**
- **Provide a level of visual interest. Brick walls not providing soft landscaping to achieve this can provide visual interest through details such as staggered height differences and interesting brick detailing;**
- **Treat all boundaries the same, regardless of street hierarchy or tenure of the dwelling, although edge of settlement boundaries may need more attention as they are especially sensitive; and**
- **Avoid long stretches of street facing boundaries so as not to create blank spaces that are unsupervised. Back garden walls should only occupy one side of the road at a time, so as not to create the sense of alleyways.**

6.7.   Trees and hedgerows in a private garden will be for the owner to maintain. Diligent species selection should have been afforded through the design process so as to minimise the requirement for maintenance. Tree preservation orders may be applied to ensure continued tree cover in line with the vision being proposed for the area.

6.8.   The use of fencing is not considered appropriate for plot boundaries facing the public realm. The use of gates alone is also not considered acceptable.

Strong Front Boundary Treatments

6.9.   Different boundary treatments can be used on different streets to create a range of street characters. Front boundary treatments should reference the local character of the area (where this exists).

6.10. **Successful developments will:**
- **Enhance the character of a street. This can be achieved by including hedges, railings and low walls, if supplemented by low hedges behind or on top, where the wall is street-facing; and**
- **Select robust species in the use of hedge front boundary treatments.**

Are boundary treatments in keeping with the area's prevailing character?
Have species used in soft landscaping been chosen for their longevity and robustness?

Section B

Section B contains codes that apply on all major development coming forward on land allocated for housing in the most recently adopted Local Plan.

7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land

Responding to the Climate Emergency

7.1.   The UK has legally binding climate change targets that need to be met. The Future Homes Standard means that, from 2025, new build homes will no longer be permitted to have fossil fuelled space heating and hot water generation. The Council also has the aim of making sure its activities achieve a net zero carbon footprint before 2050. Given the contribution that transport emissions make to the climate emergency, one of the best things that can be done is to locate development in places that will enable residents to access local services, by foot, cycle and public transport.

7.2.   Guidance in this document will help to ensure that development is sustainable while helping to mitigate against the impacts of climate change. These steps will also help improve air quality and health.

7.3.   **Successful developments will respond to the climate emergency. Examples are through:**
   - **Providing connectivity and a walkable neighbourhood with good facilities;**
   - **Designing for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users ahead of cars;**
   - **Encouraging healthy, active lifestyles;**
   - **Maximise benefits of solar gain but avoiding overheating;**
   - **Promoting biodiversity and green infrastructure through a landscape-first and nature-based approach;**
   - **Using natural or recycled and local materials;**
   - **Promoting the re-use of water; and**
   - **Providing electric car charging points in new development, in line with the Local Plan policies.**

7.4.   Factors to consider when planning for net zero carbon include a number of different factors such as efficiency of the building shape, amount of glazing, the systems deployed (such as heat pumps), modern methods of construction, the use of materials that can be re-used if it is demolished or disassembled. Water efficiency, including the re-use and responsible use of water (in line with policies in the Local Plan), also needs to be promoted.

- *Is your development contributing to net zero carbon? If not, why not?*
- *How will people be able to choose practical non-car alternatives for travel?*
- *Has the site masterplan considered all options to reduce carbon?*
- *Does the masterplan mitigate against the impacts of climate change?*
- *Will the buildings themselves be net zero carbon over their operational lifespan? How will this be achieved?*
- *How does the design of low-carbon housing relate to local character?*

Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles

7.5. The way that new development is designed can be a major opportunity to influence behaviour. The Council will expect development proposals to protect, promote, support and enhance physical and mental health and wellbeing. See Sport England's Active Design Guide on encouraging physical exercise and healthy lifestyles.

Sport England's Ten Principles of Active Design

1. Activity for all

2. Walkable communities

3. Connected walking & cycling routes.

4. Co-location of community facilities

5. Network of multifunctional open space

6. High quality streets & spaces

7. Appropriate infrastructure

8. Active buildings

9. Management, maintenance, monitoring & evaluation

10. Activity promotion & local champions

7.6. **Successful developments will:**

- **Ensure regular points of contact with nature across the whole development, including street trees, green nature corridors, SuDS design for biodiversity (including permanently wet areas), green spaces designed for biodiversity, boundary hedges.**
- **All dwellings will include one or more of the following: tree in rear garden, bat/bird/swift bricks/tiles/fascias/ bricks or bee bricks. Generally, the Council will expect developers to deliver an equal mix in the delivery of that listed. Where suitably evidenced by need, the proportion may justify deviation;**
- **Physical exercise including active travel, walkable neighbourhoods, quality cycle infrastructure, safe and attractive streets, walking and cycling routes, good public transport services, and well designed, high quality and accessible play areas within walkable distance of people's homes; and**
- **Designing places for all, including older people and the mobility impaired and building Lifetime Homes that are adaptable and accessible over time, in accordance with Local Plan policies.**

7.7. Applicants will be expected to submit an ecology survey and within that include information on how it will achieve the requirements set out above.

- *What have you done to promote healthy lifestyle choices?*

A Strong Landscape Structure

7.8.   Landscape design should be considered at the very start of the design process. This ensures that sufficient space is given to landscape and drainage within a layout and that parks, ecological corridors and other 'green infrastructure' are positioned in the best locations within the site, rather than areas left over. Strong landscape features create important movement corridors for people and wildlife.

7.9.   **Successful developments will:**
   - **Design for wildlife and retained existing features; and**
   - **Join existing features with green spaces to create a network of natural green and blue corridors through the development and beyond contributing to the wider ecological network.**

7.10. The Council encourages developers to achieve Building with Nature standards.

- *Has the design been structured around the landscape strategy, not vice versa?*
- *Has the site been designed around a suitable drainage scheme using the natural fall of the land?*

Continuous Green Corridors

7.11. A development with an attractive landscape and movement structure that interconnects key destinations, spaces and places has many benefits.

7.12. **Successful developments will:**
   - **Design a layout where it is easy to find your way around, make walking and cycling more attractive options and create a much more characterful development;**
   - **Consider protecting and extending Public Rights of Way and statutory bridleways at the early design stage of any new development; and**
   - **Have green corridor running through the entirety of a site to provide a pleasant and practical experience for pedestrians and cyclists.**

- *Do green corridors connect with spaces and places where people and wildlife will want to go?*
- *Are there spaces for wildlife alone, the same way there are spaces for people alone?*

Trees in the Public Realm

7.13. Street trees have multiple benefits. Existing mature trees should be preserved and/or new large species planted and given sufficient space to flourish and become key features. It is essential that street trees are planted within appropriate tree pits that will allow them to become healthy tree specimens. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF says that *"planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined"* and encourages applicants and local planning authorities to *"work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users."*

7.14.   **Successful developments will engage with the highway authority on their strategy to ensure new streets are tree-lined as follows:**

- **All main arterial routes in a development to be tree-lined on both sides of the road;**
- **All secondary routes to be tree-lined on at least one side of the road; and**
- **Smaller / other routes, no requirement.**

7.15. **Successful developments will also:**
- **Ensure a diverse and robust distribution of trees. Applicants must follow the Forest Research's <u>Urban Tree Manual</u> recommendation where "an urban tree population should have no more than 10% of a particular Species, no more than 20% of a particular Genus and no more than 30% of a particular Family". This ensures a healthy variety of street trees and will provide the most resilient tree stock should one of the species become susceptible to biotic or abiotic factors, pests or diseases; and**
- **Consider pockets of woodland around existing trees and hedgerows on development boundaries if kept outside of the falling distance to properties and people. Applicants will need to consider proximity of development to mature landscape features so these are not removed in the future due to growth.**

- *Have you included street trees, and others in the wider public realm?*
- *How have you selected the species that are best for the site?*
- *Are measures in place to make sure that trees will grow and thrive?*

Sustainable Drainage Systems

7.16. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) cover a range of approaches to managing surface water to reduce flood risk whilst improving water quality, amenity and biodiversity. They reduce the amount of surface water that reaches the sewer system and the rate at which it reaches a watercourse.

7.17. **Successful development will:**
- **Integrate SuDS with green and blue infrastructure and be planned in from the earliest stage to make sure that enough space is made available in the right places;**
- **Be locally specific, influenced by the different soil and landscape types;**
- **Be designed with management in mind, understanding that it will change over time and need managing flexibly; and**
- **Include locally occurring and regionally sourced native marginal and aquatic planting can be a space-efficient way to deliver biodiversity net gain.**

- *Has the scheme design been structured around an integrated sustainable drainage and green infrastructure strategy?*
- *Is drainage based on the specifics of the site, taking account of soil types and topography?*

Street Hierarchy

7.18. A development where all streets look the same lacks character can be difficult to navigate and confusing. Streets and layouts should relate to the character of the location of the development.

7.19. **Successful development will:**

- **Where considered to be urban extensions alongside existing settlements, match and continue the character and layout of local street hierarchy; and**
- **Where considered to be Stand-alone sites, be built at appropriate densities to create new urban settlements.**

7.20. As a general rule, streets in the centre of developments and key arterial routes in and out of developments should be main streets that are distinctively different to others. Key elements of a Main Street could include:

- Street trees;
- Wider pavements including roadside swales;
- Carriageway with segregated cycle lanes;
- Strong front boundary treatments such as railings and walls supplemented by hedges;
- Strong building lines;
- Absence of frontage parking;
- Strong built frontages that positively address and enclose the street;
- Higher density housing (for example 3 storey dwellings or flats);
- Rhythm and continuity of facades; and
- Well-proportioned in terms of height to width ratios.

7.21. Roads continuing out from main streets should have house types that are contextually responsive to the street on which they are located. The form, scale and mass of dwellings and street layouts should appropriately change the closer they get to more rural areas, so as main and arterial roads lead to secondary roads, and secondary roads lead to smaller, calmer roads.

7.22. Appropriate road forms moving towards the more rural areas include circular cul-de-sacs, loop roads and crescents as they provide calm zones while still being connected to the wider development. These forms are also opportunities for creating pockets of green space which contribute to a positive distribution of green infrastructure.

- *Is there a clear street hierarchy that lets people know how they should use each street?*
- *How are the street types differ from one another?*

Connected Layouts

7.23. Layouts should be permeable with good connections into the wider street and path network. Connected streets make more efficient use of space and should reduce the reversing of all vehicles. Specifically, roads must be organised so that service vehicles and waste collection vehicles are not required to reverse into a development or major road. Road layouts should also be designed so that they are easier for delivery services and bus routes to access.

7.24. Alleyways are generally perceived as unsafe and encourage loitering due to a lack in opportunities for positive street lighting and natural surveillance. Historically, poor quality narrow alleys across the Borough, especially those located between and behind buildings and in areas leading to public open space, have been found as the symptom of anti-social behaviour issues and many have been temporarily closed under Police guidance. Graffiti, littering and dog fouling are also common problems. The creation of any new narrow alleys of

any shape (straight, curved or jagged) is therefore considered inappropriate. Alleyways will only be permitted when the applicant can show they are of the highest design and have a clear purpose that serves the community well.

7.25. Long stretches of uninterrupted streets can create a highways-dominated appearance and become unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. Breaks in roads to prevent long stretches can include village greens and other open spaces, urban squares and changes to surface materials to show the active use of different road types.

7.26. **Successful developments will:**
- **Encourage walking and cycling and the use of public transport;**
- **Knit into the wider neighbourhood;**
- **Avoid single access points to large sites;**
- **Promote walking routes into town centres;**
- **Avoid the creation of new alleyways;**
- **Avoid long stretches of blank facades; and**
- **Allow for ease of access by waste collection and emergency service vehicles.**

Cul-de-sacs

7.27. Cul-de-sac roads can be opportunities for creating calm and safe residential areas, however they can often disrupt pedestrian and cycle movement, attract loitering vehicles and are challenging areas for access by waste collection and emergency service vehicles. If there are too many, they can lead to poor site layout with few access points which encourages the use of cars for short journeys. Turning head and hammerhead road layouts are notably more encouraging of these challenges.

7.28. In general, the number of cul-de-sac and dead-end roads should be limited and kept to the edge of sites. Large circular cul-de-sacs, particularly those with landscaped islands, are the favoured approach to dead end roads. Loop roads are also encouraged. If using hammerhead shaped roads, developers must provide active travel routes that are overlooked by natural surveillance from the houses around them. They must also provide a designated communal bin collection area that is at an acceptable walking distance from the furthest house to use them and should provide communal bike storage. Bin and bike storage should be set to the side, so as not to be the main feature of the close.

7.29. **Successful developments will:**

- **Avoid turning head and hammerhead road layouts;**
- **Limit the number of cul-de-sacs and keep them to the edge of development; and**
- **Provide communal bin collection areas, bike storage, active travel routes and natural surveillance on cul-de-sacs that are not circular or looped.**

- *Are most streets connected to others at both ends?*
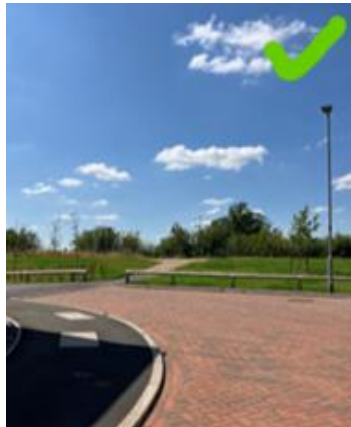
Addressing the Street

7.30. Buildings should have public fronts and private backs. Positioning public fronts on to streets and public spaces provides opportunities for natural surveillance. Back gardens should face other back gardens, bringing community safety and privacy benefits. This also applies around the edges of sites, where sensitive rural interfaces can exist. Buildings should look outwards, not turn their back on their surroundings. Hedgerows or other planting in front of homes can soften open rural interfaces and existing hedgerows have more protection if within the public realm. Properties on all corners should have active facades on both sides, not blank gable ends.

7.31. **Successful developments will:**
- **Ensure buildings look outwards onto the street with gardens facing other gardens at the back of the property.**

- *Are all streets fronted by buildings?*
- *have you included windows on the street-facing façade?*
- *Do back gardens back on to other back gardens?*

Form and Street Character

7.32. Emphasis should be given to defining street character with all elements working together to create streets that have strong characters of their own.

7.33. Streets and layouts should relate to the character of their location, streets and layouts should aim to replicate best practice in streetscape design. Streets can be curved with the placement of properties following these curves and leading the eye around the corner. Properties themselves should not be curved, so as to ensure quality of life within the home.

7.34. Proposals should be of an appropriate scale, density, massing and height, taking into account the local character and context. Different character areas can be designed into larger developments to add variety instead of monotony.

7.35. **Successful developments will:**
- **Use features and appropriately mix scale, density, massing and height of the street to elevate them from one another and add street character.**

- *How does the scheme layout relate to the wider settlement's built form?*

Local Centres and Community Facilities

7.36. Sites large enough to generate the need for local facilities will be expected to deliver facilities of high quality.

7.37. **Successful developments will:**
- **Encourage social interaction;**
- **Not be car-orientated with parking areas dominating;**
- **Be vibrant places;**

- **Be exemplary in terms of design with high quality public realm and landscaping;**
- **Include a mix of uses;**
- **Be located to be walkable for as many people as possible; and**
- **Be co-located with other facilities such as schools, recreational areas.**

7.38. Size and types of Local Centres will be agreed upon with the Local Authority on a case-by-case basis.

- *Are local centres designed to be attractive and safe for users and businesses?*
- *Will most people choose to travel there by foot or cycle?*

Affordable Housing

7.39. Affordable housing is an important component of all major schemes and needs to be designed with care.

7.40. **Successful developments will:**
- **Integrate affordable dwellings around the neighbourhood;**
- **Sensitively locate affordable dwellings with the aim of achieving sustainable communities that are intermixed, with affordable units being spread out and not being easily identifiable by means of design quality (including materials) style (including house types and architectural details) or location in terms of not placing affordable units in blatantly inferior locations; and**
- **Locate specialist housing appropriately to ensure easy access to community and social facilities, health care facilities and public transport.**

- *Is affordable housing distributed around the area and indistinguishable from all other housing?*

Corner Plots

7.41. Corner plots, also known as dual fronted or dual aspect buildings, are located where two streets meet and are opportunities for applicants to display thoughtful design and create local landmarks across the wider site. All street facing corners need to positively contribute to the overall street scene and support an active street / help activate the street. House types delivered on corner plots are therefore expected to show off innovative and creative house types of the highest material quality and architectural design.

7.42. **Successful developments will:**
- **Be reflective of the common building line;**
- **Be of an angular shape on angled corners;**
- **Have prominent windows from main habitable rooms in a dwelling facing different street corners;**
- **Have a generous amount of glazing / windows;**
- **Be accompanied by soft landscaping; and**
- **Incorporate detailing and added features for visual effect.**

7.43. House types not respecting the above often result in compromised living spaces. Unless specifically designed as a corner plot, semi-detached and terraced housing is generally unsuccessful in performing the outlined requirements. Parking (including garages), SUDS, pumping stations, waste storage areas, sheds and other forms of the sort are not appropriate on street facing corners.

Dual Entrance House Types

7.44. When done well, dual entrance house types can be positive for building smaller homes at high densities and are opportunities for home ownership by individuals, couples and smaller families. From the street, entrances to separate dwellings should be visible and clearly identifiable, and from the inside should be safe and provide the same quality and size of space for movement and circulation that is provided in single entrance homes. Entrances can be shared or individual, as long as they are not over-dominant to the face of the dwelling. The use of dual entrance house types as corner plots is not appropriate.

7.45. **Successful developments will:**
- **Ensure dual entrance house types have distinct entrance points and provide safe and comfortable living spaces inside the home**

Cycle Infrastructure

7.46. Facilities for cyclists need to be comprehensively thought out and continuous, both within the site and in connecting on to key destinations elsewhere.

7.47. **Successful developments will:**
- **Ensure continuity of routes;**
- **Think about different types of cyclists – commuters, leisure cyclists, children;**
- **Be designed to be attractive to use and encourage all types of people to cycle - 'would this cycle route design encourage me to cycle?'; and**
- **Plan for convenient on plot-cycle storage or within their curtilages.**

- *How have you catered for the needs of cyclists, and those who might be persuaded to cycle?*

Open Space

7.48. New open space should be designed into proposals from the outset and designed in such a way that they are publicly accessible to residents and visitors. Materials for play provision must be of high quality and chosen for their longevity and ease of maintenance.

7.49. Open space can be designed around existing mature landscape features such as trees, hedgerows and other biodiversity assets and designed as key focal points and community assets that over time becomes a point of interest, wayfinding features and meeting places.

7.50. Play provision in particular should be interactive and well thought out so that they are attractive to all ages and abilities. They should be considered at all scales, from play areas near the home to larger areas for outdoor games and sports pitches. Where appropriate, large play areas may require local car parks to prevent overspill of parking into residential roads.

7.51. **Successful developments will:**
- **Benefit from passive surveillance;**
- **Have direct pedestrian and cycling access connecting open space to/from a main or secondary road;**
- **Include seating spaces for those of all ages and abilities to sit, gather and supervise play areas;**
- **Be landscaped as not to create open stretches of just grass, by incorporate soft landscaping such as planting;**
- **Ensure people feel safe in the daytime and after dark, for example with street lighting and gated play areas for small children; and**
- **Have entrances from wide open roads.**

- *How is the open space designed to encourage residents and visitors to use it?*
- *How will the proposals deliver play that is fun, accessible and engaging for different age groups and abilities?*

Car Parking

7.52. Parking requirements should be considered at the outset of the design. Insufficient and poorly designed parking can have negative impacts on how streets function, can create cluttered and chaotic environments and can create unnecessary neighbour and community conflicts and divisions. There are a number of ways to provide parking, depending on variety of factors such as the size of plot, the type of street the site is located on and neighbouring buildings.

7.53. **Successful developments will:**
- **Provide parking spaces on-plot and ideally located behind the building line, between dwellings and/ or on drive through units/car ports. This is to enhance street character and maintain strong building lines and front boundary treatment lines and avoid parked cars dominating the street (as highlighted in Manual for Streets);**
- **Soften cars parked on plot with landscape, planting and materials as well as a clear property boundary. Parking spaces should be as well as, not instead of, a front garden;**
- **Use paving materials in line with the Leicestershire Highways design Guide. Paving materials could be permeable and should be complementary to the building design ;**
- **Avoid tandem parking, undercroft parking and rear parking. These are not acceptable;**
- **Avoid garages and detached garages in front of houses on main arterial routes. Double garages and detached garages are acceptable on large plots in cul-de-sacs.**
- **Ensure garages are not part of the dominant face of the buildings and avoid garages that excessively protrude out, so as not to contribute to the main street scene;**
- **Ensure parking spaces are wide enough to allow the doors on both sides of the car to be opened sufficiently, in order to provide comfort of use for all users. This includes, for**

example, the mobility impaired, older people, people with young children and people unloading luggage and bulky items; all of whom require the door to be opened wide in order to get in and out of the car. Shared landscaped/active frontage areas between driveways are encouraged;

- **Avoid triple double bays as they have been known to cause neighbour disputes and lack the required space;**
- **Comply with the car parking and garage dimensions as outlined in the sections below; and**
- **Avoid spaces between rear gardens as they have a negative impact on street character and design quality and can easily be designed out by, for example, placing detached dwellings on corner plots.**

7.54. Off plot frontage parking for linked units/terraces should be softened and broken up with street trees. Adequate space should be provided to ensure that trees do not block paths or hinder movement around spaces. A consistent building line should be maintained.

7.55. On street parking - Car parking on public streets, although not necessarily adopted, is usually the most space efficient form of parking.

7.56. **Successful developments will also:**
- **Design on-street parking from the outset;**
- **Make parking spaces clear and unambiguous by delineating them with materials or marking;**
- **Consider what is the best parking alternative according to function, location and place-making aims. Typical arrangements include: parallel, perpendicular and right-angled layouts. The right solution will emerge from analysis of the site and expected amount of traffic;**
- **Aim to get the space as close as possible to the entrance of the dwelling;**
- **Add planting to soften the presence of the car such as verges, hedges and trees on street;**
- **If possible, group cars together and incorporate a break consisting of planting such as trees or hedges every 2 car parking spaces; and**
- **Position visitor parking in visible areas and on the front of properties to encourage active places.**

Parking Space Dimensions

7.57. A large or family car is approximately 1.9 metres wide and 2.1 metres wide with wing mirrors. If a driveway is to be fit for purpose and serve a dwelling and its wide range of residents and their needs over time, residents should be able to get out of the car comfortably on both sides and open the doors. It should also be possible to get a wheelie bin of 0.6 metres past a parked car.

Garage Dimensions

7.58. Garages should only be considered as parking provision when they are of a size that will accommodate general storage (such as lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, ladders, bicycles etc) and have garage doors that are wide enough to accommodate the modern car. Building for a Healthy Life advises against 'Relying on garages being used for everyday car parking'. With regards to garage dimensions, the advice within Manual for Streets should be taken into account. Garages should be well positioned to ensure that they do not dominate the street scene in a negative way. Integral garages need to be sensitively designed and located so as not to dominate street character.

Bins

7.59. In order to help meet waste triage targets there is a need for at least waste separation and recycling, as well as planning for the future where garden and food waste are likely to become the norm. This has resulted in an increase in the number of household bins that need to be stored. These all need to be accommodated in ways that allow convenient access but without harming the appearance of buildings and the street scene. Given we have an increasingly older population, homes should be designed with consideration for how bins are stored for day-to-day use, as well as for how and when they are taken out. There should be space to carry bins past parked cars. Consider providing integral storage, such as within a recessed porch or in secure alleys between houses. Flexibility should be designed in as requirements may change. No bin stores/structures will be permitted forward of the principal elevation.

7.60. All new development must be developed in line with the latest version of the Council's 'Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for new Developments'.

7.61. **Successful developments will:**
- **Integrate bin storage that is adequate, convenient and unobtrusive.**

Lampposts

7.62. Lampposts are important structures in the street beyond the general provision of lighting as they serve as multi-use street furniture.

7.63. **Successful developments will:**
- **Be evenly distributed across the development; and**
- **Be structurally capable of being retrofitted for the instillation of security cameras where and when needed.**

Flexible and Adaptable

7.64. By designing houses and space for adaptations both upwards and outwards, the need for redevelopment and unnecessary waste is reduced, and the house is more likely to provide a stable and safe home that is fit for purpose.

7.65. **Successful developments will:**
- **Be designed to be flexible and adaptable over time to change with the health, mobility, wants and needs of occupants over their life course.**

8. Detailed Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land

Build Quality

8.1 It is important that the development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character. Set out below are a series of recommendations for higher quality solutions that are more in line with the aspirations of the Local Plan policies.

8.2 **Successful developments will:**
- **Ensure that the materials will last and contribute to the long term function & viability of a dwelling, and that build quality of workmanship will be high**

Materials

8.3 Different combinations of materials create a certain character and identity for buildings. The use of a simple and focussed palette of materials is preferred, avoiding a scatter approach of house types and materials, which in turn should define and respond to streets and spaces.

8.4 **Successful developments will:**
- **Choose materials that compliment the surrounding landscape and character; and**
- **Use authentic materials that reinforce local identity and make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character.**

- *Why have you selected the chosen materials?*

External base materials / main envelope of the building

8.5   Red brick is the most acceptable external base material to be used across the Borough. Any brick colours used for a dwelling's plot boundary should be consistent with that of the main building.

8.6   **Successful developments will use red brick as the external base material.**
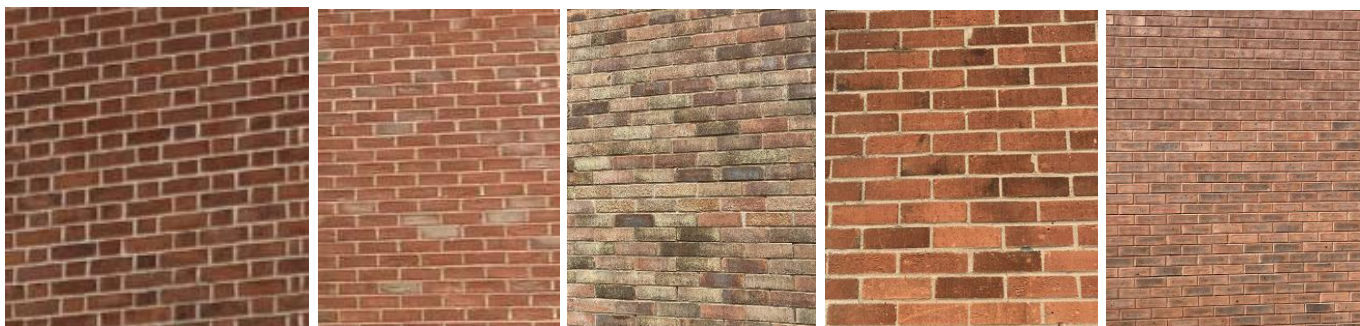
Acceptable external finishes

8.7   **Successful developments will:**
- **Use cream and off-white rendered aspects and composite cladding;**
- **Avoid large expanses of cladding and render of one colour**
- **Consider the general colour pallet of the surrounding context of the area when making decisions on colours**

Detailing

8.8   Detailing is a positive tool in adding a sense of character to dwellings.

8.9   **Successful developments will use an appropriate mix of the following to create visually interesting detailing on new home:**
- **Brick detailing on render**
- **Brick bonding and brick courses (of the same colour but different tone as the base material)**

- **Hanging tiles**
- **Mock Tudor**
- **Detailing in the apex**
- **Tile detailing**
- **Hanging eaves detailing and corbelling**

Paving materials

8.10 The roadway should be built and maintained to an adoptable standard, as defined in the Leciestershire Highway Design Guide. Paving materials that can support the weight of service and waste vehicles over time will be more successful in meeting the build quality expected on all new developments.

8.11 **Successful developments will use permeable hard surfacing materials. Examples include block paving and resin.**

8.12 Grasscrete is acceptable for overflow and communal car parking areas such as for Local Centres**.** Large expanses of tarmacadam will not be acceptable.

Roofs

8.13   The appearance of roofs can be an important determinant of character. Whilst some variety can add character, generally roofscapes should be kept simple. New development is expected to reinforce local identity and make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and character. Roof colours should be red or grey. Different house types should not be of significant visual difference in roof material and colour to maintain continuity throughout the site.

8.14   Chimneys can help to create locally recognisable and/or inspiring roofscapes. Traditionally-inspired developments should include chimneys that are authentic in their position on the roof, their scale, construction and detail. Flat roofs on main buildings and dormers are generally not considered appropriate. Any flat roof sections must have a parapet design.

8.15   Roof heights on different house types can be varied, but the same height must be used across a single dwelling. Roof shapes that are not sympathetic in shape, size, scale or materials with the main building will not be acceptable.

8.16   **Successful developments will:**
- **Match the materials and pitch of porch roofs to that on the main roof;**
- **Maintain a simple roofscape which reinforces local identity;**
- **Avoid flat roofs; and**
- **Incorporate chimneys, either real or fake for visual interest.**

- *How has the roof been designed in response to the context?*

Architecture and the use of Distinctive Detailing

8.17   New development is expected to add to existing character. The Council does not promote a specific architectural style but does expect new development to be attractive. Consideration should be given to how materials will last over time together with their maintenance, environmental performance and their general quality of appearance. Quality detailing applies to all types of development. Order can be a key element of good design. Repetition can be used as a tool, sometimes unifying a building, street or space. Symmetry can be an effective way of creating order and visually pleasing solutions.

8.18   **Successful developments will:**
- **For terraced housing providing more than 3 dwellings, deliver a level/degree of visual difference between them; and**
- **For every 4 semi-detached or detached dwellings, deliver some variation in the roofscape, base material, finishing material or detailing. This means that while buildings can be of the same house type, they must provide some design differences between them.**

- *Is design well considered and appropriate to use and context?*
- *Is excessive repetition of the same design avoided?*

Appendix 1. Design Code Checklist

1. This checklist identifies the minimum requirements for compliance with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Design Code. All applicants for residential development are required to complete the checklist in relation to Section A of the Design Code. Applicants for major development are required to complete Section A and Section B.

2. As discussed in the Code, the Design Code has been created on the 'comply or justify' principle. Applicants are required to demonstrate how they have complied with all expectations of the Design Code, unless justification for an appropriate variation is provided.

3. Failure to meet the Design Code or provide valid justification for non-compliance may result in a delay in the decision-making process of your planning application. Note, the Case Officer may/will require you to provide justification for outputs recorded as not applicable.

Section	Design Code Checklist	Complied with	Not complied with	Not applicable	If the code has not been complied with, justify non-compliance	Council confirmation (Leave free)
Section A of the Design Code						
Section A. 6. Codes for all Development, Windows and Detailing	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful Windows and Detailing?					
Section A. 6. Codes for all Development, Plot Boundary Treatments	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful Plot Boundary Treatments?					
Section A. 6. Codes for all Development, Strong Front Boundary Treatments	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful Strong Front Boundary Treatments?					
Section B of the Design Code						
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Responding to Climate Emergency	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful climate emergency response?					
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful encouragement of healthy lifestyles?					
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, A Strong Landscape	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful a Strong Landscape Structure?					
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Continuous Green Corridors	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful Continuous Green Corridors?					

Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Trees in the Public Realm	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful trees in the Public Realm?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Sustainable Drainage Systems	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful Sustainable Drainage Systems?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Street Hierarchy	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful street hierarchy?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Connected Layouts	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful Connected Layouts?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Cul-de-sacs	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful Cul-de-sacs?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Addressing the Street	Does the development fulfil the guidance to successfully address the street?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Form and Street Character	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful form and street character?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Local Centres and Community Facilities	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful local centres and community facilities?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Affordable Housing	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful affordable housing?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Corner Plots	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful corner plots?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Dual Entrance House Types	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful dual entrance house types?			

Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Cycle Infrastructure	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful cycle infrastructure?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Open Space	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful open spaces?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Car Parking	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful car parking?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Bins	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful bins?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Lampposts	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful lampposts?			
Section B. 7. Strategic Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Flexible and Adaptable	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful homes that are flexible and adaptable homes?			
Section B. 8. Detailed Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Build Quality	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful build quality?			
Section B. 8. Detailed Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Materials	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful use of materials?			
Section B. 8. Detailed Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Roofs	Does the development fulfil the guidance for successful roofs?			
Section B. 8. Detailed Codes for Major Development on Allocated Land, Architecture and the use of Distinctive Detailing	Does the development fulfil guidance for successful architecture and distinctive detailing?			

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Design Code –2025

Design Code

Public Consultation Statement

2025

Oadby & | Our borough -
Wigston | the place to be

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires every local planning authority to produce a Design Code for its area.

1.2 The Council prepared a Design Code document that was publicly consulted upon between midday on Friday 10 January 2025 until midday on Friday 21 February 2025. It is worth noting that the Design Code was consulted on alongside the New Local Plan and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.

1.3 This Public Consultation Statement (Statement) has been prepared in support of the Council's Design Code.

1.4 The public consultation statement sets out the following:

- The persons that the Council consulted during the abovementioned 6 week public consultation;
- A summary of the main issues raised by those persons who submitted comments during the consultation period; and
- How any issues raised during the consultation period have been addressed by the Council.

1.5 Appendix 1 of this Statement sets out a summary of all the comments received during the public consultation period and Council officer responses to each of these comments.

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2. Public Consultation Period

2.1 A public consultation for the Design Code was undertaken by the Council between January and February 2025, as specified in paragraph 1.2 of this document.

2.2 In line with requirements, the following persons and bodies were notified via notification letter, send by email or post, of the consultation that was taking place:

- Duty to Cooperate Partners
- Specific Consultation bodies
- General Consultation bodies
- Other stakeholders held on the local Plan consultation database

2.3 The notification letter explained:

- The purpose of the consultation;
- How to find further information;
- The consultation period;
- How to make representations; and
- How a person or body could be added to the Council's Local Plan consultation database.

2.4 In addition to the notification letter, the Council:

- Made all elected Council Members aware of the consultation;
- Advertised the consultation on the Council's website;
- Made available for inspection hard copied of all relevant information and documentation at public libraries across the Borough and at the Council's Brocks Hill Offices; and
- Made available for inspection electronic copied of all relevant information and documentation on the Council's website.

3. Summary of the Main Comments Raised

3.1 A total of 13 persons / bodies submitted representations to the Council relating to the Design Code. Representations were received from:

- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Arboricultural Officer
- Climate Action Leicester & Leicestershire
- Define obo Bloor Homes
- Environment Agency
- Fisher German obo David Wilson Homes
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- Historic England
- Mulberry Land
- National Highways
- Natural England
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Regulatory Services
- Sport England
- Swifts Planning Ltd

3.2 Two representations made no specific comment. The key topics and issues that stakeholders commented on are summarised below in Table 1, together with a general response.

3.3 Further details on the issues and topics raised in representations are set out in the Appendices.

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Table 1. Summary of topics and points raised in representations

Comment	Response
Requirements for Net-Zero and climate change mitigation	A mix of responses were received, some asking for the Code to push further for more specific requirements, and others wanting to scale back on expectations. The Local Plan sets out Council's policy approach to climate change, energy and renewables. As Local Plan policy takes precedence over the Design Code, the Plan should be referred to.
Driveway layout, street parking and road materials	The Code is a Comply or Justify approach where there maybe site-specific issues that require different design approaches. The Code also makes reference to the need to consider the local highways design guide.
Higher densities for mixed housing	The Local Plan sets out Council's policy approach to housing mix and density on sites. As Local Plan policy takes precedence over the Design Code, the Plan should be referred to. The Design Code's Comply or Justify approach means there maybe site-specific issues that require different design approaches.
Further reference to the historic environment and heritage assets	The Design Code complements, but does not supersede, the Local Plan. Wording in the Code was strengthened.
The building and integration of alleyways	A mix of responses were received, some asking to retain alleyways and others highlighting their design issues. The overall position outlined in the draft Code remains the same.
Planning for future bin arrangements	Further details on bin arrangements for day-to-day storage and use added to the document.
Support for design relating to active travel	Support welcome by the Council.
Further clarity on tree and ecology mix	The Design Code's Comply or Justify approach means there maybe site-specific issues that require different design approaches. Some changes made to ensure longevity of good design.

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4. How the Comments Raised Have Been Addressed

4.1 Having considered the amendment suggested in representations, some minor changes to the report were made. There have been no significant changes made to the consultation document.

4.2 A full break-down of representations and changes made to the Design Code are set out in the Appendices.

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Appendix 1. Comments Received During the Consultation Period and Officer Responses

Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
Arboricultural Officer	The increasing presence of in-out driveways is becoming ever apparent across the Borough. Where this occurs on streets we stand to double the amount of driveways to the highway, breaking up frontages, reducing green verges, increasing pressure for highway tree removal. Reducing front garden use and generally eroding the visual amenity value of an area. This makes it look to be an area appear Increasingly car-centric and less pedestrian friendly, they generally stretch out the façade of the property. The increasing presence starts to change the character of an area, which after a certain amount then becomes a reason why a proposal should be considered acceptable. When only 1 car wide, the second car will have to reverse anyway, and the same area redesigned should allow for ample space to turn.	No change. Guidance on car parking in paras 7.52-7.58 explicitly and approach of design code as a whole would discourage this type of parking solution. However, para 1.14 is clear code is based on a comply or justify approach and there maybe site-specific issues that require this design approach.	None.
Climate Action Leicester & Leicestershire	Our over-riding concern with this design document is the lack of requirements around fabric first/insulation-based energy efficiency, low energy heating systems and solar generation. Therefore, we had expected that this design code would make specifics and set requirements about what this would entail. It fails to do this. Please add in requirements and specifics on insultation,	No change. Policy takes precedence over guidance and are set out in the Local Plan. Design code is aspirational allowing for different responses on different sites. Definitive standards should be set out in Local Plan policy not a design code.	None.

Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	solar generation, heat pumps and car-reduction measures.	No change. The Local Plan policy on density sets out Council's approach, policy takes precedence over guidance. Design code is aspirational allowing for different responses on different sites.	None.
	Para 1.19 Make it clear that you expect higher than current housing densities at the same time as fitting with the character of existing settlements. What do you require these densities to be on stand-alone sites? We want higher densities of mixed housing (both number of bedrooms, heights, flats, garden size/balconies) and type but with an emphasis on terraced and 3-4 story flats, not semi-detached. This should push densities up to 50-80dph ensuring less land use and encouraging people to walk rather than drive as it would sprawl over less space.	No change. A tree in every garden may not always be the appropriate design solution.	None.
	Para 6.6 2nd bullet point Continuous boundaries of 30+ meter should require a tree/large shrubs in every garden, not just every 4th.	No change. Point addressed in para 7.15.	None.
	Para 6.7 These trees should be chosen for resilience to climate change and	No change. Site specific measures will vary according to each site. It is for the developer	None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	variety, and include food eg walnut, sweet chestnut, apple.	to show how their scheme achieves the aims/aspirations of the design code or provide a robust justification for why they cannot. It is not for the design code to set out all requirements, a number of which would be Local Plan policy rather than guidance.	
	Para 7.3 The aspirations in 7.3 are great. They need to contain specifics and requirements. For example: Require specifics such as cross ventilation and window shading to minimise overheating, require fabric first approach to energy efficiency and a list of ways in which a new development could be made less car centric e.g. moving parking areas to edges of new developments – and including trees or solar in parking areas, ensuring frontages have soft landscaping and provide less rather than more off road car parking, blocking through car traffic by making one end of street only open to bikes and pedestrians, ensuring that cycle paths are safely segregated from car use on busier roads. There are examples in our Attachment 1, transport and climate. Re building materials, you should require developers to use low carbon steel and concrete. These are both available and economically viable.	No change. A tree in every garden may not always be the appropriate design solution.	None.

Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	You don't have to specify that every development should do every specific thing on your list, but you should say you require them to do a minimum number of the things including from each category e.g. insulation, energy generation, transport mode shift etc.		
	Para 7.6 We are glad to see requirement for swift and bat boxes. However, we would like to see requirement for at least one tree in every garden in addition to one thing for each house from this list.	No change. Although there is no requirement developers can go beyond requirements if site design would be enhanced.	None.
	Para 7.14 Some street trees should be required on smaller/other routes. They reduce flood risk, overheating and also reduce extreme cold in Winter as well as supporting biodiversity and mental health. They also help to make sites less car centric.	No change. Making elements of the list requirements would be policy, policy is set out in Local Plan not a design code.	None.
	Para 7.20 (Elements of a main street) Some of these should be required not just suggested. This includes higher housing density, segregated cycle lanes, street trees	No change. Approach to parking set out in paras 7.52-7.58.	None.
	Para 7.22 This is a good place to add in requirements for parking for a street in order to provide a small separation between homes and parking.	No change. Setting out requirements would be policy, policy is set out in Local Plan not a design code.	None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	Para 7.24 Alleyways are essential to provide through routes for pedestrians and cyclists when it comes to crescents and cul-de-sacs. They do need to be safe, so please put in minimum widths and sightlines but ensure that they exist, otherwise you are pushing people towards car use.		
	Para 7.28 Instead of on street parking, communal parking (with trees and/or solar panel coverage) should be provided alongside bin storage. This will help with access for emergency and waste collection as well as allowing for more street trees, safer, cleaner active transport use and discouraging car use.	No change. Approach to parking set out in paras 7.52-7.58.	None.
	Para 7.31 Tree surrounded parking areas can be put on backs as visually they look like gardens. This allows frontages to be greener and more aesthetically pleasing as well as discouraging car use.	No change. Para 6.6 promotes the role of trees as a boundary treatment.	None.
	Para 7.47 These are very good ambitions which we strongly support. However, to be effective when it comes to design it would be useful to have specific requirements in place, eg all closed roads must have cycle links at the closed ends, all new homes must include space for secure and easily accessible from the road cycle storage, etc. As with energy	Support welcomed. No change. Setting out requirements would be policy, policy is set out in Local Plan not a design code.	None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	efficiency and generation, you should be requiring a minimum number of actions from a list of specifics, not just be designed to encourage or think about.		
	Para 7.51 Open spaces should be climate-enhanced to reduce both carbon footprints, and the effects of climate change. We would like to see at least 50% tree cover including the use of mini forests and food trees to provide shade, reduce flood risk and surface temperatures, sequester carbon and support nature. This also involves putting in ponds to reduce flood risk, support biodiversity and make surface temperatures less extreme. We also want to see design requirements reducing hard surfaces – use grasscrete, board walks and narrow paths rather than large hard surface areas. Again this will reduce temperatures and flood risk.	No change. Setting a target for tree coverage is policy. Policy is set out in Local Plan not a design code.	None.
	Para 7.53 Spaces between back gardens and corner plots should be used to separate parking from homes. We want grasscrete not block paving, resin (or concrete or tarmac). Garages should be designed to link homes together and increase energy efficiency, car ports should be designed to generate solar energy where possible.	No change. Design code allows for different solutions depending on site circumstances. Proposed wording may not always be appropriate. Policy is set out in Local Plan not a design code.	None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	Para 7.56 We do not support on street parking as the convenience encourages car use. Therefore we do not support getting parking spaces as close to front doors as possible. Instead parking as described in 7.54 with trees is much more positive and still allows for car use. Where on street parking is necessary (and this should be specifically limited), it should be interspersed with street trees.	No change. Convenience is an important factor, with an ageing population it is likely to become increasingly important.	None.
Define obo Bloor Homes	Idea of a design code supported and content largely appropriate.	Support welcomed.	None.
	Understand that code takes a comply or justify approach that gives flexibility but feel wording should give greater flexibility by using phrases such as 'developments may consider'.	No change. Desire for flexibility is understood. Design code recognises that circumstances will vary and that on-site reality and design code preferences may not be the same. Design code is meant to be aspirational.	None.
	Plan policy requires compliance with current building regulations (or any successor) but wording of design code at para 7.4 goes beyond this.	Agreed. Will amend wording to be consistent.	*Is your development contributing to net zero carbon? If not, why not?*
	Para 7.12 Green corridors cannot always be central or continuous - wording should reflect this.	No change. Desire for flexibility is understood. Design code recognises that circumstances will vary and that on-site reality and design code preferences may not be the same. Design	None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
		code is meant to be aspirational.	
	Street Trees para 7.13, access para 7.26 and layouts para 7.29 these are determined by the relevant local Highways Authority in line with its Highway Design Guide, text should reflect this.	Agreed. Para 4.7 already makes reference to the need to consider the local highways design guide. This para can be enhanced.	***Leicestershire Highways Design Guide*** County-specific advice is set out in this document. There may be situations where there is a conflict between the advice in the Highways Design Guide and this design code. The position of the local highways authority on highways matters will be the primary consideration.
	Lighting of open spaces is not always appropriate, text here should offer greater flexibility.	No change. Desire for flexibility is understood. Design code recognises that circumstances will vary and that on-site reality and design code preferences may not be the same. Design code is meant to be aspirational.	None.
	Car parking para 7.53 requiring side parking will require large plots affecting density and disrupt building lines. Rear parking can be acceptable.	No change. Desire for flexibility is understood. Design code recognises that circumstances will vary and that on-site reality and design code preferences may not be the same. Design code is meant to be aspirational.	None.
	Paving in para 8.10 permeable paving may not always be appropriate allow flexibility.	No change. Desire for flexibility is understood. Design code recognises that circumstances	

Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
		will vary and that on-site reality and design code preferences may not be the same. Design code is meant to be aspirational.	None.
Environment Agency	Welcome reference to flood risk in section 2 but would like more text on flooding here.	Support welcomed but EA did not suggest any form of wording they would like to see added.	None.
	Welcome reference to multi-functional infrastructure in Section 3.	Support welcomed.	None.
	Welcome reference to building with nature in Section 4.	Support welcomed.	None.
	Welcome Section 5 on Context	Support welcomed.	None.
	Welcome Section B 7 on major development	Support welcomed.	None.
	Welcome examples listed in Section 7.3	Support welcomed.	None.
	Welcome inclusion of public realm and SuDS within the code.	Support welcomed.	None.
Fisher German obo David Wilson Homes	Insisting on net zero dwellings is overly ambitious and will make many properties unaffordable.	No change. Local Plan policy sets out approach to climate change. This is not a matter for the design code.	None.
			None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	While preference for side of plot parking is noted can't always be achieved. Front of plot parking can be improved through landscaping and surface materials.	No change. Design code recognises that circumstances will vary and that on-site reality and design code preferences may not be the same. Design code is meant to be aspirational.	
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	Would welcome clarity on status of design code.	No change. Para 1.8 is clear status is dependant on possible future changes to the planning system introduced by central Government changes in status will be outside of Council's control.	None.
Historic England	Welcome positive approach code takes to development and historic environment.	Support welcomed.	None.
	Para 1.1 welcome ref to conservation areas here	Support welcomed.	None.
	Para 1.7 list should include references to policies on the historic environment.	Agreed. Change would strengthen document.	The Design Code complements, but does not supersede, the Local Plan. Policies on Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Density, Housing Choice, Active Design and Travel, Open Space, Public Realm, High Quality Design, the Historic Environment, Sustainable design, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Trees & Woodland are likely to be important considerations for the residential development of greenfield sites although any policy may apply.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	Paras 2.6-2.15 welcome this text but would like para 2.14 to include same information links as in para 2.1 and that reference is made to our own conservation area SPD and the National Heritage list for England.	Support welcomed. Agreed. Will add suggested other references.	Heritage resources should be consulted as part of understanding the context and local identity of sites for development proposals affecting designated heritage assets. These include: • <u>Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record</u> • <u>Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation</u> (2019) • <u>Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment</u> (2018) (this study is in 3 parts) • Oadby and Wigston Conservation Area SPD • National Heritage List for England
	Section 5 – would like to see the wording on heritage assets currently set out under townscape to be repeated under landscape as there is potential for greenfield development to affect/be affected by heritage assets.	Agreed. Change would strengthen document.	***Landscape*** • *Landscape character, setting and history;* • *Topography;* • *Views into and out of site and visual impact;* • *Urban – rural interface;* • *History and heritage assets, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, and their settings*

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
			Ecology and biodiversity, including biodiversity opportunity mapping; *Green space, trees, hedgerows (green infrastructure);* *Hydrology and drainage (SuDS, existing flow paths, watercourses - blue infrastructure);* *Environmental risks, such as flooding and noise, air and water quality;* *Microclimate - Light, shade, sunshine and shadows; and colours, textures, shapes and patterns.*
Mulberry Land	There appears to be a conflict between wording of Local Plan policy 2 and design code over its requirement. Clarification needed. Design code should only be applied to schemes of 500 dwellings or more.	Agreed. The Local Plan does offer flexibility over design requirements and a wording redraft could resolve issue. No change. There is no requirement for a local authority to set a threshold for its design code..	No change to design code amend wording of LP Policy 2 to ensure consistent approach. None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	Number of requirements of the design code will not be applicable at outline stage.	Agreed. Amend para 1.13 to reflect this.	The Reserve Matters or details following applications must reflect the design quality in the original Outline (where known) or Full permission. Outline applications often lack the level of detail that would allow a fully rounded judgement against a design code. The Council will take a pragmatic view on the level of detail it expects from an outline application.
	Many issues will be determined by the relevant local Highways Authority in line with its Highway Design Guide, text should reflect this.	Agreed. Para 4.7 already makes reference to the need to consider the local highways design guide. This para can be enhanced.	***Leicestershire Highways Design Guide*** County-specific advice is set out in this document. There may be situations where there is a conflict between the advice in the Highways Design Guide and this design code. The position of the local highways authority on highways matters will be the primary consideration.
National Highways	NH encourage the borough to support proposals that reduce need for car travel.	No change. Local Plan policies set out approach to reducing the need to travel by car. Not the role for a design guide.	None.
Natural England	In section 4 Guidance include reference to following 3 documents; Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles and Standards, Borough Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy, GI Planning and Design Guide	Agreed. Proposed changes strengthen document.	Add new section 4.9 ***Green & Blue Infrastructure*** Natural England have produced guidance on ensuring new development delivers high quality

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
			infrastructure Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles and Standards, GI Planning and Design Guide as well as the Borough's own Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy
Regulatory Services	Document reads well.	Support welcomed.	None.
	Also, a key point is the design of development should be such that collection vehicles must not have to reverse into a development from a major road or be required to exit a development onto a major road.	Agreed. Proposed changes to para 7.23 strengthen the document.	Para 7.23 Layouts should be permeable with good connections into the wider street and path network. Connected streets make more efficient use of space and should reduce the reversing of all vehicles. Specifically, roads must be organised so that service vehicles and waste collection vehicles are not required to reverse into a development from a major road or be required to reverse onto a major road from a development. Road layouts should also be designed so that they are easier for delivery services and bus routes to access.
	Alleyways – Environmental Health receive many complaints around crime particularly where they are tucked away and unlit. Graffiti, littering, and dog fouling are all common problems.	Agreed. Para 7.24 discusses issues surrounding alleyways and can be enhanced.	Alleyways are generally perceived as unsafe and encourage loitering due to a lack in opportunities for positive street lighting and natural surveillance. Historically, poor quality narrow alleys across the Borough, especially those located between and behind buildings

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
			and in areas leading to public open space, have been found as the symptom of anti-social behaviour issues and many temporarily closed under Police guidance. Graffiti, littering and dog fouling are also common problems.
	Number of bins will likely to be increased.	Noted. Amend text of para 7.59 to reflect this change.	Para 7.59 In order to help meet waste triage targets there is a need for at least waste separation and recycling, as well as planning for the future where garden and food waste are likely to become the norm. This has resulted in an increase in the number of household bins that need to be stored. These all need to be accommodated in ways that allow convenient access but without harming the appearance of buildings and the street scene.
	Many homes have poor arrangements for bin collection and this needs to be improved.	Agreed. Amend text of para 7.59 to reflect this.	Given we have an increasingly older population, homes should be designed with consideration for how bins are stored for day-to-day use, as well as for how and when they are taken out. There should be space to carry bins past parked cars. Consider providing integral storage, such as within a recessed porch or in secure alleys between houses.

Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	Waste Guidance has been updated.	Agreed. Para 7.60 weblink has been updated.	Para 7.60 weblink has been updated.
	The design and layout of roads – for bin lorries to service property the roadway should be built and maintained to an adoptable standard (as defined by our Highway Authority). Those that aren't cannot be accessed by our trucks. Block paved roadways may be pleasing to the eye, but our vehicles cannot use them, so kerbside collection will be the nearest road. If the Leicestershire County Council design code has not been followed, block paving may not support the weight of refuse trucks without them causing damage.	Agreed. Proposed changes to paras 8.3 and 8.10 strengthen the document.	Para 8.3 - Carefully consider the use of materials for roofs, walls, windows, the roadway and boundaries and ensure they are appropriate for the site's context and use over time.
	Communal buildings and bins – a real problem and support approach of design code.	Support welcomed.	Para 8.10 added – The roadway should be built and maintained to an adoptable standard, as defined in the Leciestershire Highway Design Guide. Paving materials that can support the weight of service and waste vehicles over time will be more successful in meeting the build quality expected on all new developments. None.
Sport England	SE have recently produced a guidance note on active design and would like to see this document referenced in the design code	Agreed. Proposed change would strengthen document and will be added to Section 4 Guidance.	Add new section 4.10 *Active Design* Sport England have produced recent guidance on how design can be used

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
			to promote healthy lifestyles. https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design?section=design_code_guidance
Swifts Planning Ltd	Clause 7.6 (page 21) reference to "tree in rear garden, bat/bird/swift boxes/tiles/fascias/ boxes or bee bricks" is welcome but unclear please add "and", i.e. "tree in rear garden, and bat/ bird..." (to make it clear it's not a choice between a tree and another feature).	No change. Wording offers a range of options to reflect that sites will differ. Introducing the 'and' would then require every garden to include a tree and that may not always be the appropriate design solution.	None.
	Clause 7.6 please change the first of the two "boxes" references to "bricks" (to reflect that permanent integrated nest bricks, supported by national planning guidance, are preferable to external bird boxes which are easily removed, have a relatively short lifetime and high maintenance requirements and are not supported by national planning guidance).	Agreed. Bricks are superior to boxes.	Amend Clause 7.6 2nd bullet point All dwellings will include one or more of the following: tree in rear garden, bat/bird/swift bricks/tiles/fascias/ bricks or bee bricks. Generally, the Council will expect developers to deliver an equal mix in the delivery of that listed. Where suitably evidenced by need, the proportion may justify deviation;
	Clause 7.6 add ", where applicable to the development, and in line with any ecologist's recommendations" to the end of: "Generally, the Council will expect developers to deliver an equal mix in the delivery of that listed."	No change. Para 1.14 is clear that design code is based on a comply or justify approach offering flexibility for developers to produce schemes that differ from the design code where they can	None.

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Organisation	Comment Made	Officer Response	Change proposed to text
	(because bat/ bird tiles and fascias are niche products that will have very limited applicability, whereas swift bricks for example are a universal nest brick which would have benefit in almost any development.	justify their approach. As such adding 'where applicable...' is unnecessary. Para 7.7 already makes it clear that proposals should be supported by an ecological survey.	
	Swift bricks are a universal nest brick for small bird species and should be installed in new developments including extensions, in accordance with best practice guidance such as BS 42021 or CIEEM. Artificial nest cups for house martins may be proposed instead of swift bricks where recommended by an ecologist.	No change. Proposed wording is policy not guidance. This is set out in the Local Plan.	None.
	Existing nest sites for building-dependent species such as swifts and house martins should be protected, as these endangered red-listed species which are present but declining in Oadby & Wigston return annually to traditional nest sites. Mitigation should be provided if these nest sites cannot be protected.	No change. Proposed wording is policy not guidance. This is set out in the Local Plan.	None.

Agenda Item 10

	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	**Tuesday, 17 June 2025**	**Matter for Information**

Report Title:	**Contract Management Framework**
Report Author(s):	**Trish Hatton (Head of Policy, Performance & Transformation)**

Purpose of Report:	To share the Council's new Contract Management Framework with Members
Report Summary:	This report outlines the Council's approach to contract management. The aim of the Contract Management Framework is to enable better management of the Council's contracts, support consistency of approach and drive standards across the Council.
Recommendation(s):	**That the content of the report and appendix be noted.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Colleen Warren (CFO / S151 Officer / Head of Finance, Law & Democracy) (0116) 257 2759 colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Trish Hatton (Head of Policy, Performance & Transformation) (0116) 257 2700 trish.hatton@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Economy (SO3) Our Environment (SO4) Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Key Supplier / Partnership Failure (CR2) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	

Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Contract Management Framework Policy

1.   Importance of Contract Management

1.1   Oadby & Wigston Borough Council spends approximately 27% of its expenditure budgets on contracts and supplies. It is therefore important for the Council to ensure external spend is well managed and that the Council receives what is expected from that spend.

1.2   There are further benefits of good contract management, including the likelihood of achieving value for money, reducing risk and the potential for contracted services to provide non-commercial benefits (e.g. social value) for residents.

1.3   As a public body, the Council needs to be transparent with its spend. Contract management supports the Council being open with its decision making when operating a contract.

2.   The Purpose of the Contract Management Framework

2.1   The Contract Management Framework aims to outlines the Council's approach to managing contracts across the Council.

2.2   The framework will:

- Set out the principles to good contact management
- Set out activities/tasks that need to take place when managing contracts
- Provide staff with guidance and a set of standards to ensure an effective and consistent approach to contract management.
- Set out the different roles and responsibilities involved in contract management
- Provide information and guidance on monitoring and managing the performance of contracts
- Set out the change process to be followed

2.3   The framework also sets out governance and monitoring arrangements to ensure the Council knows how well it is managing its contracts across the council.

3.   Training Plans

3.1   Contract Managers across the Council have already undertaken the Contract Management Capability Programme Foundation Level training course. This has been developed by the Government Commercial Function and Crown Commercial Services.

3.2   Contract Managers will receive additional training on the new Contract Management Framework over the summer months.

4.   Contract Assurance Board

4.1   The Contract Assurance Board will provide structured governance to oversee the delivery,

compliance and effectiveness of contract management across the Council.

4.2   The board will meet bi-annually and all members of the Senior Leadership Team will attend.

4.3   During the Contract Assurance Board, performance against targets, KPI's and Social value will be reviewed. The board may also ask contract suppliers to attend to discuss things like proposed changes and performance.

4.4   The first Contract Assurance Board will take place in July 2025.

Contract Management Framework

May 2025

Oadby & Wigston | Our borough - the place to be

Foreword – Colleen Warren – Chief Financial Officer – Section 151

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council spends approximately 27% of its expenditure budgets on contacts and suppliers. The Council aims to achieve best value for our residents and effectively managing the spend on contracts is key to this.

The procurement process creates the foundations for effective contracts, selecting and evaluating the right supplier at the right costs. It is therefore vital that the intentions of a contract are delivered to create maximum value.

The value lost through poorly managed contracts is money that could be invested in services or a saving that does not need to be found. It is therefore crucial that anyone, at any level of the Council, is proactive with contract management.

Our Contract Management framework emphasises that contract management needs to be proportionate to its value and risk level so that we allocate our resources wisely, however there are some fundamental requirements that always need to be followed.

Whilst each service will be responsible for running their own contracts, there are some central practices and principles required as outlined in this framework.

The framework will therefore support consistency of approach and collective learning to continuously improve contract management that drives value and standards across the Council.

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1. Why Contract Management

The central premise of contract management is to ensure external spend is well managed and the Council receives what is expected from that spend.

There are further benefits of good contract management including improving the likelihood of achieving value for money, realising non-commercial benefits (e.g. social value), reducing risks, and the potential for suppliers to go beyond the contracted services to provide innovation in response to local need.

As a public body the Council needs to be transparent with its spend, and contract management supports the Council being open with its decision making when operating a contract.

2. The Framework

2.1 The Purpose

This contract management framework aims to outline an expected approach to running contracts across the Council whilst also providing guidance, tools and templates.

The framework aims to be scalable and flexible acknowledging there may need to be different approaches within services but also provides a set of requirements and principles to create a degree of consistency across the Council.

Therefore, the framework aims to:

- Enable better management of contracts across the Council in terms of the approach, use of resources and governance
- Provide support to officers who manage spend and hold relationships with third-party suppliers
- Provide guidance on managing contracts proportionate to the level of spend, risk and impacts on residents
- Outline a set of standards and best practice activity to ensure an appropriate approach to managing contracts
- Provide a series of tools and templates to support the management of contracts.

It is also crucial that the Council knows how well contracts are being delivered across the organisation and the requirements as outlined in the framework will be used as a baseline to assess compliance and highlight areas of good practice.

2.2 When and How to Use

The framework follows the contract management lifecycle from contract handover to preparing for re-procurement.

The foundations for successful post-award contract management are supported by a thorough procurement process ensuring all the right elements are included in the specification that forms the contract.

This includes making sure the following are clearly set out:

Clearly defined measurables with KPIs	Pricing and payment mechanism	Terms relating to extensions and break clauses
Roles and responsibilities of both parties	Social value measures and how monitored	Reporting requirements including rights to audit

2

Dispute resolution and escalation processes	Change contract processes and governance	Continuity and risk ownership
Mobilisation time scale and plan	Continuous improvement and innovation	Health and Safety monitoring
Data and information management	Communication protocols	Exit strategy
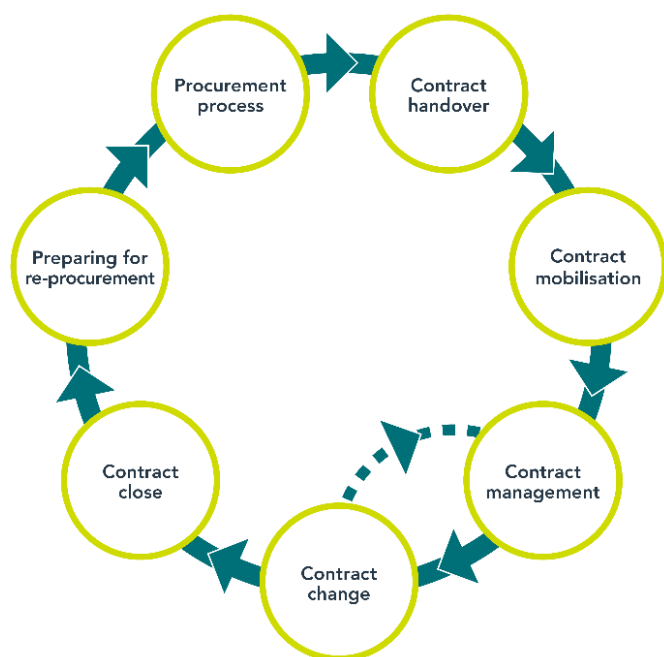
Contract management is not a linear process, therefore it is recognised that stages might need to be repeated (e.g. contract change).

The framework is accompanied by a set of tools and templates to assist in managing contracts.

The framework lists the fundamental requirements of all contracts, and outlines some of the roles and responsibilities, as well as going into detail of the expected activity based on contracts determined as High, Medium or Low.

For the purposes of this framework the term "supplier" will be used to refer to a third-party organisation that is awarded a contract for goods, works or services. For the most part suppliers will be from the private sector but can also encompass the voluntary/third sector or other public bodies. All will be treated as delivering a commissioned contract for the Council.

3. Principles Contract Management

The principles of contract management are based on the following points:
1. To drive value for money for residents including added benefit such as social value and support for the local economy
2. For Contract Management to be proportionate to their value, level of risk and relevance in terms of impact on communities
3. To be proactive and well planned when managing contracts including addressing risk, incorporating health and safety, developing supplier relationships and responding to change.
4. To create a culture of continuous learning in contract management to drive improvement

4. Being Proportionate Through Tiering

There is a strong emphasis in this framework on contracts being managed proportionately based on:

The financial value: The higher the value the more financial risk to the Council

The level of risk: In addition to financial other risks might be associated with the contract such as health and safety, reputational risk and volatility in the market

Impact to services: This relates to the importance of the service in meeting the needs of residents, particularly the most vulnerable, or to the operation of the Council as a whole.

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The Council measures these risks and impacts through a Tiering Tool, providing inputs to assess if the contract is considered High, Medium, Low – these are outlined below and will determine the level of management, reporting and scrutiny needed.

High	Contracts have the ability to place the Council at financial risk if they were to fail, and can have a significant impact on service delivery: ▪ The Council spends more than £50K per year with the supplier or it is a capital project greater than £100K ▪ The Council is reliant on the contract for delivery of a corporate priority ▪ The Council is reliant on the contract for delivery of a key public service
Medium	Medium contracts place the Council at less financial risk and whilst important for service delivery, are not critical to the delivery of important services to the public ▪ The contract is between £5K and £50K or a capital project greater than £10K and less than £100K ▪ The contract could put at risk the Council's ability to deliver public services
Low	Other contracts that do not have a significant impact on the Council's day-to-day operations. ▪ The contract is worth less than £5K or a capital project less than £10K ▪ The contract is unlikely to put public service delivery at risk

All current contracts have already been tiered. New contracts will have a tiering assessment at the end of a procurement process.

Tiering should be periodically reviewed through the life of the contract and specifically at any change that alters the value or nature of the contract to ensure the proportionate management and governance is correct.

5. Fundamental Requirements and Tiered Activity

The table below outlines the range of requirements aligned to all contracts:

Activity	Tiering
Every contract should have a designated contract manager. The Head of Service for the relevant area will become the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for that contract	All contracts
All contract managers have to complete the Contract Management Foundation training course	All contracts
Every contract should be determined as high, medium or low using the tiering	All contracts

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Regular contract review meetings to be set with the supplier (low – no less that yearly – Medium – no less 6 monthly – High no less than quarterly)	All contracts
Variations/changes should be recorded and stored; ensure all variations inc. waivers are in accordance the Council's scheme of delegation	All contracts
Failures in performance with any contract should be challenged, and corrective action taken	All contracts
Improvement plans should be used where a contract is failing before a formal change or termination	All contracts
Contract Performance tracker should be completed with a RAG status monthly for review by SLT at the Contract Assurance Board	All contracts
Contract Managers should attend Contract Assurance Board as required to highlight issues with contracts with Amber/Red status	All contracts

In addition, the following requirements should be conducted in relation to Medium and High contracts:

Activity	Tiering
Contract Management Plan should be created for new contracts moving forward. The plan is used to document the monitoring arrangements, governance requirements, milestones and tasks, payment schedule, and escalation process for concerns, and exit arrangements	Medium High
Contract Management Plan to be reviewed and updated no less than every six months	High
Contract Management Plan to be reviewed and updated no less than annually	Medium
Establish a joint risk register with the supplier, and populate the Council's risk register where relevant	High
Use the Performance Tracker for measuring deliverables (KPIs and social value)	High
Receive a monitoring report from supplier to be used at account management meeting to ensure the contract is on track, including social value results	High
Network across the Council and with other local authorities where the supplier has multiple contracts to share knowledge, approach and practices	Medium High

6. Contract Management Lifecycle

The following is a summary of activity aligned to the stages in contract management lifecycle with reference to the tools and templates:

Activity	Tools and templates
Confirm the contract manager and SRO	
Set up a new supplier with purchase order based on the payment mechanism	
Run tiering to confirm the level of management and assurance required	Tiering Tool

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Contract handover

Activity	Tools and templates
Publish Contract Detail Notice and if required the contract (when over £5m in value)	Central Digital Platform
Add contract to the Contract Register	

Contract mobilisation

Activity	Tools and templates
Hold kick-off meeting with the supplier, and discuss contract management process. Schedule on-going contract monitoring meetings	
Finalise other supplier mobilisation arrangements	
Produce the Contract Management Plan (high/medium contracts only)	Contract Management Plan
Work with suppliers to create a joint risk register and update Council risk register (high/medium contracts only)	Risk Register

Contract management

Activity	Tools and templates
Hold contract review meetings with the supplier, to monitor performance and delivery of the contract	Contract Review Meeting Template
Receive and assess performance reports and pay suppliers on the basis of delivery	
Collaborate with suppliers on improvement if performance is not as expected	Improvement Plan
Complete Contract Performance tracker with RAG status monthly and attend Contract Assurance Board as required to highlight issues with contracts with Amber/Red status	Contract Performance tracker
Keep the Contract Management Plan and any risk register up to date	
Publish Contract Performance Notice for contracts over £5m	Central Digital Platform

Contract change

Activity	Tools and templates
Assess a change request from the supplier if within agreed tolerances	
Consider if a change is needed by the Council to improve the service offer	
Draft a change notice for approval through the correct level of decision making	
Issue contract variation or early termination, and prepare for re-procurement if necessary	Seek Legal Team advice
Record change on the change log and inform stakeholders	
Publish Contract Change Notice or Below Threshold Modification	Central Digital Platform
Update the contracts register relating to the change	Contracts Register

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Activity	Tools and templates
Implement exit arrangements including serving supplier notice	Exit Plan (outlined in the Contract Management Plan)
Implement the range of decommissioning arrangements including data management, asset transfer, intellectual property etc.	
Communicate end of contract to stakeholders	
Consider lessons learnt, involving supplier and contribute to options for re-procurement	
Publish a Contract Termination Notice	Central Digital Platform

Contract close

Activity	Tools and templates
Review the need and design of the contracted service to determine future method of delivery	
Engage with the market to match service need to potential provision by the provider	Options appraisals
Conduct options assessment as part of the business case including insourcing, routes to market and ceasing the service	
Procurement agreed through governance, including production of equality impact assessment	SLT Report template
A procurement plan produced working with the procurement lead (where needed)	
Publish Preliminary Market Engagement Notice and Tender Notice (where needed)	Central Digital Platform

Preparing for re-procurement

7. Procurement Act Required Notices

There are a number of notices which need to be completed on the government's central digital platform.

Contract Award Notice: Information to the market before a contract is awarded and only once the tenderers have been provided with an assessment summary.

Contract Details Notice: Once a contract is signed, this notice must be published within 30 days of contract execution or 120 days if the contract is 'Light Touch'. In addition, where the contract has a value exceeding £5 million, a copy of the contract must also be published with the notice (commercially sensitive information can be withheld).

Below-Threshold Contract Details Notice: This must be published following the award of 'notifiable' below-threshold contracts in the same way as the Contract Details Notice for above-threshold procurements. The notice must be published as soon as reasonably practicable after the contract has been entered into.

Contract Change Notice: Before changing an existing contract, the Council must publish a Contract Change Notice. The only exception is where the change is a "below threshold modification" which is a change which either increases or decreases the value of the contract by 10% or less (in the case of goods or services), or 15% or less (in the case of works) or increases or decreases the term of the contract by 10% of the maximum duration of the originally awarded contract.

Payments Compliance Notice: Every six months, the Council must publish a notice setting out details of compliance with the requirement to pay suppliers within 30 days of receipt of invoice or, if later, within 30 days of the payment due date specified on the invoice. This needs to include the average number of days it takes to make payments.

Contract Performance Notice: Where a contract value is estimated to exceed £5 million, the Council must include at least three KPIs within the contract and monitor the supplier's performance against these. Details of the supplier's performance under these KPIs must be published at least annually in accordance with ascribed ratings of Good, Approaching Target, Requires Improvement, Inadequate and Other. Where the supplier has breached the contract, the Council must publish details of that breach and details of whether the contract was partially terminated, a settlement reached, or damages awarded as a result. Where the breach has resulted in a full termination of the contract, this would require a Contract Termination Notice instead.

Contract Termination Notice: Within 30 days of a contract expiring or terminating for any reason, an authority must publish a Contract Termination Notice. This must include details of the contract and the reasons for its termination (including certain details if termination arose from details of any breach of contract), the date of the termination and its estimated value.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The various parties involved in successfully managing a contract have a range of roles and responsibilities, with an interplay between functions, balancing what the service needs and the suppler can provide, incorporating the Council's corporate obligations and the legal requirements.
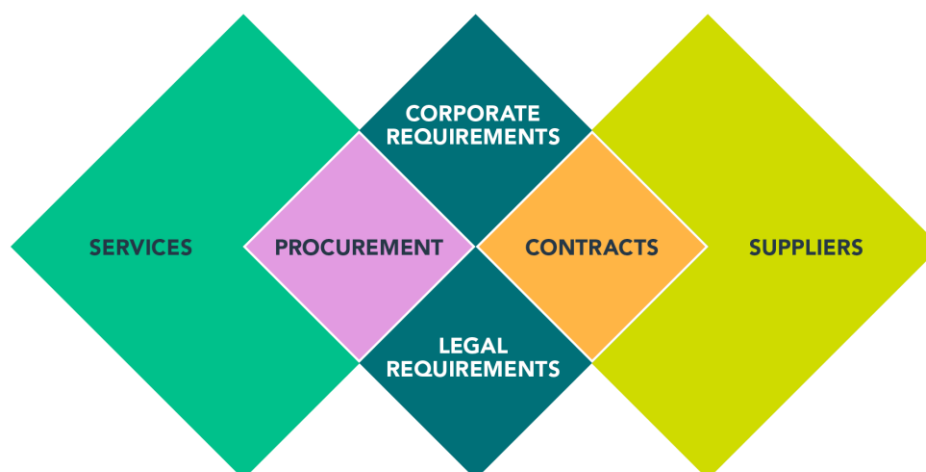
The following is a list of key roles:

8.1 The Contract Manager

In essence, a contract manager ensures the supplier delivers the contract, managing change when needed and reporting on the contract's progress. To note, the role of managing a contract is often just one part of someone's roles.

1. **Contract creation and negotiation:** designing the specification when involved in the procurement

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2. **Contract delivery:** oversee the execution of contracts, ensuring that suppliers fulfil their contractual obligations and coordinate with various departments (e.g. legal, finance, procurement) to ensure smooth contract implementation and following the correct change process
3. **Performance monitoring:** monitor the performance of the supplier, ensuring that timelines, deliverables, and standards are met
4. **Reporting:** regular reporting on the status of contracts, including any issues or financial implications
5. **Payments:** authorising payments ensuring the invoices are correct against the agreement and paid in accordance with the payment mechanism
6. **Risk management:** identify potential risks and set actions that mitigate those risks
7. **Dispute resolution:** where possible resolve disputes to minimise impact to the Council, escalating those disputes if needed and handle breaches including working with the legal service on a course of action
8. **Contract renewal and termination:** evaluate the future delivery options for the service including if still needed, in-sourcing or continued delivery through a contract
9. **Continuous improvement:** continually seek to maximise the outcomes of the contract, and record any lessons learnt.

8.2 The Finance Team

1. The Finance Team will **e**nsure the Council and supplier are meeting the statutory requirements and carry out financial compliance/checks

8.3 The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

An SRO in contract management will not be involved in the day-to-day activity of the contract but plays a pivotal role in providing support to the contract manager in resolving issues and guiding implementation.

1. **Strategic oversight and decision-making:** ensures that the contract aligns with the Council's strategic objectives and long-term vision and makes higher level decisions that cannot be resolved by the contract manager
2. **Accountability and responsibility:** ultimately accountable for the delivery of the contract, overseeing the work of the contract manager to ensure implementation is on-track, and compliance with the requirements in the Contract Management Framework
3. **Resource allocation:** assesses the resources needed to deliver the contract, appointing the contract manager with the right skills and experience, and addressing resource barriers to delivery
4. **Governance and reporting:** establishes and maintains appropriate governance structure to oversee the contract management process
5. **Management and support:** manages the contract manager by ensure they discuss contracts regularly at 121's, providing support and advising when needed, as well as assessing/addressing the performance and compliance of the contract manager
6. **Lead on dispute resolution:** takes a lead on resolving or escalating disputes with suppliers, working with SLT and legal services on a course of action
7. **Wider organisational learning:** involved in lessons learnt to inform wider learning of contract management when fulfilling the legal and corporate priorities of the Council.

8.4 Key Corporate Colleagues

There are a range of colleagues in corporate services that will support with contract management – these are generally:

Legal: setting contracts and involved in escalated disputes

Finance: due diligence/financial checks, arranging payments, assessing savings and cost modelling

Procurement/Project Team: manages the procurement process to the point of issuing the contract and handover to the contract manager.

Compliance/Data management: at specification and contract management the team will provide advice and guidance on handling data and document retention

Governance and performance: receives information on the contract's progress for further reporting giving guidance on what is needed.

8.5 Senior Managers

The Senior Leadership Team do not need to be involved in the day-to-day operation of the contract – that will be delegated to the contract manager and secondly to the SRO. They will sit on the Contract Assurance Board which takes place bi-annually to provide governance.

SLT may also receive reports on the progress on high tier contract. They will provide a cross-organisation approach to resolve barriers to delivery and when absolutely necessary be involved in dispute resolution (as outlined in individual contracts).

They will also work with the political leadership to set the policy and priorities of the Council that will inform the approach to contract management and procurement policy.

8.6 Councillors

Councillors will have an interest in the effective operation of contract management to ensure positive outcomes for residents, that every consideration is given to value for the money, and the due diligence in the operation of the Council. Councils will be involved in the following ways:

- Agree policy: Members will agree policy and the constitution including the Contractual Procedure Rules.
- Committee briefings: The Service Delivery Committee is used to keep members up to date with contract delivery and performance.
- Audit committee: Assurance that proper process is being followed by the Council, including receiving results of audit reports

9. Measuring Performance and Supplier Relations

A fundamental requirement of good contract management is to monitor performance. The following guidance sets out actions to be taken:

- Set reporting expectations at the start of the relationship with suppliers, this is particularly important in high tier contracts.
- Hold regular contract review meetings with suppliers. As a rule, the Council takes a lead in setting the agendas, chairing the meetings and taking notes. Use the Contract Review Meeting Template to ensure a consistent approach.
- Keep an action log, it is important to record and monitor what is expected of the supplier in what timescale, equally there maybe actions for the Council to deliver.

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- Complete the Contract Management Tracker monthly with the appropriate RAG status highlighting any issue as appropriate
- Good relationships with suppliers are based on mutual trust and shared objectives – this can drive innovation through a flexible approach to the contract, but any change needs to be justified. Challenging a supplier on delivery as it is often the big fails that are noticed and need escalating, but there could be incremental poor performance that also needs to be captured and addressed.
- Escalate issues to the SRO where appropriate so further support and guidance can be provided

10. Key Performance Indicators

The Procurement Act 2023 has a strong emphasis on key performance indicators (KPIs) which will be published for contracts that exceed £5m.

All contracts of this value and above should have KPIs established as part of the specification, developed through service need and capable of delivery by the supplier. Therefore, they need to be challenging but realistic.

Good (KPIs) in contract management are essential in measuring how well a supplier is delivering what was agreed during the procurement. When clear, measurable and baselined they can be very efficient in assessing performance – this can then form the basis of recognising achievements and challenging when inadequate. It can also be the basis of a discussion where the contract terms and deliverables may need to change.

The Best KPI' are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound)

Specific and clear: KPIs should be clearly defined so that everyone understands what is being measured and why. For example, instead of "Improve customer satisfaction," a more specific KPI could be "Increase customer satisfaction score by 10% within 6 months"

Measurable: Ensure that the KPI can be quantified. It should be possible to measure progress and determine whether the target has been achieved. For instance, "Reduce average response time to customer enquiries to 3 hours" is measurable

Achievable: KPIs should be realistic and attainable. Setting targets that are too ambitious can set a contract up to fail, while too easy may not meet the requirements of the service

Relevant: The KPIs should align with the overall goals and objectives of the Council – this can relate back to the corporate strategy or the Council's statutory responsibilities.

Time-bound: KPIs should have a specific timeframe for achievement and can be based on milestones which will be relevant for long-term contracts.

Other factors to consider:

Benchmarking – it is useful to compare to industry standards where they are robust and relevant

Source your own customer feedback – whilst it is the duty of the supplier to provide the data (in a format the Council specifies) the service can source its own feedback from users of the contract

Check the methodology – some methods of collecting data can be quite complicated and it is essential to check an agreed way of collecting, recording and interpreting that data. For example, when using percentage results ensure the actual numbers are also supplied

Right to audit – most contracts will have a right to audit, and this should include auditing how KPI results are collected and delivery of social value

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Driving behaviours – the KPIs can be designed in a way to focus on delivery, for example when a particular geographical area or demographic need to be targeted and at what result.

11. Monitoring Social Value and Set Standards

11.1 Social Value

Achieving Social Value is built into the procurement process for suppliers to provide additional value when a contract is awarded. This will be community-based activity that contributes to the outcomes of the Corporate Strategy.

Social Value should be measurable along with KPIs and have equal status as something the supplier has committed to deliver. Therefore, recording social value outcomes needs to be captured and form part of the regular monitoring and reporting.

Social Value should be beyond activity the supplier would have undertaken in any case to be effective in their operation; some examples are:

Creating skills and training e.g. apprenticeships	Initiatives that target hard to reach groups	Supporting voluntary or community organisations
Sustainablity projects that support the environment	Working with schools and young people	Free activities for residents
Actvities that address anti-social behaour	Place based services such as play areas/green spaces	Market and awareness campaigns
Local economy activity e.g. involving small businesses	Nature conservation such preserving habitats	Involvement in partnerships e.g. community safety

For High tier contracts, KPI's and Social Value performance will be reviewed bi-annually at the contracts assurance board.

11.2 Monitoring Standards

Performance also relates to how the organisation operates which will help to assess supplier compliance with set legal or Council requirements. These include:

Risk: create and review a joint risk register with mitigating actions, and escalate to the Council's corporate risk register.

Financial: checking the supplier's financial stability through credit checks.

Continuity planning: there are two aspects to continuity. 1: the continuity plan produced by the supplier to outline mitigation of scenarios that could impact delivery; 2: the continuity plan by the Council if the supplier fails particularly for critical services.

Health and safety: the supplier should be responsible for the services it delivers within expected standards. The supplier needs to keep a record of instances, including near misses to learn from, which are reported to the Council and with the local authority having the right to audit that information.

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12. Change and Assurance

12.1 The Change Process

It can often be the case that a contract needs to be varied. This can be driven by the supplier or instigated by the Council to respond to service needs. Management of contracts requires responsiveness and flexibility on both sides, with a willingness to adapt the terms of the contract to reflect changing circumstances. Common reasons for change are as follows:

In response to legislation	Customer or service need	Opportunities of new technologies
External factors e.g. supply change costs	Creating a cost savings	Changes in how the services are being delivered
Addressing an emergency	Mitgating a risk or continuity requirement	Health and Safety issue, including a near miss

Below are the steps to be followed when a change is presented by the supplier:
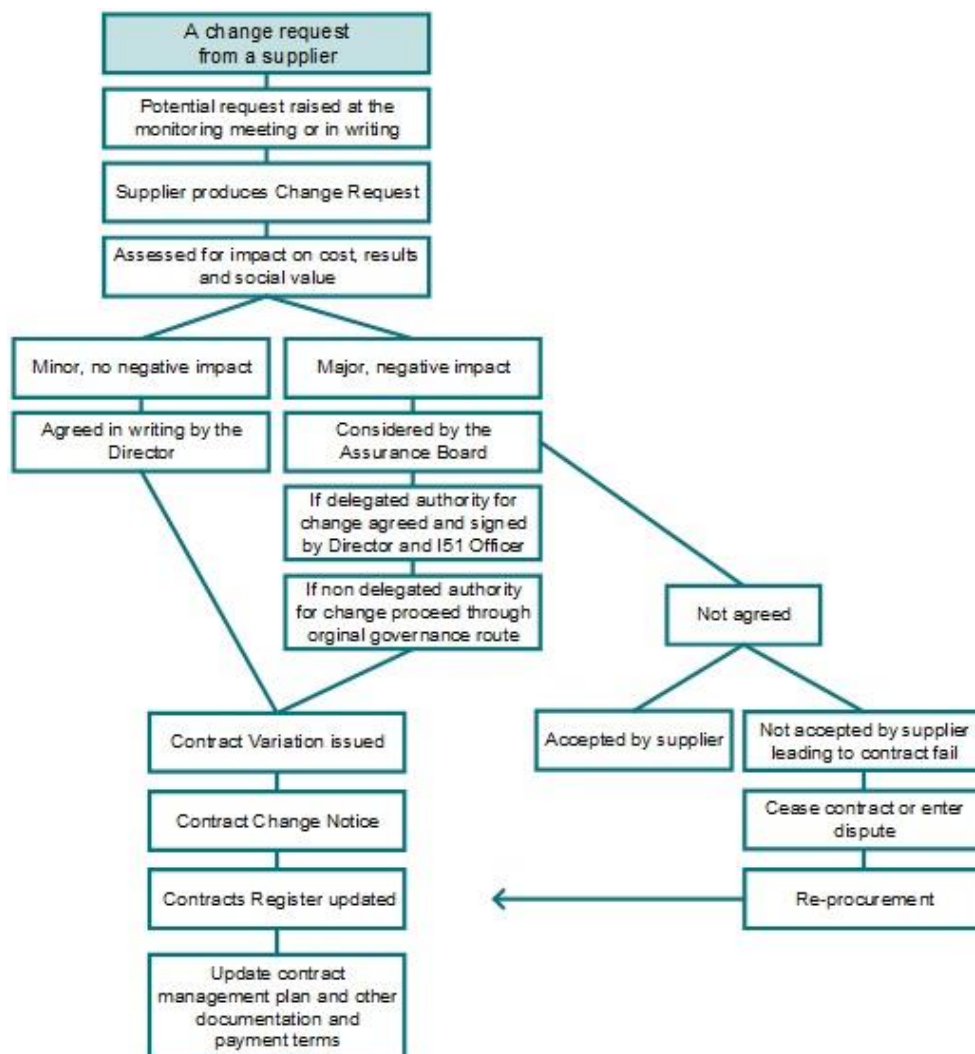
A reasonable request can be made by the service to alter the contract. The supplier will need to agree and it then needs to be formally ratified by the director with a contract variation issued, along with change notice and updated contracts register. The supplier may want to negotiate something that they want in exchange for the change which would need to be considered in light of any negative impact on the Council.

12.2 Disputes

Many disagreements and disputes arise, for example, from a different interpretation of a contract provision such as a performance level, an unclear item in the terms and conditions or practice becoming the norm when it shouldn't. It is important that any potential dispute is recognised early and addressed quickly.

Disagreements which are minor in nature should be resolved swiftly at contract manager level. However, it may be important sometimes to get a second view by raising concerns with the SRO, the Contract Assurance board and informing Legal Services early on.

The contract will include a dispute resolution and escalation process which will include a number of mechanisms to reach an agreement. These should be followed and well documented in case of future legal challenge so that the Council can demonstrate its reasonableness.

12.3 Assurance

It is important that the Council knows how well it is managing its contracts across the Council. This will help provide assurance and identify where improvements can be made. A Contract Performance Tracker has been developed, and Contract Managers will give the contracts they manage a RAG rating each month, providing commentary on Amber/Red statuses where appropriate.

The Contract Assurance Board will meet bi-annually. Members of the SLT will be on the board. SLT will review the Performance Tracker prior to the meeting and invite Contract Managers with any Amber/Red statuses to attend the next Corporate Assurance Board to highlight any issues and discuss ways forward.

During the Contract Assurance Board Performance against KPI's and Social Value will also be reviewed. The Board may also ask contract suppliers to attend a meeting to discuss things like proposed changes and performance.

13. Learning and Help

Heads of Service (as SRO) will support their managers with contracts on an on-going basis.

The intranet pages have a range of information available, including templates, tools and this framework.

Each Head of Service needs to make sure their officers have the relevant contract management training and should address any skills gaps and resource issues.

Internet pages → Read to framework → Introduction to contract management → Foundation course → Attend Contract Management Group

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Agenda Item 11

	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	**Tuesday, 17 June 2025**	**Matter for Information and Decision**

Report Title:	**Formal Approval of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
Report Author(s):	**Peter Heath (Planning Policy Officer)**

Purpose of Report:	To seek approval for the final version of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire and Rutland.
Report Summary:	A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire and Rutland has been produced by Leicestershire County Council (known as the responsible authority). The draft strategy was reported to this Committee on 3 December 2024, and a supportive response was submitted. The strategy has been subject to public consultation and is going for adoption by the County Council at a meeting in early July. The Council is a supporting authority in the production of the strategy and the responsible authority is seeking formal endorsement of the strategy from its' supporting authority partners. The final version of the strategy is attached. The deadline for registering any formal objection to the strategy was the 20th of May, so while we cannot formally object the responsible authority would value a supportive response.
Recommendation(s):	**A. That the content of this report be noted; and** **B. That the Committee formally approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as a supporting authority.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Teresa Neal (Strategic Director) (0116) 257 2642 teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 2645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Ed Morgan (Principal Planning Policy Officer) (0116) 257 2650 ed.morgan@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Peter Heath (Planning Policy Officer) (0116) 257 2732 peter.heath@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Environment (SO4) Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	Collaborative & Creative (V3)

	Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	Click to select or insert narrative.
Corporate Risk Management:	No corporate risk(s) identified.
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Human Rights:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

1.   Background

1.1   In an effort to arrest and then reverse the national decline in biodiversity the previous Government passed the Environment Act 2021. One of the principal ways the Act seeks to address this issue is via the production of 48 local nature recovery strategies (LNRS). Leicestershire County Council were designated as the responsible authority for producing the strategy for Leicestershire and Rutland (the strategy also covers the city).

1.2   The Councils within Leicestershire were all designated as supporting authorities that contributed to the drafting of the strategy and had the opportunity to formally comment on the draft strategy before it was released for public consultation and on the final version of the strategy before adoption.

1.3   At the meeting of this Committee on 3 December 2024 (minute 37 refers) Members endorsed a response to the draft strategy in advance of public consultation which took place in January-February 2025. The strategy is due to go to a County Council meeting in early July for adoption and they are seeking responses from their supporting authorities prior to its adoption.

1.4   Under the regulations underpinning the Strategy, following the public consultation period supporting authorities have a limited period (28 days) to formally object to the strategy. That period has expired. There are two grounds on which an objection can be made, that the strategy was in some way materially deficient or that the strategy was not justified in light of consultation responses received. Neither case applied in relation to the LNRS.

1.5   As noted in the December report the strategy does not place any financial requirements/liabilities on the Council or define new areas for protection or designation. It will guide funding and investment into local priorities to provide benefits for people and wildlife.

2.   Strategy

2.1   The strategy sets out opportunities for improvements to biodiversity across the area looking at specific locations (for example, Rutland Water, the Welland Valley) and then looks at opportunities for eight priority habitats – woodland, freshwater, grassland, urban areas, agriculture, previously developed land, green and blue corridors and geodiversity. The approach of the strategy is to protect, enhance, create, manage and connect these habitats to ensure their future resilience and sustainability.

2.2   For each of these priority habitats the strategy has a series of actions that will contribute to one of the five aims set out above in paragraph 2.1. So, for example, for the urban priority habitat there are nine actions that would contribute to at least one of the five aims above. Action 3 - increasing the urban tree canopy by planting native and climate resilient species - is about enhancing the urban habitat. This action compliments emerging local plan policies.

2.3   The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offers the chance to improve development sites. If there is insufficient space on-site to improve a development site then improvements can be made off-site. The strategy provides multiple opportunities to improve habitats as it will highlight to each local authority opportunities for improvements both within their own area but also with cross boundary links to aid species movement.

2.4   The development of a local nature recovery strategy is welcomed. It identifies the important priority habitats within Leicestershire & Rutland that need to be improved. The actions it identifies for each priority habitat will help with the aims of creating, protecting, enhancing, managing and connecting habitats which in turn should help boost the number and diversity of species.

2.5   The strategy is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Making Space for Nature

Contents

Foreword

The development of this first Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland has been the culmination of almost two years of work by a wide range of people and organisations.

But the work did not start two years ago. Many people and organisations have been beavering away, sometimes in the background, for decades, if not longer, to protect the habitats, species, landscape, waters, soils and wider environmental resources of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

So, this strategy builds on their work, their efforts, their knowledge, expertise and most of all passion. Their passion for nature, be it an individual species or habitat, or a particular part of our area. It also builds on their belief that nature is important, that it provides vital eco-system services to us as humans, for our economy and for the survival of our wider society.

We started off developing this strategy because we had to. It was a new statutory duty placed on local government. We were required to work together.

But as we worked together and got to know more about the biodiversity, habitats, species and landscape of the area and learned from each other and heard how important nature was to the people of the area, how much they appreciated being in nature and recognised the health and wellbeing benefits it gave them, we more and more wanted to develop this strategy.

We have sought to develop a strategy that provides a solid foundation on which we can collectively work together for nature's recovery, knowing that this is a long-term project. We will not be able to overturn centuries of depletion and destruction of nature in 5 years, but we can together make a good start, with the opportunity to review where we are and recalibrate our approach and our efforts as needed.

This strategy sets the course for nature's recovery and wider environmental benefits for the next 30+ years. It presents a collective vision for both restoring and enhancing the biodiversity in our area and connecting to a network of ecological recovery spanning the whole of England.

We are immensely grateful for the input and collaboration of all partners, stakeholders, farmers, landowners and community members who have contributed their knowledge, expertise, and passion to this strategy. Together, we can create a legacy of nature recovery that will benefit generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in making this strategy, and the work that flows from it, as comprehensive and effective as it can be.

Ultimately, the test of its success will be the emergence of more, better and better-connected space for nature across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, and all the benefits that creates.

Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy Steering Group

1. Executive Summary

This first Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland outlines a comprehensive strategic, landscape scale approach for enhancing and restoring biodiversity across the strategy area.

Developed in collaboration with local authorities, government agencies, environmental organisations, farmers, land managers, communities, residents, and many supporting organisations and individual stakeholders, the strategy is designed to address the urgent challenges of habitat loss, species decline, and climate change.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies key habitats and species that require immediate attention and lays out strategic aims to increase biodiversity, improve habitat quality, and create a connected and resilient landscape for wildlife, people and livelihoods.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy ultimately serves as a call to action for all sectors of society to play a role in the recovery of nature, ensuring that the biodiversity and natural beauty of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland can thrive for future generations, while at the same time supporting the lives and livelihoods of the people and communities that live and work there.

Key features of the strategy include:

- A description of the natural and people shaped landscape of the area.

- The identification of existing areas of particular importance for biodiversity.

- The setting out of the current state of nature of the area.

- The identification of priority habitats across various landscapes, including woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, farmland, and urban environments.

- The identification of priority species and species which are known indicators of habitat quality.

- A focus on nature-based solutions to make space for nature, mitigate climate change impacts, enhance ecosystem services, and improve environmental health.

- A strong emphasis on community involvement through citizen science, partnerships with landowners and farmers, and local biodiversity initiatives.

- The identification of areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity or where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits. Including specific landscape opportunities for creating and expanding habitats, improving habitat connectivity, and safeguarding key species.

- A roadmap for delivery to ensure long-term success, alongside a monitoring framework to track progress and make the necessary adjustments.

2. Introduction

This first Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland is a forward-thinking strategy aimed at addressing biodiversity loss and other ongoing environmental challenges.

By setting out a clear and structured approach, this strategy focuses on making space for nature, restoring biodiversity, improving habitat quality, and fostering greater ecological connectivity across various landscapes from woodlands and wetlands to urban green spaces and farmlands.

This strategy is structured around key principles that reflect both local and national priorities. At its core, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is underpinned by extensive stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and alignment with over 100 existing plans and policies, including national biodiversity action plans and local conservation efforts.

The document is divided into several thematic areas, including a comprehensive area description which sets out an overview of current landscape conditions, priority habitats and species, opportunities for nature recovery, and detailed strategies for implementation.

The methodology guiding the Local Nature Recovery Strategy involved a rigorous, evidence-based process, combining local ecological data, national biodiversity datasets, and stakeholder input to identify key areas for intervention.

The strategy uses geographic information systems (GIS) to map biodiversity hotspots and wildlife corridors, ensuring that efforts are focused where they will have the most significant impact. Special attention was given to landscapes such as Charnwood Forest and the National Forest, Leighfield Forest, Rutland Water and surrounding areas, Leicester City and urban areas, the Soar and Wreake and Welland Valleys, which provide vital habitats for many endangered and priority species.

This strategy also introduces a collaborative approach to nature recovery. It integrates contributions from local communities, farmers, businesses, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), emphasising the importance of citizen science in tracking the health of ecosystems.

In the long term, the strategy sets ambitious but achievable aims, including increasing the area of land managed for wildlife, improving the condition of priority habitats, and reinstating natural processes like floodplain restoration.

By focusing on key indicators of ecological health and leveraging the expertise of local stakeholders, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy aims to create a landscape that is more resilient to climate change, more connected for wildlife, and more accessible for the people who live and work in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

This strategy not only aims to reverse biodiversity decline but also to integrate nature into our everyday lives, ensuring a sustainable future for all.

3. Methodology

The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland followed statutory regulations and guidance set out by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It also sought to be an ambitious and comprehensive process designed to find solutions to the problems nature is facing and approaches to make space for nature. The following methodology outlines the processes undertaken in developing the first ever Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, from stakeholder involvement and data collection to the mapping of priority areas and the establishment of bespoke conservation measures for key species and habitats.

3.1 Principles

As the appointed responsible authority to lead on the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Leicestershire County Council was expected to work to the following principles:

- Transparency - be able to show how partner contributions have been considered, how decisions have been made, and what the basis for them is.

- Inclusivity - enable everyone with an interest to be involved where possible.

- Clear communication - avoid using technical terms that may not be understood by partners and end users.

We have sought to include these principles throughout the process of developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, through involving as many partners, stakeholders and residents as possible, engaging with them in a variety of ways, listening to and taking on board the views and knowledge of others and being clear and transparent in communications. These principles have also been embedded into how this document has been produced in that we have sought to use clear and simple language where possible, minimise the use of technical terms and abbreviations, and placed the more technical detail in the appendices, for those that need or want to read it.

> **Nature needs a voice of its own. Too often in the past it has been taken for granted or dismissed as unimportant. I am glad that this is being introduced. It is of the utmost urgency.**
>
> (Residents' survey)

3.2 Prescribed Process for Developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The government guidance set out a prescribed process for developing local nature recovery strategies. This consisted of a five steps process as set out in Figure 1 and described in the following paragraphs.

Step 1:
Map that are of particular importance for biodiversity including national conservation sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitats

↓

Step 2:
Map areas where action for nature recovery has been taken when LNRSs are reviewed and republished

↓

Step 3:
Describe the strategy area and its biodiversity and opportunities for recovery

↓

Step 5:
Map areas that could become of particular importance

→

Step 4:
Agree LNRS priorities and indentify potential measures

←

Statement of biodiversity priorities

↓

Local habitat map → Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Step 1: Map Areas That Are of Particular Importance for Biodiversity

Data Collection and Analysis:

A critical component of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy was the use of the best available data to inform decision-making, prioritise areas for nature recovery, and guide the development of conservation measures.

The Local Habitat Map is the foundation of the strategy and identifies areas of particular importance for biodiversity. The local habitat map must identify:

• national conservation sites in the strategy area

• local nature reserves in the strategy area

The habitat map must also identify other areas in the strategy area, which in the opinion of the responsible authority:

• are, or could become, of particular importance for biodiversity, or

• are areas where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits.

Its purpose is to provide a clear visual way for groups and individuals to understand the areas which are or could become of particular importance for biodiversity and the environment to target nature recovery action.

Figure 1: Order of steps to be followed in preparing contents of a local nature recovery strategy

Data Sources:

- Local ecological surveys: Data from recent species counts and habitat quality assessments across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland.

- National biodiversity datasets: Integration of data from the UK BAP, NBN Atlas, and State of Nature Reports.

- Historic land and species records: Data from the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust and Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre.

- Habitat mapping: Sourced from several organisations such as Natural England's datasets, Rural Payment Agency, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, UK CEH, National Forest Inventory 2021[1].

- Environmental conditions: Access to nature and air quality data, Environment Agency data on water quality, natural flood management and ecological status of catchment areas.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Mapping:

GIS was employed to:

- Overlay species distribution with habitat data to identify areas of ecological importance.

- Model wildlife corridors using connectivity analysis.

- Identify areas for habitat creation based on land use and ecological significance.

- Assess land use and constraint patterns for feasible implementation.

Step 2: (Not applicable for the first strategy)

Over 1,000 residents responded to the Nature Recovery survey.

Step 3: Describe the Strategy Area and Its Biodiversity and Opportunities for Recovery

Overview of the Strategy Area:

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy focuses on Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, which comprise areas that are rich in biodiversity and contain key habitats such as wetlands, woodlands, urban, farmland and grasslands. Opportunities for recovery are centred around enhancing these habitats, restoring connectivity, and addressing species decline.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Interactive workshops, online maps, focus groups, and surveys were used to gather input from stakeholders, including identifying local pressures, opportunities, land use and biodiversity preferences and priorities.

- Stakeholders included farmers, tenant farmers, land managers, landowners, local government, environmental organisations, residents, and national agencies (Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, National Forest and DEFRA).

- Engagement Phase (March – July) comprised of a stakeholder survey - 96 responses received. A public survey - 1,077 responses received. An online interactive map - 516 comments added. Stakeholder briefings/workshops - 7 online briefings for stakeholders (90) and 6 member briefings (77). In-person workshops - 4 farmer and landowner workshops (35 attendees) - 10 resident workshops (over 80 attendees). A copy of the Engagement Report including the results from the public survey can be found here: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

- A core stakeholder advisory group was established to guide the strategy development, called the Strategic Reference Group.

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[1] National Forest Inventory 2021 - provides detailed data on the extent of tree and forest cover across the country.

Step 4: Agree Local Nature Recovery Strategy Priorities and Identify Potential Measures (Statement of Biodiversity Priorities)

Species and Habitat Prioritisation

Species and habitats were prioritised based on:

- Guidance provided by Natural England.

- Assessment of 1500 species by 40 county recorders and local species experts.

- Conservation status (e.g., Red List species, UK BAP species).

- Vulnerability to local pressures.

- Ecological importance (e.g., keystone species, pollinators).

- Stakeholder preferences for culturally or economically significant species (e.g., farmland birds, pollinators).

Alignment with Existing Plans:

Over 100 local and national plans were reviewed to ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy aligned with existing priorities, including local biodiversity action plans, local plans, blue and green infrastructure strategies, climate strategies, flood management plans, environmental organisations habitat and species best practice guides and agri-environment schemes such as the Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes.

Stakeholder Input on Priorities:

Continuous feedback from stakeholders ensured that the strategy reflected local and national priorities, with particular focus on land management practices and habitat restoration.

Step 5: Map Areas That Could Become of Particular Importance (Local Habitat Map)

Mapping of Priority Areas for Nature Recovery:

Areas of opportunity for habitat creation, biodiversity enhancement, and nature-based solutions were mapped. This included identifying areas critical for floodplain restoration, wetland creation, grassland enhancement, urban green and blue space protection and woodland creation and expansion.

Criteria for Priority Area Selection:

- Ecological important areas with high biodiversity value.

- Habitat connectivity: Locations that could enhance wildlife corridors and Nature Recovery Networks.

- Climate resilience: Areas critical for adaptation to climate change impacts.

- Feasibility of intervention: Areas with high stakeholder buy-in and suitable management practices.

Opportunity Mapping:

- Habitat creation example: Wetland restoration in the Soar and Wreake Valley, woodland expansion in the National Forest, Charnwood Forest and Leighfield Forest.

- Species reintroduction example: Potential areas for reintroducing species like Glow Worm, Hazel Dormouse and Water Voles.

- Nature-based solutions example: Mapping areas for actions such as floodplain restoration to deliver both biodiversity and ecosystem services.

3.3   Governance Structure

The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy was supported by a governance structure consisting of a Steering Group, in turn supported by a Strategic Reference Group and several Working Groups. See figure 2. All of which was supported by a dedicated Project Manager.
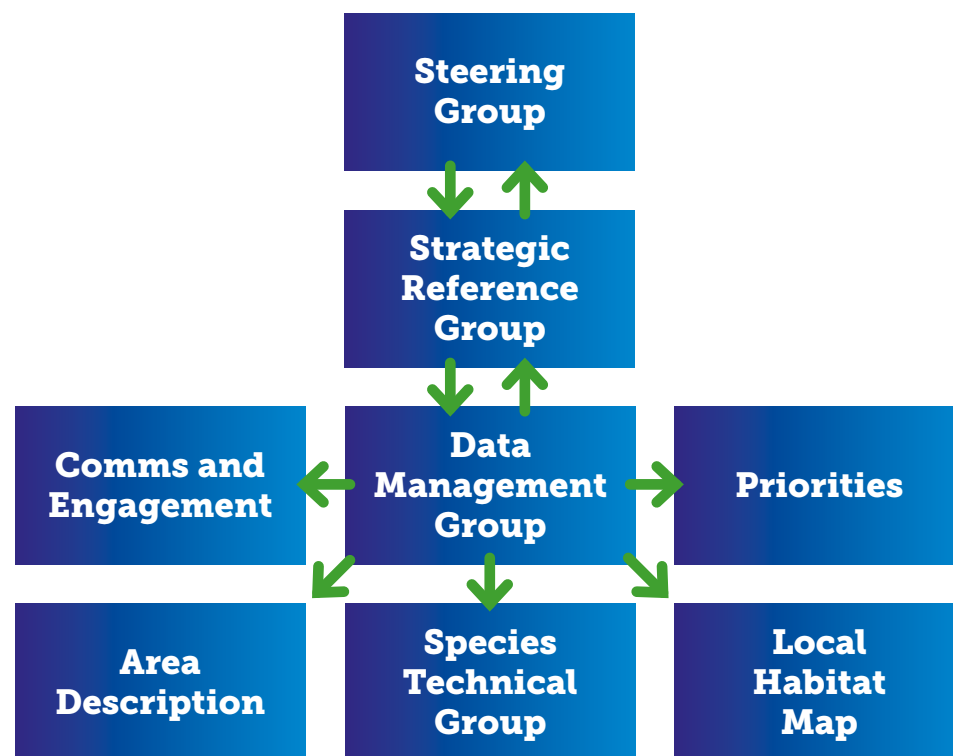

Figure 2: Governance structure for the development of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The structure allowed the right people and organisations to be involved in the right way at the right time, to enable the most effective use of people's time, knowledge and expertise.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy was developed through a rigorous and collaborative process, leveraging the best available data, integrating stakeholder perspectives, and aligning with over 100 existing priorities and plans. This comprehensive approach ensures that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is both ambitious and achievable, providing a blueprint for nature recovery that will benefit biodiversity, people, and the local economy for years to come.

Further information about what a responsible authority should include in a Local Nature Recovery Strategy is found in the government's statutory guidance: (www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategy-what-to-include)

Responsible and supporting authorities should read this guidance about what to include in a Local Nature Recovery Strategy alongside The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023: (www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/made).

The regulations set out the process they must follow when they prepare, publish, review and republish their strategy.
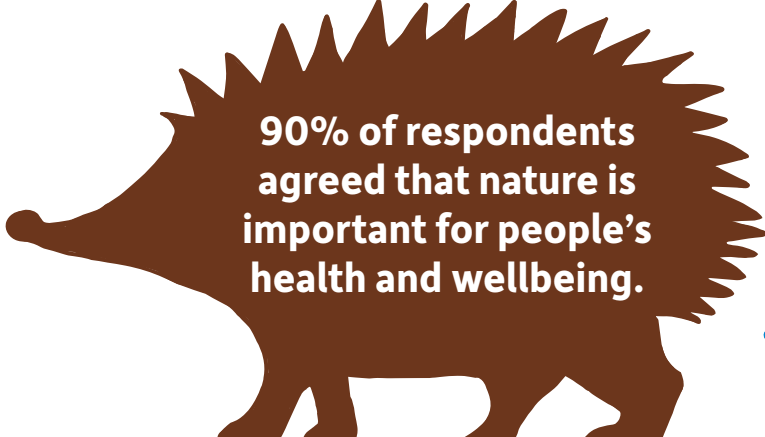
Authorities that are responsible for delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will need to review the strategy and report on progress with its partners and stakeholders within 3 to 8 years of the initial strategy being approved. Thereafter, strategies are expected to be reviewed approximately every 5 years.

4. Strategic Aims

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been developed through a comprehensive review of over 100 existing plans and strategies, along with an assessment of more than 400 associated priorities against Natural England's National Environmental Objectives. This robust analysis has allowed the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to align with a wide range of national and local plans, ensuring it is not only comprehensive but also complementary to ongoing initiatives.

As the strategy focuses on nature recovery, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy plays a critical role in supporting other key strategies that address pressing environmental issues, such as flood management, climate resilience, and improvements to air and water quality. By implementing nature-based solutions, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy contributes directly to these areas, demonstrating the essential role of biodiversity and ecosystem health in broader environmental goals.

The strategic aims outlined are designed to address the specific challenges facing nature while also supporting sustainable farming practices and development objectives. Each aim has been carefully crafted to ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy not only promotes biodiversity recovery but also contributes to the area's resilience to climate change and other environmental stressors.

90% of respondents agreed that nature is important for people's health and wellbeing.

i. Increase the area and diversity of land and water managed for wildlife in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland (make more space for nature):

Large-scale integrated habitat creation and restoration measures/projects within both areas of existing high wildlife value, and less ecologically distinct areas to improve habitat corridors, ecological connectivity, and support natures recovery.

ii. Increase biodiversity by improving the ecological condition (habitat quality) of existing areas for nature conservation:

Conserve and enhance wildlife habitats, increasing the biodiversity value of protected/priority sites. Drive species recovery by targeting bespoke management in the right places to improve habitat quality. Improve ecological condition of existing habitats to support priority species.

iii. Reinstate natural processes, make space for water and utilise Nature-Based-Solutions to support nature and climate resilience:

Re-instate natural processes and utilise nature-based solutions to support resilience, both ecological and for projected climate change. Reconnect rivers with their floodplains, restore floodplains and reverse historic channel straightening to reduce flood risk. Plant trees and encourage natural regeneration of woodlands to draw down carbon and improve both water and air quality. Allow dynamic mosaics of habitat to develop to support biodiversity and natural succession of wildlife communities to occur.

iv. Protect and enhance green and blue spaces within urban habitats:

Implement green and blue infrastructure into urban design and planning, adopt management strategies that increase resilience to environmental stresses and climate change and create corridors and networks facilitating wildlife movement and ecological interactions.

v. Promote sustainable agriculture and support local food systems:

Encourage farming practices that enhance soil health, reduce chemical inputs, and promote biodiversity. Encourage the production and consumption of local and sustainable food that reduce food miles and promote environmentally friendly farming practices.

vi. Improve ecological connectivity by establishing coherent and resilient ecological networks at scale:

Create, conserve, and enhance the Nature Recovery Network by linking with existing and establishing new green/blue corridors across the strategy area and neighbouring strategy areas.

vii. Reduce major pressures and threats to nature including Invasive Non-Native Species:

Significantly reduce the prevalence of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and its detrimental effects on native ecosystems.

viii. Improve our understanding of the State of Nature and actively monitor habitat/species change over time:

Engage and educate all ages about the importance of the natural world. Establish robust monitoring systems to track the effectiveness of nature recovery practices and adapt strategies as needed. Using indicator species at landscape scales develop key data to show responses to pressures and positive conservation measures. This includes using data-driven approaches to assess environmental impacts and inform continuous improvement efforts.

> "I am grateful for the natural world and love to be in it. I feel better surrounded by nature."
> (Resident)

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5. Area Description - Natural Landscape

5.1 Introduction

The natural landscape of the strategy area is defined by its diverse physical characteristics, which include unique topography, varied geology, and rich hydrological systems. These natural features have shaped the biodiversity and ecosystems of the part of middle England. Understanding these elements is crucial for identifying key areas for conservation and nature recovery efforts. This section explores the natural foundations that make up the distinctive character, from its national character areas to its geodiversity and hydrology.

5.2 The National Character Areas

There are 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) in England, each of which is distinctive with a unique 'sense of place'. These broad divisions of landscape form the basic units of countryside character, on which strategies for both ecological and landscape issues can be based.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy area of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland contains ten National Character Areas, each emphasising their unique ecological features and biodiversity. What follows is a brief overview of each of the ten areas.

Figure 3: Map showing the ten National Character Areas that cover the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy area.
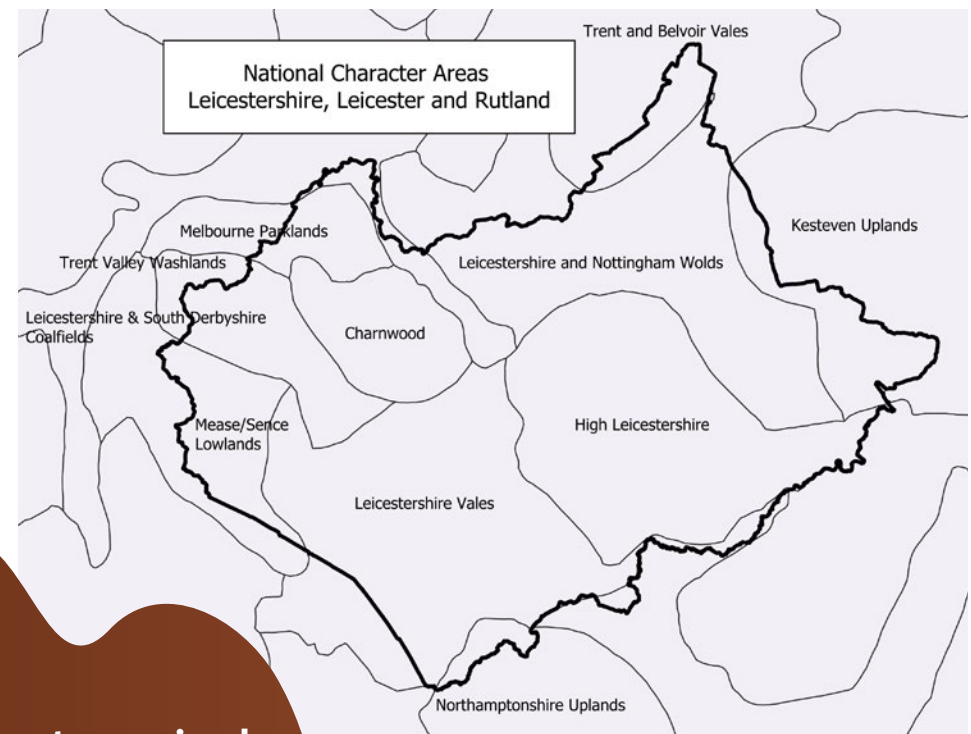
"I am concerned about perceived separation from nature for many people, leading to less empathy."
(Oadby and Wigston resident)

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a) Trent and Belvoir Vales National Character Area

Characterised by undulating farmlands and rural scenery, and surrounding the **River Trent**, this character area covers a small part of the north of Leicestershire. Newark-on-Trent sits at its heart, while Grantham, Nottingham, Lincoln, and Gainsborough mark its periphery. Settlements include Bottesford, Barkestone and Hose. These low-lying landscape provide expansive open views due to its limited woodland cover.

The area's fertile soils have long-supported diverse agricultural practices, yet this has led to the loss of much semi-natural habitat. The river Trent acts as a vital biodiversity corridor, supporting various wetland habitats and serving as a significant route for wildlife movement. Notably, it also serves functions like flood storage and provides cooling water for local power stations.
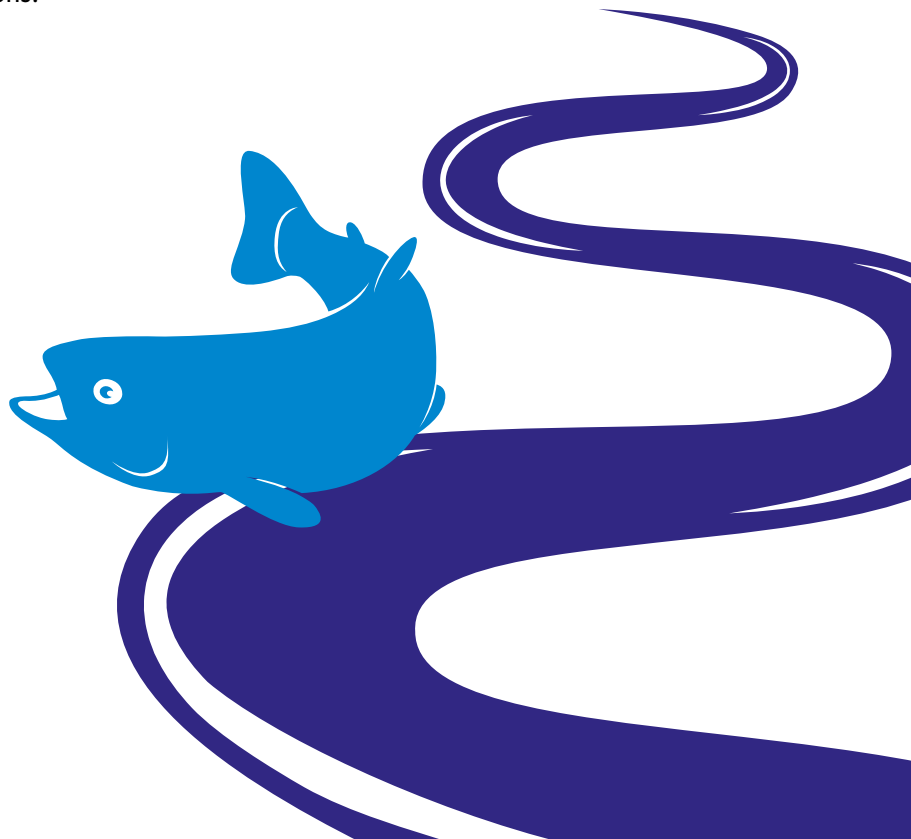
b) Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds National Character Area

Moving eastwards towards the gently dipping Jurassic rock landscape between Nottingham and Leicester, this rural, open landscape features mixed farmlands and includes the bustling market town of Melton Mowbray. Further South the **River Eye** with its Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation has a significant impact on the landscape. **Rutland Water** stands out as a prominent feature within this rural backdrop, offering a picturesque setting atop undulating hills.

c) Kesteven Uplands National Character Area

Lying at the intersection of several counties and predominantly within Lincolnshire's historic Kesteven district, this character area covers a small part of the east of Rutland and Leicestershire and includes settlements such as Empingham, Thistleton and Saltby. The gentle, rolling landscape features a mix of farmland dissected by rivers like the Witham, and the East and West Glen. It boasts diverse geology, showcasing various soil types, from limestone to heavy clays. Calcareous loam soils support the growth of cereals, oilseeds, and root crops. The region's distinct network of narrow country lanes, hedgerows with wildflowers, and scattered woodlands contribute to its rural charm.
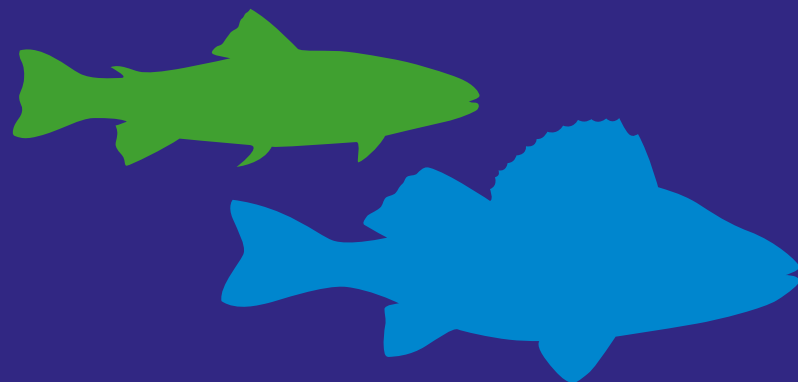
d) Northamptonshire Vales National Character Area

A series of low-lying clay vales and river valleys define this character area, as it skirts along the southeast of Leicestershire and Rutland and includes settlements such as Market Harborough and Great Easton. The rivers Nene and Welland, along with their tributaries, shape the landscape, where settlements often dominate the visual landscape due to its 10 percent urban coverage. Major road networks, including the M1, A45, A6, and A5, crisscross this region, influencing its visual dynamics and land use.

e) Leicestershire Vales National Character Area

Adjacent to Northamptonshire Vales and extending from Hinckley to Leicester and towards Market Harborough and Lutterworth, a range of towns dot this area, with contrasting urbanisation in the north and rural tranquillity in the south. This expansive, relatively open landscape features low-lying clay vales interspersed with varied river valleys and a mix of arable and pastoral farmland.

f) Trent Valley Washlands National Character Area

This character area covers a very small part of northwest Leicestershire near Marston and the Kingsbury Water Park and Wanlip and Watermead Park. Comprised of river floodplains in the heart of England, it offers a distinctly narrow, linear, and low-lying landscape. Predominantly flat these washlands consist of flood plains and gravel terraces periodically flooded deliberately for flood management purposes. The geological composition and soil types greatly influence settlement patterns and agricultural land use, dividing the area into arable lands on river terraces and pastoral farming on flood plains.

g) Charnwood National Character Area

Situated amidst urban areas, Charnwood maintains its rural essence, with villages nestled within its bounds. Distinguished by its geology and upland qualities, this character area stands out amidst the gentle lowlands. A mosaic landscape, it comprises rivers and waterbodies, heathland, farmland, parkland, and woodland, featuring rugged, rocky outcrops owing to its underlying Precambrian geology. The region is relatively well-wooded, with mixed deciduous and coniferous woodlands providing a unique contrast to the surrounding landscapes.

h) Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfields National Character Area

This transitioning landscape has evolved from extensive coal mining heritage to a blend of restored landscapes, woodlands, and agricultural spaces including settlements such as Ashby-de la-Zouch, Ibstock and Newbold Verdon. It spans a plateau offering panoramic views of shallow valleys and gentle ridges. An ongoing transformation aims to integrate these formerly industrial spaces into the predominantly rural agricultural scenery.

i) Melbourne Parklands National Character Area

Bordered to the north and west by the Trent Valley, with the Burton-upon-Trent to its southwestern arc, the area includes settlements such as Castle Donnington, Breedon on the Hill and Diseworth. Situated between ancient forests, it comprises a mix of farmland, woodlands, and grand estates. Calke Abbey, just across the Derbyshire border, hosts a Grade II listed historic park, designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR), and boasting significant woodland cover.

j) High Leicestershire National Character Area (includes most of West Rutland)

Emerging from the clay of the Leicestershire, West Rutland and Northamptonshire Vales, and scattered with small villages such as Great Dalby, Tur Langton and South Luffenham, this character area rises above lowland plains and valleys. Characterised by broad, rolling ridges and secluded valleys, it exudes a quiet, remote, and rural charm. Farms dot the landscape, interconnected by a network of country lanes and footpaths. Throughout this diverse area, the delicate balance between agricultural practices, wildlife corridors, and urban settlements contributes significantly to maintaining a rich and diverse ecosystem. These landscapes offer an array of challenges and opportunities for conservation efforts and co-existence, showcasing the importance of varied ecosystems and human interaction with nature.

k) Mease/Sence Lowland National Character Area

The Mease/Sence Lowlands are a gently rolling agricultural landscape centred around the rivers Mease, Sence and Anker. The area extends across: Derbyshire in the north, Warwickshire in the south, Leicestershire in the east and Staffordshire in the west. With its towns lying on the fringes of the National Character Area (NCA), only a very small percentage of it is urban. These lowlands retain a rural, remote character, with small villages, red brick farmsteads and occasional historic parkland and country houses. The National Forest extends into the area north of the River Mease.

The NCA contains one Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - the River Mease, which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - and has 139 ha of nationally designated SSSI, including the Ashby Canal SSSI. Important habitats include neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, wet woodlands, rivers and streams, all of which support characteristic and rare species of international importance, including the White-clawed Crayfish, the Spined Loach and the Bullhead fish.

83% of respondents said creating new or expanding existing habitats is very important.

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5.3   Geodiversity

Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland boast a rich geodiversity that has shaped the landscapes, ecosystems, and economies of the area over millions of years. From the ancient Precambrian rocks of Charnwood Forest, Oolitic Jurassic Limestone outcrops of Rutland and the glacial deposits of the Pleistocene era, the geological make-up of the area has left an indelible mark on its character.

Charnwood Forest is home to some of the oldest Precambrian rocks in England. These rocks offer a glimpse into the early geological history of the region, with evidence of marine environments, volcanic activity, and ancient life forms. Additionally, the Carboniferous rocks in the west, particularly in the Leicestershire Coalfield, have played a significant role in the area's economic history, once fuelling a thriving coal mining industry.

Moving eastward, the landscape transitions to Mesozoic rocks, including Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous formations. These rocks have yielded valuable insights into past environments, from arid deserts to shallow seas. The Jurassic strata, for example, are rich in fossils, providing a window into ancient marine ecosystems and the creatures that inhabited them.

Glacial deposits from the Pleistocene era cover much of the area, offering evidence of past ice ages and shaping the modern topography through processes like glacial till deposits and river erosion. These are not only of geological interest but also provide resources for construction materials, such as aggregates found in quarries throughout the region.

The use of geological resources has played a crucial role in the economic development of the area. From coal mining in the **Leicestershire Coalfield** to limestone quarrying and ironstone mining in **Rutland**, the extraction of minerals has left a lasting impact on the landscape and local communities. Distinctive building stones, such as Sandrock and Marlstone Rock Formation, have contributed to the unique architecture of the area.

The area's geological heritage has been a focal point for scientific research and education. **Fossil discoveries**, like the Rutland dinosaur Cetiosaurus and the Barrow Kipper pliosaur, have captured the imagination of researchers and the public alike, shedding light on ancient ecosystems and prehistoric life.

Image courtesy of Charnwood Forest LPS

5.4 Hydrology

The hydrology of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland is significantly influenced by an intricate and diverse network of rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and canals - examples of the significant waterbodies can be found in **Appendix D1.a**.

These water bodies play a crucial role in shaping the landscape, supporting biodiversity, and providing essential environmental benefits. Not only vital for sustaining local ecosystems, but they also contribute significantly to regional water supply, flood management, and recreational activities.

The **River Soar** is the most prominent watercourse in Leicestershire, draining a large portion of the county and flowing into the **River Trent** and its surrounding catchment area, which covers approximately 1,380 km². It traverses both urban and rural landscapes, influencing the hydrology of Leicester City, Loughborough, and Melton Mowbray. Several stretches of the River Soar are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), particularly where it supports rich aquatic habitats and species, including wetland areas and floodplain meadows.

The catchment faces several hydrological challenges due to urbanisation and agricultural activities. Urban areas contribute to issues like pollution, with sewage spills and plastic waste being significant problems. The rural sections, particularly around Melton Mowbray, experience pressures from agricultural runoff, which affects water quality and increases flood risk.

Physical modifications to the river, such as culverts and weirs, have altered natural flow regimes. This in turn reduces oxygen levels and negatively impacts aquatic ecosystems. Additionally, the catchment is vulnerable to exacerbate flood risks caused by climate change, impacting water resources further. Those responsible for our hydrological management, working with catchment partnerships, aim to address these challenges through initiatives like natural flood management, river restoration, and improving water quality. These projects aim to enhance the river's resilience to environmental pressures and ensure sustainable water management for the region.

Also in Leicestershire, the **River Wreake** is a significant tributary of the **Soar**, flowing through predominantly agricultural landscapes. It is known for its meandering course, which contributes to local floodplains and wetland habitats. Similarly, the **Eye Brook** and its reservoir are vital for both water storage and biodiversity, supporting a range of species, including wildfowl and aquatic plants.

The **River Welland** flows through the picturesque Welland Valley, forming a vital part of the landscape and ecology of the area. Originating in the hills of Northamptonshire, the river meanders through rural Leicestershire and Rutland before continuing its journey eastward. The River Welland plays a crucial role in nature conservation and water management efforts, with ongoing initiatives to enhance its ecological value, improve water quality, and increase resilience to flooding. The river is also a key feature in local efforts to restore wetland habitats and promote sustainable land management practices, ensuring the Welland Valley remains a thriving environment for both wildlife and people.

The **River Mease** is a lowland river of significant ecological importance, flowing through the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire. Recognised as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to its rare habitats and species, the river is home to nationally important populations of species such as the **Spined Loach** and the **White-clawed Crayfish**. The surrounding floodplains and meadows along the river support a rich diversity of wildlife, contributing to the river's exceptional environmental value. However, the River Mease faces ongoing challenges, particularly from nutrient enrichment and changes in land use. Conservation efforts are focused on improving water quality, restoring habitats, and protecting its unique biodiversity. As part of wider environmental initiatives, the River Mease continues to be a focal point for nature recovery and sustainable water management within the region.

Rutland is home to **Rutland Water**, one of the largest artificial lakes in Europe was only created in 1976 and consequently its effect on the landscape is only in its infancy. This reservoir is fed by the Upper and Lower Gwash Rivers and several large streams playing a critical role in water supply and providing a vital habitat for birds, including Osprey and other waterfowl, making it a site of international importance for bird conservation.

The rivers and water bodies in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland support a variety of habitats, including wetlands, floodplains, and riparian woodlands. These areas are crucial for biodiversity, providing habitat for species such as otters, water voles, and a range of fish, including brown trout, European eel and Atlantic salmon.

Complementing the natural rivers are man-made canal systems, such as the **Ashby Canal SSSI**, **Oakham Canal** and **Grand Union Canal** including the SSSI-designated Leicester Line of the **Grand Union Canal**, once used for trade and transportation. Today, these waterways offer corridors for leisure activities and provide habitat and connectivity for a variety of species.

Ponds, both natural and artificial, are scattered throughout the landscape, providing connectivity and homes for mammals, birds, amphibians, insects, and other aquatic species. These changing, often temporary waterbodies play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity, particularly in agricultural landscapes where natural wetlands are scarce. Ponds, particularly in acid soils such as those around Charnwood Forest provide the acidic water vital for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland rarest amphibian, the **Palmate Newt**.

Ditches, though often overlooked, are vital components of the hydrological landscape, helping to manage water flow, reduce flooding, and support wetland habitats. These linear water features crisscross the countryside, providing connectivity and refuge for a variety of aquatic plants and animals. However, habitat loss and fragmentation and invasive, non-native species significantly disrupt these aquatic ecosystems and corridors.

The hydrology of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland is not without its challenges. Urban areas are affected by polluted runoff from impermeable areas, roads, and water treatment system discharges. Poor urban drainage systems and surface water management are a cause of localised flooding and impact groundwater recharge and stream conditions. Intensive land management in the upper reaches of the Soar contributes to high levels of diffuse agricultural nutrients and sediment affecting water quality. Rivers previously adapted for these intensive agriculture and historical industrial activities, now affect natural flows and water levels.

Climate change poses additional threats, altering rain patterns and exacerbating droughts and floods. The changing climate, catchment practices and modification of river channels impact on flow levels and contribute to increased flood risk across the catchment areas.

The catchment areas also feature grasslands and agricultural fields, where traditional farming practices co-exist with efforts to conserve natural habitats. Initiatives like the creation of buffer strips along riverbanks and the restoration of wetlands help to mitigate the impacts of agriculture on local ecosystems.

The rivers are also home to several species of birds, including **Kingfishers**, **Herons**, and various species of warblers that thrive in the riparian vegetation. The presence of Invasive Non-native Species like the **American Signal Crayfish** and **Himalayan Balsam**, however, poses challenges to the local biodiversity, as these species compete with native flora and fauna.

Conservation efforts, led by local catchment partnerships, focus on improving water quality, restoring natural river functions, and enhancing habitats to support the region's rich biodiversity. These initiatives are crucial in ensuring that Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland's rivers continue to provide ecological, recreational, and economic benefits to the local communities.

"Nature fills me with good feelings so there is less room for all the bad stuff."
(Charnwood resident)

6. Area Description – People Shaping the Landscape

6.1 Introduction

Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland are at the heart of rural England and is characterised by a blend of lowland landscapes, rural expanses, and densely populated urban areas. Leicestershire's and Rutland's position as a key hub for agriculture, industry, and transport places significant pressure on its natural resources, making it a focal point for biodiversity action.

The rural character of Rutland, with its rolling hills, agricultural fields, and woodlands, contrasts with the more urbanised areas around Leicester City, which serves as a thriving cultural and economic heart. This mixture of urban and rural environments creates a complex ecological mosaic that presents both opportunities and challenges for nature recovery. The diversity of these landscapes, from floodplains and grasslands to ancient woodlands, supports a rich array of wildlife, though many habitats have been fragmented by urban development and intensive land use.

Human activity has significantly influenced the landscape of the strategy area over centuries, from rural farming practices to urban development. These interactions have shaped not only the physical environment but also the cultural and ecological heritage. This section examines how various human influences ranging from farming and urbanisation to the preservation of heritage sites and wildlife conservation efforts have played a vital role in shaping the landscape as we see it today.

6.2 Rutland

Rutland is the smallest historic county in England, located in the East Midlands region, bordered by Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Northamptonshire. Despite its size, Rutland is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, rich history, and vibrant community. Rutland is characterised by its rolling hills, patchwork of agricultural fields, and well-preserved rural environment. The county is predominantly rural, with much of the land used for farming and conservation. The landscape includes a mix of woodlands, meadows, and wetlands, providing diverse habitats for wildlife.

The county town of Oakham is the administrative and commercial centre of Rutland. It is known for its historic architecture, including Oakham Castle, one of the best-preserved Norman halls in England. Uppingham is another notable town, famous for its public school and its charming market square. Rutland is also dotted with picturesque villages, each with its own unique character, often featuring traditional stone-built houses and historic churches.

Rutland has a rich history that dates back to the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, with numerous historical sites and buildings. The county maintains a strong sense of identity and community, with local traditions and events celebrated throughout the year.

Agriculture plays a significant role in Rutland's economy, with arable farming, livestock, and sheep farming being prominent. The county has a growing tourism sector, driven by its natural beauty, historic sites, and Rutland Water, which attracts visitors for outdoor activities such as sailing, birdwatching, and cycling.

Rutland is home to a variety of wildlife, supported by its diverse habitats, including woodlands, grasslands, and wetlands. The county's natural environment is actively managed and conserved through various local initiatives and organisations. Conservation efforts in Rutland are particularly focused on maintaining and enhancing the quality of its natural landscapes and supporting biodiversity across the network of nature reserves.

Rutland may be the smallest county in England, yet it boasts one of the best nature reserves in the entire country - **Rutland Water**, the focus of much of the county's conservation efforts. For such a diverse, beautiful and excitingly wild place, Rutland Water is relatively young. The reservoir, one of the largest man-made bodies of water in Western Europe, covers over four-square miles, and the path around the edge is 23 miles long. When full, it has enough water for about three years of drought, supplying mainly the east of England.

6.3   Leicester City and Urban Towns and Settlements

Across the Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy area, the urban environment is a complex and dynamic mosaic of built infrastructure, green and blue spaces, and natural habitats. In Leicester City and the urban towns and settlements, this mosaic provides unique opportunities and challenges for biodiversity conservation and the enhancement of ecosystem services.

Green spaces such as parks, gardens, urban woodland, and nature reserves serve as vital connections and refuges for biodiversity, supporting a rich variety of plant and animal species. These areas are essential for maintaining ecological networks within urban environments, acting as vital corridors that connect isolated patches of habitat. This connectivity is crucial for the movement of species, genetic diversity, and the overall health of urban ecosystems.

In Leicester City, for example, iconic green spaces like **Watermead Park**, **Abbey Park**, **Victoria Park**, and **Aylestone Meadows** provide not only recreational opportunities, but also important habitats for species ranging from common urban wildlife like foxes and songbirds, to fewer common species such as bats and rare invertebrates. The presence of ancient and veteran trees, wildflower meadows, woody scrub and wetland areas within these parks adds to the mosaic of habitats increasing biodiversity and opportunities for nature to flourish within the urban landscape.

Urban gardens, allotments, cemeteries and community-managed green spaces also play a crucial role in enhancing urban biodiversity. These areas often feature a mix of native and ornamental plants, which provide food and shelter for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives contribute to local food production, reduce food miles, and support pollinator populations - essential for domestic food security. These also provide valuable opportunities for people to experience and engage with nature on their doorsteps.

Blue spaces, encompassing rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands, are equally significant in shaping the urban ecological fabric of Leicester City and the surrounding towns. The River Soar, flowing through the heart of Leicester, is a key blue corridor that supports a range of aquatic and semi-aquatic species. Its banks and associated wetlands are home to species such as kingfishers, otters, and various fish, aquatic invertebrates and amphibian species, which rely on the clean water and riparian habitats for survival.

In addition to the River Soar, urban water bodies such as canals, reservoirs, and artificial lakes provide critical habitats for aquatic and bird species. The Grand Union Canal, for instance, not only serves as a recreational waterway but also as a habitat corridor, facilitating the movement of species between different parts of the city and beyond. These blue spaces are particularly important for species that are otherwise isolated in urban settings.

Moreover, blue spaces contribute significantly to the overall health of urban ecosystems by regulating water flow, reducing the risk of urban flooding, and improving water quality through natural filtration processes. Wetlands and vegetated riparian zones act as natural buffers, absorbing excess nutrients and pollutants before they enter watercourses, especially crucial in urban areas.

Both green and blue spaces offer vital ecosystem services that contribute to the quality of life for urban residents. Trees and vegetation in parks and along streets help to capture carbon, mitigate the urban heat island effect[2], and improve air quality by filtering out pollutants. Similarly, blue spaces provide cooling effects and help regulate local climates, which is increasingly important in the face of climate change.

These natural areas also offer cultural and recreational services, providing spaces for outdoor activities, relaxation, and community engagement. Urban residents benefit from the mental and physical health advantages of having accessible nature close to where they live and work. The presence of water bodies and well-maintained parks can enhance property values, attract tourism, and foster a sense of place and community identity.

Despite the numerous benefits of green and blue spaces, urban areas like Leicester face significant pressures that threaten the integrity of these natural ecosystems. Urbanisation, with its associated infrastructure development, often leads to the loss, fragmentation, and degradation of habitats. This fragmentation can isolate populations of wildlife, making them more vulnerable to environmental changes and reducing overall biodiversity.

Urban areas are also hotspots for pollution, including air, water, and noise pollution, with proven detrimental effects on both human health and ecosystem functioning. Water bodies in urban areas are particularly susceptible to pollution from sewage overflows and storm water runoff, carrying pollutants from roads, gardens, and industrial areas into rivers and lakes, degrading water quality and harming aquatic life.

Climate change exacerbates these pressures, leading to more frequent and severe weather events such as heatwaves, storms, and flooding. These changes pose additional risks to both natural habitats and the built environment, requiring adaptive management strategies to ensure the resilience of urban ecosystems.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a thoughtful and integrated approach to urban planning and management. Nature-based solutions, such as the restoration of rivers and wetlands, the creation of green roofs and walls, and the expansion of urban green spaces, can enhance the resilience of urban ecosystems and mitigate the impacts of urbanisation and climate change.

In Leicester, initiatives like the High Quality Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) implemented in new developments helps manage storm water runoff, reducing the risk of flooding while also providing habitats for wildlife. Similarly, the redevelopment of brownfield sites offers opportunities to create new green and blue spaces that contribute to urban biodiversity and the wellbeing of residents.

Leicester City and its surrounding towns can create a more sustainable, resilient, and biodiverse urban environment, where nature and people co-exist harmoniously. This approach not only conserves and enhances the natural heritage of the area but also ensures that urban ecosystems continue to provide essential services to current and future generations.

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[2] An urban heat island is a localised area of increased temperature (compared to surrounding rural areas) in a dense, urban area. It is caused by human-made structures, like buildings and roads, absorbing and retaining heat more than natural surfaces, such as grass and forests.

6.4 Open Mosaic Sites

Open mosaic habitats are complex and diverse habitats that emerge on post-industrial or urban land, such as former quarries, brownfields, or derelict urban areas. These habitats are characterised by a mix of bare ground and quick-to-establish plant life known as early successional communities. They include grassland, scrub and wetland areas all in close proximity. They are particularly significant for supporting a variety of species that are adapted to these unique conditions, including rare invertebrates, birds, and plants that thrive in nutrient-poor or disturbed soils.

In Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, open mosaic habitats are often found in areas that have undergone industrial decline or urban redevelopment. Notable examples include parts of the National Forest and former coalfield sites, where natural regeneration has led to the development of these valuable habitats. The **Cossington Meadows** nature reserve and areas around Coalville are examples where open mosaic habitats have been allowed to develop, supporting a wide range of species, and contributing to local biodiversity.

These habitats are crucial for biodiversity because they provide niches for species that are not typically found in more stable or less disturbed environments. In Leicestershire, these areas are important for species such as the **Dingy Skipper Butterfly**, various species of bees and wasps, and pioneer plant species. The diversity within open mosaic habitats also supports a high number of invertebrate species, which in turn provide food for birds and other wildlife.

Open mosaic habitats are recognised as a priority habitat under UK conservation frameworks. In Leicestershire, they are often included within designated Local Wildlife Sites and are subject to conservation efforts aimed at preserving their unique ecological character. These habitats are particularly valued for their role in supporting species that are declining elsewhere in the landscape, making their preservation a key aspect of local biodiversity strategies.

In addition to its scientific significance, the geological diversity of the area serves as a testament to the interconnectedness of natural processes, economic activities, and cultural heritage.

Image courtesy of NatureSpot
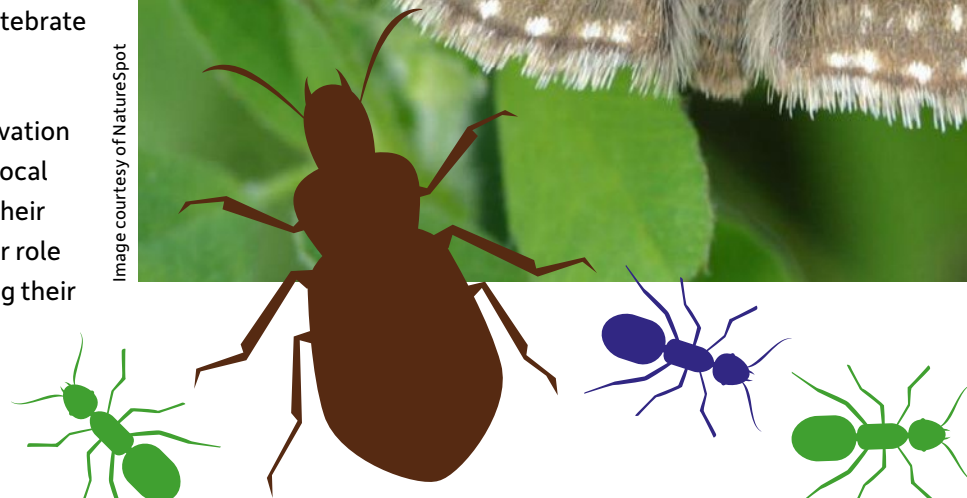
Several quarries are particularly known for their extraction of limestone, granite, and other minerals. These quarries are typically situated in rural areas, often in proximity to key geological features. Notable examples include quarries around Mountsorrel, known for its granite, and **Ketton** in Rutland, renowned for its limestone.

Mountsorrel Quarry, located in Charnwood, Leicestershire, is one of the largest granite quarries in Europe. The surrounding area is characterised by nationally important woodland, heathland, and grassland habitats. **Ketton Quarry**, situated in Rutland, is a limestone quarry surrounded by arable fields, hedgerows, and small woodlands, contributing to a varied landscape. **Bardon Hill Quarry**, also in Leicestershire, lies near one of the highest points in the county, in a landscape that includes scarce and important heathland and ancient woodland.

To boost biodiversity, quarries in Leicestershire and Rutland can be transformed and managed to create a valuable mosaic of habitats once extraction ends. The steep walls and deep pits can be filled with water to create lakes and wetlands and, when properly managed, can create valuable wetland habitats for amphibians, birds, and aquatic plants. Surrounding areas can be reforested or converted into grasslands and heathlands, supporting a wide variety of species. The use of native plants in the restoration process ensures the returned land is suitable for local wildlife. Native plants help prevent soil erosion, maintain local water quality, and provide habitat and food sources for native species.

Adopting a phased approach to this restoration work means sections of the land can be returned more quickly to a natural state, allowing various habitats to recover sooner. Over time, with a well-implemented restoration plan and effective post-restoration monitoring, these transformed quarries can serve as critical habitats for wildlife, contribute to regional ecological networks, and even become important recreational and educational sites for local communities, all while enhancing landscape connectivity and resilience against climate change.

6.5 Cultural and Heritage Assets

The rich historical and cultural heritage of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland is deeply intertwined with the natural landscape. These areas are home to numerous historic monuments, battlefields, ridge and furrow landscapes, and registered parks and gardens, each contributing to the region's unique character and biodiversity. Conserving and integrating these features into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is essential not only for safeguarding our cultural heritage but also for enhancing the ecological value of the landscape.

Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland boast a wealth of **historic monuments** that reflect the region's long and varied history. These include ancient earthworks, medieval castles, historic churches, and industrial relics. Many of these monuments are designated as Scheduled Monuments, offering them legal protection due to their national importance.

These sites often serve as important habitats for wildlife, with the surrounding landscapes providing undisturbed environments that support a variety of species. For example, old stone structures can host bat colonies, while the grounds around ancient monuments often support rare plant species and invertebrates. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy recognises the need to protect these historic sites from degradation while promoting their ecological enhancement through careful management and habitat creation.

The counties are also the site of several **historic battlefields**, most notably the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, which marked the end of the Wars of the Roses and the beginning of the Tudor dynasty. The Battle of Bosworth site is registered as a Battlefield under the Historic England register, highlighting its national significance.

Farmers and landowners also thought nature is important for our sense of heritage and identity.

These battlefields are not only of great historical interest but also represent significant open landscapes that have remained largely unchanged for centuries. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will consider the preservation of these battlefields as part of the overall strategy, ensuring that any interventions enhance their ecological value without compromising their historical integrity.

The **ridge and furrow** landscapes of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland are some of the best-conserved examples of medieval ploughing systems in the country. These landscapes, characterised by parallel ridges and troughs, were created by the methodical ploughing of fields with oxen during the medieval period.

Today, many ridge and furrow fields have been agriculturally improved, and would benefit from efforts to restore species rich elements. Those that remained undisturbed provide valuable grassland habitats that support a wide range of species, including wildflowers, birds, and insects.

They are also a visual reminder of the region's agricultural history. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will encourage conservation of these landscapes as part of the overall strategy to maintain biodiversity, recognising their dual value as both cultural and ecological assets.

Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland are home to **several registered parks and gardens**, which are designated for their historical significance and landscape design. These include grand estates, such as **Belvoir Castle** and **Bradgate Park**, **Burley on the Hill** and **Exton Park**, as well as smaller, locally important gardens.

These parks and gardens are not only of cultural importance but also serve as important green spaces that contribute to local biodiversity. Many contain ancient woodlands, veteran trees, ponds, and flower meadows, all of which provide habitats for a variety of species. This strategy promotes the continued management and enhancement of these areas to support both their heritage and ecological function.

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6.6 Farming Landscapes

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland sit at the heart of agricultural England, and rightly enjoy enviable reputations as being among the leading 'foody' counties of Britain, with a profusion of specialties.

There is a huge level of diversity to Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland's agricultural landscape, from the volcanic rock and mudstones of Charnwood Forest in North West Leicestershire, to the flat, wide plains in the centre of the county, the rolling, heavy slopes along the Leicestershire and Rutland border, to the sandstones and ironstones in the west, mudstones in the middle and Oolitic limestones in the east of Rutland, where today successful vineyards are even being established on southward facing slopes.

Therefore, Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland sit in prime, traditional 'mixed farming' country where all manner of agricultural enterprises have the potential to thrive. Livestock farming dominates the steep, rain-soaked west while the dryer, flat arable and horticultural lands lie to the east.

a) Soil health

England has a great profusion of soil types and Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland are no different. The area's predominant soil type is a **loamy clay** (representative of some 20% of England). This can be considered 'slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich', that is to say: the soils in Leicestershire and Rutland can be challenging to farm, but in a kind weather season have the potential to be fertile and productive. In a more challenging weather season, they have the potential to be very difficult indeed, with a risk of overland flow and run-off in heavy rainfall situations, if left bare.

In general, agricultural soils in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland are classified as '**Grade 3**' ('good to moderate') in terms of productivity. Some areas are 'Grade 2' (very good') - in particular to the south of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and between Loughborough and Melton Mowbray, while there are also some corridors and pockets of 'Grade 4' (poor) land, especially along the routes of some of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland's watercourses, which are often flooded.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland are among the most densely cropped and most densely livestocked areas in England, reflecting its mixed farm heritage and relatively productive land.

> **If there is collaborative working with neighbouring land owners, this will develop the motivation needed to implement nature recovery strategies.**
>
> (Farmer)

b) Farming composition

There are **2,167 farm holdings** in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (2021) covering a total of 190,000 hectares of farmed land, making the average farm size some 88 hectares (exactly matching the national average). The number of farm holdings has decreased by around 25% since 1995, reflecting the general trend towards consolidation in UK farming.

The largest single categorisation of farms in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland is 'lowland grazing' (40%) followed by 'cereals' (23%) and 'general cropping' (16%). However, by far the largest agricultural land use is 'cereals' (94,845 hectares) followed by 'lowland grazing' (32,489 hectares) and 'mixed' (26,701 hectares). There are some 7,500 hectares of farm woodland, with owned versus tenanted land at a roughly 2:1 ratio.

Across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, there are some **295,000 sheep**, **105,000 cattle and 55,000 pigs**. There are also more than **2.5 million kept poultry**, pretty evenly split between laying hens and broiler chickens.

Around **5,300 people** are considered to be a part of the **agricultural workforce**, with 3,600 of them 'family' members working either full or part-time. Family farms are, as across the nation, the backbone of farming in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

In overview, there is a significant element of **cereal and general cropping** in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (wheat being the predominant crop at some 50%), as well as beef, dairy and sheep production. There are also significant minority interests in **pig and poultry production**. There is, however, very little in the way of horticultural production, with fruit and vegetable farming occurring in better soil conditions elsewhere in the country.
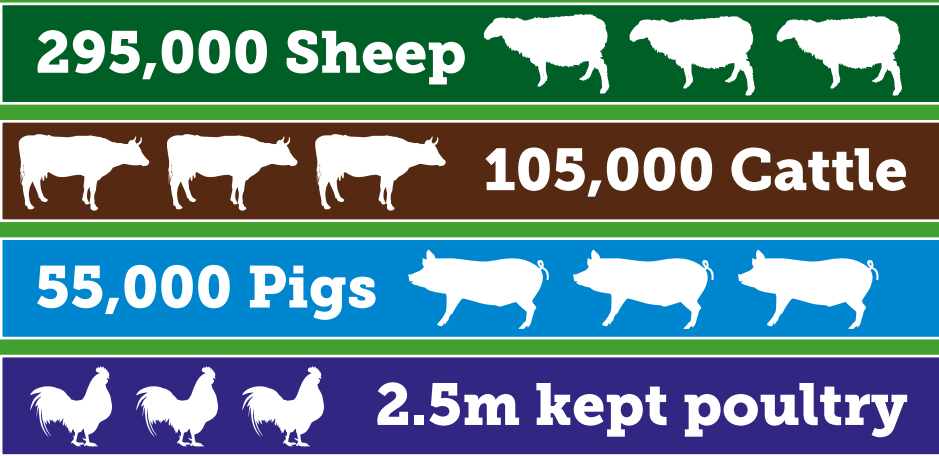
The largest single categorisation of farms in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

40% Lowland Grazing	23% Cereals	16% General Cropping

The largest agricultural land use

Cereals 94,845 Hectares	Lowland Grazing 32,489 Hectares	Mixed 26,701 Hectares

Across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland there are some

295,000 Sheep

105,000 Cattle

55,000 Pigs

2.5m kept poultry

As across most of the UK, there is a wide range of farming practice in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. However, in general a distinction should probably be made between those sectors (often more 'intensive') such as pigs, poultry and dairy where data, innovation and attention to detail are commonplace, and the more traditional sectors such as red meat and general cropping where practices may be much the same as in decades past.

However, in general British farmers are on a journey towards more sustainable, high welfare production (from an already high base) in areas such as soil health ('regenerative farming'), use of technology (such as drones, satellite data and AI) and generation of renewable energy on-farm, to name but three.

In the last seventy years, farming has changed significantly across the UK. As the nation seeks economies of scale in its food production, there has, in general, been a move away from smaller-scale traditional mixed farming toward mechanisation, specialisation and consolidation. In large part this has been driven by government imperatives concerning food security during and following the Second World War, with many government policies and incentives (both outside and inside the EU's Common Agriculture Policy or CAP) driving so-called 'intensification', most obviously manifested in measures such as the clearing of hedgerows to create larger, more efficient fields or the increased use of agro-chemicals and fertilisers to boost production. These policies, underpinning the cheap food culture demanded by consumers, have undoubtedly played their part in the decline of biodiversity across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, as across much of the UK and the world.

However, recent decades have seen increasing efforts at reversing these trends, both from individual farmers and encouragement by EU and now UK schemes under the CAP and **Environmental Land Management** (ELM). In the 2010s around 70% of farmed English land was in some form of '**agri-environment scheme**' (AES), and although confusion in the delivery of these schemes in the late 2010s saw that number decline significantly, it is now once again on the rise. For example, hedgerow plantings are at record levels across the country.

While farmers have always been required to respond and adhere to government policy, it must be recognised in the context of this strategy, that the production of food materials is an increasingly devalued practice, from which it is ever harder to draw a profit.

## 6.7   Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes

The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes initiative has been central to conservation efforts for over 15 years. Five areas of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland are recognised as particularly valuable for wildlife thanks to the quality of existing habitats, the concentration of important sites and the opportunities for habitat creation within and around them.

These landscapes describe focal areas for habitat restoration, where active conservation measures have helped to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and these areas will be referred to later in the opportunities for nature recovery, section 9.

The initiative prioritises reconnecting fragmented habitats, enabling wildlife to move more freely across the landscape, and making ecosystems more resilient to the pressures of climate change and development. This approach also involves working with local communities, landowners, and partners to promote sustainable land use and ensure long-term conservation success.

By building on this foundation, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy aims to expand these efforts, creating larger, better-connected landscapes that support a wider range of species.

Figure 4: Map of the Living Landscapes for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
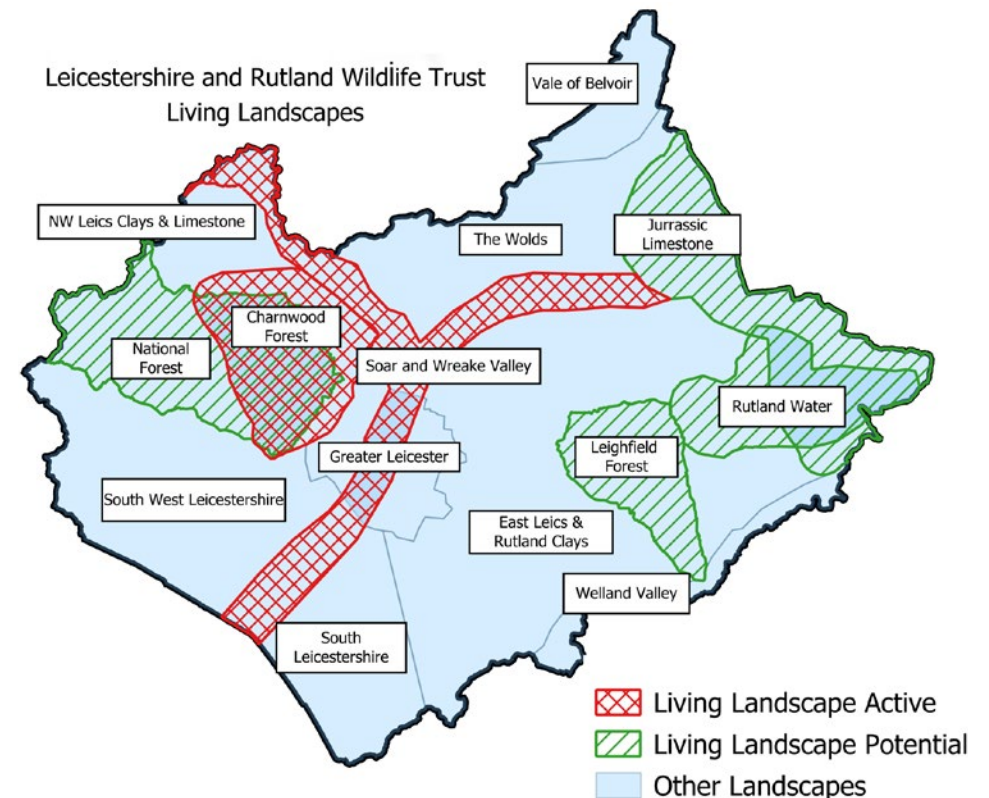
a) Charnwood Forest and the adjoining National Forest

Covering around 16,600 hectares, the **Charnwood Forest Living Landscape** is unique in the East Midlands. Craggy hilltops, dry stone walls, fast flowing streams, ancient woodlands, and open views define the area. The volcanic geology, comprising some of England's oldest rocks, combined with the dynamic relationship between people and natural forces is the key to this landscape and its wildlife.

By the late eighteenth century, Charnwood Forest probably looked like a small, wetter, version of Dartmoor. Remnants of this historic scenery are preserved at Bradgate Park, a medieval deer park. There would have been wide open spaces of rough grazing land, boggy in places, with patches of heather and bilberry. The Enclosure Act of 1808 changed the landscape, which was drained, ploughed, and replaced with small fields bounded by hedges and walls. Wildlife was still abundant but became increasingly threatened in the twentieth century by intensive land use.

The area now has the highest density of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in Leicestershire and Rutland. Charnwood Lodge, Charley Woods, Ulverscroft and Lea Meadows are some of our most precious habitats in this area.

Covering 200 square miles, half of which lies in western Leicestershire, the National Forest is an ambitious project to create a new forest in the Midlands, for the enjoyment and benefit of all. Established in the early 1990s, the National Forest stretches west from Charnwood Forest to the border with Derbyshire. Public funding has seen the creation of over 8,500 hectares of forest habitats, including over 2,500 hectares of non-woodland. Forest creation continues to be a key element of the Government's approach to meeting the challenges of climate change, with funding increasing in recent years to reflect this.

b) Leighfield Forest

The **Leighfield Forest Living Landscape** is a roughly triangular area covering the high ground straddling the Leicestershire and Rutland border between Tilton-on-the-Hill, Oakham, and Eyebrook Reservoir.

It is a well-wooded area of high nature conservation, landscape and historical importance. With 23 ancient woodlands[3] - 16 of which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - spanning 594 hectares, it is one of the prime woodland biodiversity areas in the East Midlands. The area includes the entire Eyebrook catchment, as well as lengths of the Chater and Gwash rivers, all of which feed the River Welland.

As well as its wildlife, the area has great historical value. It was once part of the Forest of Rutland - a Royal hunting area created by Henry I soon after 1100 AD. The forest originally covered the southern half of Rutland together with a small part of Leicestershire. Later, following the disafforestation of the Leicestershire portion in 1235 and most of the eastern half of Rutland in 1299, the remainder became known as Leighfield Forest. Charles I removed the Royal protection on the forest in 1630 and the land was subsequently sold. The boundaries of the historic Leighfield Forest fall within the current Living Landscape.

Factors such as changes in woodland and agricultural practice mean the level of biodiversity in the forest declined during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Work is taking place to better conserve the forest, for both its biodiversity and heritage interest. This work includes woodland restoration and changes in land management practices to improve the quality of the watercourses and farmland for wildlife.

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[3] English Nature's Ancient Woodland Inventory - Everett and Robinson 1990

c) Soar and Wreake Floodplain

The **Soar and Wreake Living Landscape** covers the extensive river corridors and associated floodplains of Leicestershire's two principal rivers, the Soar and the Wreake.

The River Soar rises in the south of Leicestershire and flows slowly northwards through a shallow valley. Fed by several streams and smaller rivers, it flows through the City of Leicester growing rapidly in size before joining with the River Trent on the Nottinghamshire border. The River Wreake, the main tributary of the Soar, flows from the West of Melton Mowbray towards the village of Cossington where the rivers join together, forming an extensive network of valuable freshwater and riparian habitats for the people and wildlife of Leicestershire.

The river valleys have changed dramatically over several thousand years, facing historic and modern pressures, each cumulatively contributing to an ever more degraded landscape for nature. Major issues have included canalisation, widespread dredging, increasingly intensive farming, extensive development within the floodplain and pollution, all of which have had a devastating impact on local wildlife.

d) Rutland Limestone (Jurassic limestone Living Landscape)

The **Jurassic Limestone Living Landscape** extends along the eastern side of Rutland from Ketton in the south up towards Waltham-on-the-Wolds in northeast Leicestershire. It is part of a much bigger Lincolnshire and Rutland Limestone Natural Area.

The underlying geology is 'Oolitic' limestone. This is made up of small spheres which were formed when calcium carbonate was deposited on the surface of sand grains rolled by wave action under a shallow sea during the Jurassic period.

Soils derived from this rock are lime rich and give rise to diverse grasslands with a range of characteristic plants such as Common Rock-rose and Tor-grass. This grassland is now confined to a few small remnants mainly associated with former quarries, including Bloody Oaks, Ketton and Stonesby Quarry nature reserves, as well as roadside verges – many of which are Local Wildlife Sites.

Other important habitats include arable field margins where the free draining lime rich soils are good for arable plants such as **Venus's-looking glass, Round-leaved Fluellen, and Night-flowering Catchfly**.

e) Rutland Water

Rutland Water Nature Reserve holds significant designations, including Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), and Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. It is renowned for its outstanding populations of wintering waterfowl and serves as the site of the successful Rutland Osprey Project. This project, led by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT) in partnership with Anglian Water, has played a crucial role in reintroducing breeding ospreys to the region, marking a key achievement in UK species recovery efforts.

The reserve regularly hosts over 20,000 wintering wetland birds, including internationally important populations of gadwall and shoveler, as well as nationally significant numbers of other ducks, grebes, and swans. The diversity of migrating waders using the reserve is particularly impressive for an inland location, while the growing numbers of breeding waterfowl, waders, and passerines are increasingly important. Additionally, large wintering gull roosts have become a prominent feature, with recent counts recording over 50,000 individuals, primarily **Black-headed Gulls**.

Owned by Anglian Water and managed alongside the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the reserve features a variety of wetland habitats on the western end of the reservoir, including lagoons, reedbeds, marshlands, and wet grasslands. Other habitats such as woodlands, scrub, and species-rich grasslands also support a wide range of breeding birds and invertebrates.

Monitoring of the Ramsar, SPA, and SSSI conditions is primarily conducted through monthly Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS), ongoing since 1975. The Reserve Management Plan outlines additional annual surveys, covering species such as ospreys, water voles, and seabirds, along with habitat-specific assessments of grasslands, trees, and invertebrate populations to ensure effective habitat management.

In summary, landscape-scale conservation efforts highlight the importance of well-managed habitats in supporting biodiversity recovery. It is crucial to examine the current state of nature across the strategy area, identifying both the challenges and opportunities for biodiversity restoration. Understanding the broader ecological context helps guide efforts to protect and enhance natural habitats across the strategy area.

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7. State of Nature

7.1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, the UK has experienced a significant decline in biodiversity across most species' taxonomy groups, reflecting a broader trend of ecological degradation driven by human activity. This decline is particularly evident in mammals, birds, amphibians, invertebrates, and fish, with many species now at risk of local extinction.

The **State of Nature 2023** report reveals that over 26% of terrestrial mammals in the UK are facing the threat of extinction. Iconic species such as the **Hazel Dormouse** and the **Water Vole** are among those that have seen sharp declines due to habitat loss, predation by invasive species, and changes in land management. The **European Hedgehog**, a species once commonly found across the countryside, has declined by more than 50% in rural areas over recent decades. These declines are linked to factors such as intensive farming, the loss of hedgerows, and increased pesticide use, which reduce the availability of food and shelter.

Birds are one of the most severely impacted groups, with 43% of species facing risk of extinction. Species like the **Turtle Dove** and **Curlew** have seen catastrophic declines due to habitat destruction, agricultural intensification, and hunting during migration. The Turtle Dove population has decreased by a staggering 94% since 1995. In contrast, urban-adapted birds such as the **Peregrine Falcon** have flourished, benefiting from the availability of nesting sites on tall buildings.

Invertebrate populations have also shown worrying declines. On average, invertebrate species are found in 13% fewer places than in 1970, with pollinators like bees, hoverflies, and moths suffering even larger reductions. Pollinator species have decreased by 18% on average, while crop pest control invertebrates, such as the **2-Spot Ladybird**, have declined by more than 34%. This decline poses a serious threat to ecosystem services such as pollination and pest control.

Freshwater habitats are particularly vulnerable, with species such as the **European Eel** and **Atlantic Salmon** facing dramatic population declines. The European Eel has seen a 95% decrease in its numbers due to overfishing, habitat degradation, and migration barriers. Amphibians like the **Great Crested Newt** are similarly affected by pollution and habitat loss, exacerbating the pressures on these already fragile populations.

The main drivers of biodiversity loss in the UK are habitat destruction from agricultural intensification, urban development, pollution, and climate change. Unsustainable fishing practices and marine development also contribute to declines in coastal and marine species. Less than half of the UK's biodiversity remains, with only 7% of woodlands and 25% of peatlands in a healthy ecological state.

Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland cover over **255,000 hectares** of land. According to the most recent data provided by Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Record Centre, approximately 7% of the land in is designated for nature conservation, encompassing around **15,000 hectares**. These areas, protected under various designations serve as critical habitats for biodiversity and include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Regionally Important Geology Sites (RIGs) and irreplaceable habitats such as Ancient Woodland.

7.2 Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map is a crucial component of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, providing a detailed, visual representation of the most important areas for nature within Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland.

Figure 5: Image of Local Habitat Map showing the Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity
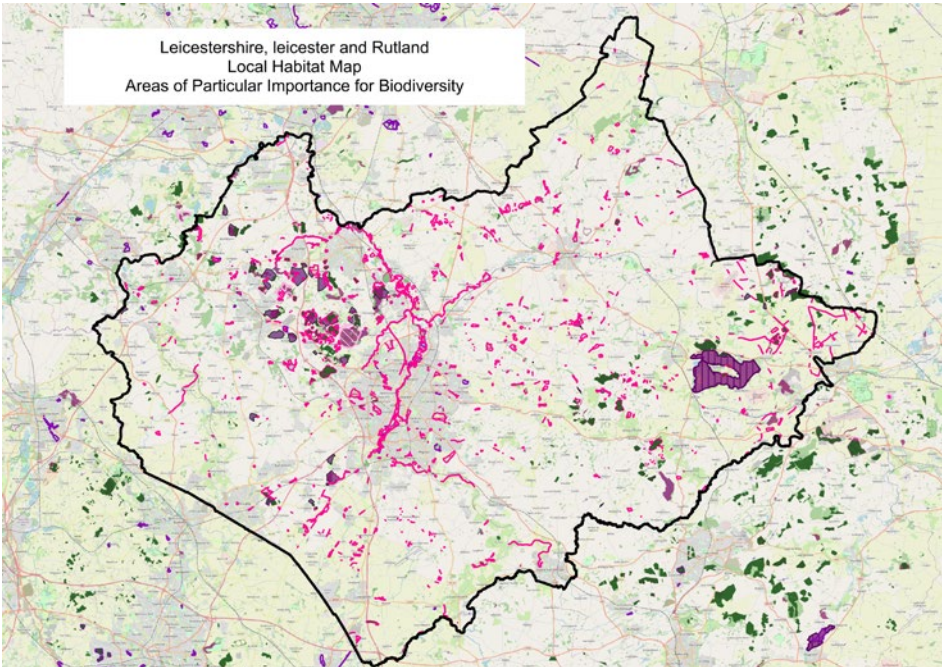
The Local Habitat Map can be viewed online: https://haveyoursay.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy-local-habitat-map

The map shows the existing **Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)** and acts as a foundation for identifying opportunities for nature recovery. The map incorporates legally protected designated areas and irreplaceable habitats as outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework.

Figure 6: Table showing the number of designated sites and irreplaceable habitats, and the approximate area in hectares they cover.

Designation Type	Count	Description	Approx Area (Hectares)
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	1	River Mease	23
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	4	2 ecological 2 ecological/geological	593
Special Protection Area (SPA)	1	Rutland Water	1,225
Ramsar Site	1	Rutland Water	1,225
Irreplaceable Habitat (Ancient Woodlands)	500+	Count includes existing AW and those being assessed for AW status	2,679
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	98	76 biodiversity, 14 geological, 8 geological and biodiversity	5,136
Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	1176	1176 notified and 1353 candidate sites	Notified 4053
Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)	60	60 confirmed and 10 candidate sites	Confirmed 1829
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	26		345
Irreplaceable Habitat (Lowland Fens)	254		97.5
Irreplaceable Habitat (Ancient Trees)	c1814		

The Local Habitat Map is an essential tool for local government decision-makers, developers, farmers and landowners, and conservationists. By visualising the existing landscape, the map supports informed decision-making and fosters collaboration towards nature recovery goals.

The Local Habitat Map is a dynamic representation of the area, serving as a blueprint for restoring and enhancing biodiversity. It plays a central role in shaping the **Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB)** and the Priorities and Measures required to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, helping to create a more connected and resilient natural environment.

The following sections describe the different habitats and species found in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland.

7.3   UK Habitats of Principal Importance

UK Habitats of Principal Importance, also known as Priority Habitats, are those identified as being the most threatened and in need of conservation efforts under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP), see Appendix C 2.a and C 2.b. Following the publication of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, these habitats are legally recognised as requiring protection and restoration in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The NERC Act specifically mandates public bodies and decision-makers to have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity, including these priority habitats.

There are 56 Priority Habitats in the UK, ranging from woodlands and wetlands to grasslands, heathlands, and coastal habitats. Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland are home to 19 of these priority habitats, supporting a wide range of species, including many that are rare or under threat. They provide essential ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, and water purification, while also contributing to human well-being and sustaining agricultural systems.

These habitats are recognised for their high conservation value, not just for the rare species they support, but for the broader ecosystem services they provide. Many of these habitats are under threat from human activities such as development, pollution, invasive non-native species, pests, disease unsustainable agricultural practices, and climate change, making their conservation a priority for biodiversity strategies at national and local levels. The protection and enhancement of pressures these habitats are key objectives within the UK's biodiversity commitments, including Biodiversity 2020 and subsequent nature recovery initiatives.

While there are 19 UK Habitats of Principal Importance present in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, the region supports a wide range of other habitats that also hold significant ecological value. These include urban environments like walls, gardens, and allotments, as well as managed landscapes such as plantations and ornamental parks. Each of these habitats, though not classified as priorities, plays an essential role in supporting biodiversity and contributing to ecological networks.

Efforts to conserve and restore these habitats involve collaboration between government agencies, landowners, conservation organisations, and local communities, all working together to ensure that these vital ecosystems can continue to thrive and support wildlife for generations to come.

For more information on these habitats see the Biodiversity Action Plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland 2016-2026 and the Biodiversity Action Plan for Leicester 2021-2031: Appendix C.

7.4 Freshwater and Wetland Habitats

Freshwater and wetland habitats of principal importance Include rivers, streams and canals, lakes and reservoirs, lowland fens, reedbeds, purple moor-grass and rush pastures, and ponds.

Rivers, canals and streams are the backbone of freshwater ecosystems. These habitats support a range of aquatic plants and animals, providing critical breeding grounds and feeding areas. The River Mease is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to its importance for species like the **Spined Loach** and **White-clawed Crayfish**, both of which have experienced significant declines due to pollution and habitat degradation. Efforts to restore riparian habitats along rivers and streams have resulted in the return of species such as Otters and Water Voles to areas where they were had once previously disappeared. Exact figures for river habitats are variable, but rivers in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland span across hundreds of kilometres.

Image courtesy of NatureSpot

> **I survey wildlife – I'm currently trying to find habitat and traces of water vole.**
>
> (Leicester resident)

Image courtesy of NatureSpot

Seasonally, waterlogged grasslands found alongside rivers and streams create **floodplain grazing marshes**, also referred to as **floodplain meadows** which are valuable for both biodiversity and agriculture, supporting a wide range of wetland birds and acting as buffers for floodwaters. Important areas of floodplain grazing marsh can be found in the Soar Valley and Welland Valley, some of which are designated as SSSIs. Floodplain grazing marsh is limited but covers around **200 hectares**. Birds like the **Lapwing** and **Snipe** benefit from these marshes, as do amphibians and invertebrates such as damselflies.

Lowland fens are waterlogged habitats rich in peat and organic matter. They support a variety of sedges, reeds, and mosses and are essential for flood control and water filtration. Fens can be found within designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and nature reserves such as Watermead Country Park. Lowland fens are fragmented and cover relatively small areas, estimated at around **50-100 hectares**. However, they are rich and diverse in many specialist plant and invertebrate species including **Marsh Stitchwort** and **Common Cottongrass**, which are under pressure from land drainage and development.

Ponds and lakes are widespread, with many man-made ponds supporting significant biodiversity. They are important for a variety of species, particularly amphibians, insects, and birds. Unlike the diverse flora of the fens, **reedbeds** are dominated by **Common Reed** and provide essential habitats for birds, amphibians, and invertebrates. Huge numbers of Starlings can be seen roosting in reedbeds during winter months, although the once common murmuration's of thousands of birds, are much smaller due to population declines. One of the most notable successes has been the **Rutland Osprey Project**, which has reintroduced ospreys to England after they had been extinct in the country for over 150 years. Since its inception in 1996, the project has seen over 200 chicks successfully fledged, with the ospreys now being a well-established breeding population at Rutland Water. This reintroduction is a shining example of successful species recovery and habitat management. Reedbeds are a favourite habitat for endangered species such as **European Eel**, which have seen their numbers decline by **approximately 95%**. They also provide vital nesting sites for some of the more elusive wetland birds, such as the **Eurasian Bittern**, **Water Rail**, **Cetti's Warbler** and **Marsh Harrier**. They are particularly valuable for species that rely on aquatic vegetation.
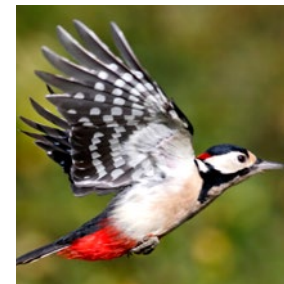
These freshwater and wetland habitats are vital for supporting biodiversity across the region, with designated sites playing a crucial role in their conservation. However, many of these habitats face threats from land drainage, pollution, and habitat fragmentation, making ongoing conservation efforts essential for their protection.

7.5 Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees

Woodland habitats of principle importance include ancient woodlands, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, wood pasture and parkland, traditional orchards, and hedgerows. Ancient and veteran trees are not a UK habitat of principle importance but are however defined as irreplaceable habitat in the National Planning Policy Framework. They are also recognised in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as priority habitats due to their importance for providing habitats for rare invertebrates, Bat roosts and nesting cavities for Owls and Woodpeckers.

Woodland habitats play a crucial role in the ecological landscape of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, encompassing a diverse array of forested areas that provide vital habitat for wildlife and contribute to the region's biodiversity, ecological and cultural significance. A table showing examples of important woodlands in the strategy area can be found in **Appendix C**.

Ancient woodlands, remnants of historical forest cover, provide important habitats for biodiversity. Existing woodlands, including **Charnwood Forest** and **Leighfield Forest**, are areas that have been continuously wooded for over 400 years and offer valuable ecosystems and corridors for wildlife. New plantations, established through sustainable forestry practices, contribute to flood management, carbon capture and storage and resource management.
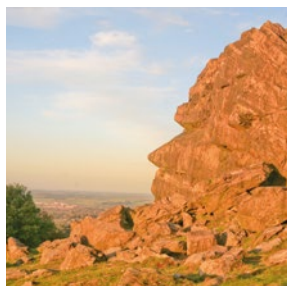
In urban environments, trees play crucial roles in air quality improvement and urban heat island mitigation. Urban forests, consisting of street trees and green spaces, are integral to urban ecosystem services and public wellbeing. Ancient trees, such as oaks and yews, serve as notable landmarks and repositories of ecological history.

Canopy cover across the area varies, with efforts underway to increase tree cover through planting initiatives and woodland restoration. However, threats such as habitat loss, disease, and climate change pose challenges to tree health and forest resilience.

[4] Designated as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) or Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)

Existing woodland cover within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area accounts for approximately 6% of the total land area, equivalent to 15,822 hectares. Trees outside woodland including orchards account for another 11,569 hectares taking the total tree canopy cover to 27,391 hectares and 10.74% of the total land area. This area is low compared to the national average of around 13% (Woodland Trust, 2021). This woodland cover comprises a variety of woodland types, with broadleaf woodland dominating at 65% (10,075 hectares), followed by coniferous woodland at 1,024 hectares, mixed woodland at 800 hectares, and the remaining hectares comprise of active management such as recently planted young trees.

Among the woodland habitats, **ancient woodland** stands out as irreplaceable, covering approximately 3,025 hectares within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area. These ancient woodlands[4] represent ecosystems with high conservation value due to their long-term ecological continuity and unique variety of species. However, the management status of these habitats varies, with 36% of designated plantations on ancient woodland sites and 64% of ancient semi-natural woodland sites currently under management. Efforts to improve the management of these irreplaceable habitats are crucial for safeguarding their ecological integrity and enhancing biodiversity conservation.

Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) are ancient woodlands that were replanted, often with non-native species like conifers. These sites are now undergoing restoration to reintroduce native species and return the habitat to its original state. PAWS offer great restoration opportunities, where native species like Oak and Hazel can be re-established. This creates a habitat for birds such as the **Wood Warbler** and mammals like the **Pipistrelle Bat**. As native trees return, the restoration of PAWS also enhances habitats for species such as **Purple Hairstreak Butterflies**, which depend on native oak trees for their life cycle.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland boast a significant amount of **priority woodland habitat** compared to other habitat types within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area. **lowland mixed deciduous** woodland, covering **9,894 hectares**, stands as the most extensive priority woodland habitat in the area, while **wet woodland** is a scarce and fragmented habitat, covering approximately 60 known sites and about **300 hectares** of land, it is primarily associated with floodplain wetland.
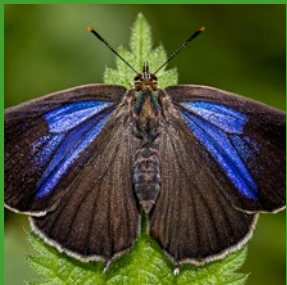
Image courtesy of NatureSpot

Notably, Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland also feature **4,500 hectares** of **parkland**, an estimated **20,000 mature trees**, including **1,800 ancient trees** and more than **17,000 km** of **hedgerow**, further enhancing the green infrastructure, and providing valuable ecological benefits and wildlife corridors which enable species movement and connections between woodlands and other priority habitats.

Woodlands are among the most biodiverse ecosystems, offering stable habitats for rare species. The **Willow Tit** dependent on wet woodland, has suffered a dramatic 94% decline due to habitat loss and competition from other species. The **Marsh Tit**, reliant on diverse woodland structures, has also experienced a 68% decline.
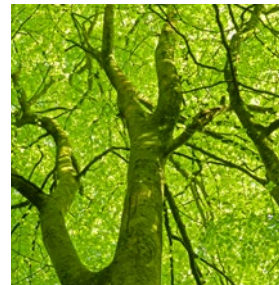
The **Hazel Dormouse** is extremely rare in the strategy area and has become a priority species for reintroduction. For its survival it requires well-managed, dense woodland but faces challenges from habitat fragmentation. The **Black Hairstreak Butterfly** found in **Blackthorn** scrub, is threatened by changes in scrub management, while the **White-letter Hairstreak** has been impacted by the loss of **Elm Trees** due to Dutch Elm Disease.

Woodland plants such as **Bluebell** and **Wood Anemone** thrive in undisturbed ancient woodlands but are vulnerable to habitat degradation and fragmentation.

Woodland habitats have been affected by agricultural expansion, urbanisation, **Deer** and **Grey Squirrel** pressures, invasive non-native species, disease, such as Ash Die-back. A decline in woodland management practices has led to darker and more simply structured woodlands which therefore support less biodiversity and provide fewer niches for specialised species.

Efforts to conserve and restore woodland habitats include the planting of new woodlands and the restoration of ancient woodlands. Initiatives such as the National Forest aim to expand woodland cover, while targeted management like coppicing helps preserve species diversity. Hedgerow restoration also enhances connectivity between fragmented woodlands.

85% of respondents would like to enjoy or access nature more often.

7.6 Grassland, Heathland and Shrub Habitats

Grassland habitats of principle importance comprises lowland calcareous grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, neutral lowland meadows and floodplain grazing marsh.

Grasslands are a vital component of the landscape in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, supporting a rich diversity of species and contributing significantly to the area's ecological health. The grasslands in these counties can be broadly categorised into neutral, acid, calcareous, and other specialised types such as lowland meadows and floodplain grazing marsh. These habitats are crucial for biodiversity, providing essential services such as pollination, carbon capture and storage, and serving as breeding grounds for a variety of fauna.

A table showing examples of important grasslands in the strategy area can be found in Appendix D.

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Image courtesy of NatureSpot

Neutral grasslands are typically found on soils with a neutral pH, supporting a diverse array of plant species. These grasslands are most prevalent in traditional hay meadows and pastures across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) data from 2016 indicates that approximately **2,550 hectares** of neutral grassland of UK BAP quality remain, although this has been in decline, especially outside protected sites. The loss of these grasslands underscores the importance of conservation efforts to protect and restore these valuable habitats.

Acid grasslands and heathlands are associated with poorer, more acidic soils, such as those found in Charnwood Forest. These habitats support a range of specialised flora and fauna adapted to the challenging ground conditions such as Adders and Palmate Newts. The area covered by acid grasslands and heathlands is less than **500 hectares**, primarily within the Charnwood Forest, and is also in decline. The importance of these habitats is recognised in their designation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), particularly due to the presence of unique species like Heather and Bilberry.

Image courtesy of NatureSpot
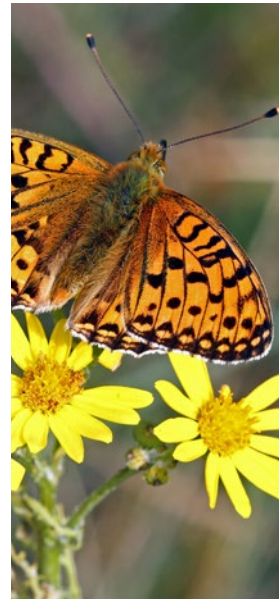
Calcareous grasslands, which develop over limestone and other calcium-rich substrates, are particularly notable in the eastern parts of the region, such as Rutland and around Ketton Quarry. These grasslands are among the most species-rich, supporting a variety of wildflowers, including orchids and **Rockrose** and rare butterflies such as **Grizzled Skipper** and **Dark Green Fritillary**. However, they are now largely confined to small patches, often on roadside verges and in quarries. The estimated extent of calcareous grasslands in the region is under **200 hectares**, highlighting the urgent need for targeted conservation.

Lowland meadows, characterised by their species-rich grasslands managed traditionally as hay meadows, are also present across the area, particularly in the Leicestershire Vales and the floodplains of the River Soar. These meadows are significant for their biodiversity, supporting a variety of invertebrates, birds, and wildflowers. The restoration and expansion of these meadows are critical for maintaining their ecological value, especially in the face of pressures from agricultural intensification and development.

Image courtesy of NatureSpot

Other grasslands such as floodplain grazing marshes are areas of periodically submerged grassland along rivers and streams, important for both agriculture and wildlife. In Leicestershire, the Soar Valley is a key area for these habitats. These marshes support a range of species, including waders like **Curlew** and **Lapwing** and contribute to flood management and water quality improvement. Efforts to restore and connect these habitats are vital for enhancing their ecological function and resilience.

Grasslands in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland are under significant threat, with many types in decline due to changes in land use and agricultural practices. There is urgent need for protection, restoration, and connectivity of these habitats. For instance, targeted actions such as appropriate grazing regimes, invasive species control, and habitat creation are crucial for preserving these landscapes. The integration of these efforts into broader conservation strategies will help ensure the long-term survival of these vital ecosystems.

74% of respondents were concerned a great deal about access to green spaces and nature.
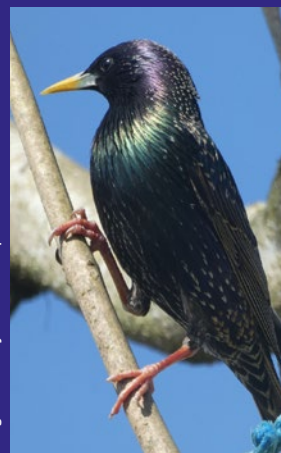
7.7   Urban

Image courtesy of NatureSpot

Urban areas, though often heavily modified by human activity, provide a mosaic of habitats that can support a surprising range of wildlife. Large parks such as Watermead Park, Bradgate Park, Abbey Park, and Burbage Common offer green oases for wildlife. These areas support **Hedgehogs**, **House sparrows**, and **Starlings**. Nationally, Starlings, once abundant, have seen a **66% decline** and House Sparrows have seen a **71% decline** since the 1970s, though urban populations are relatively stable compared to rural ones, likely due to the availability of food and nesting sites in cities.

Private spaces such as gardens and allotments provide significant biodiversity benefits, particularly for pollinators like bees and butterflies. Species such as the Hedgehog, which is now classified as vulnerable to extinction, and birds like the **Swift (which has declined by 58% since 1995)** benefit from urban gardens where food sources, shelter and nesting sites can be found. Gardens are also critical for invertebrates such as moths and butterflies, with urban areas now being hotspots for species like the **Holly Blue**.

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Image courtesy of NatureSpot

Street trees and roadside grass verges provide important habitats for species such as **Glow Worms**, **Ox-eye Daisy**, and **Bird's-foot Trefoil** (an important plant for species such as **Common Blue Butterflies**. Although difficult to quantify, the 2016 Biodiversity Action Plan estimates there are over **100km of verge** with a Wildlife Site designation, designated since 2000, and 4km designated as SSSI, providing a network of green corridors, which contribute to wider environmental benefits such as rainwater storage, pollination and buffering and protecting neighbouring habitats from run-off from vehicle pollution. In turn, street trees help moderate temperatures in urban heat islands, hold water in the soils, capture carbon, improve air quality and provide nesting sites for urban-adapted species.

Watercourses in urban areas, like the River Soar and the Oakham Canal, provide feeding and breeding sites for species such as Kingfishers, dragonflies, and Water Voles. Efforts to improve water quality and restore riparian vegetation through initiatives like river restoration, Natural Flood Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are crucial for maintaining these habitats.

Additionally, former industrial sites or disused land, often found along these watercourses (known as open mosaic habitats), support rare and specialist species like **Black Redstarts**, which have found new nesting opportunities in the post-industrial urban landscape. These areas often support rare plants and invertebrates, contributing to biodiversity even in heavily urbanised areas.

Churchyards and cemeteries are often undisturbed spaces can provide homes for species such as **Foxes**, Bats, internationally important lichens such as **Lasallia Pustulata** which can be found on gravestones and old buildings. These green pockets in the urban landscape can be extremely important for pollinators where they provide a rich diversity of wildflowers. The presence of mature trees in these areas enhances their value as biodiversity hotspots in urban landscapes.

Urban wildlife faces threats from habitat fragmentation, pollution, and development. However, there are growing opportunities to enhance urban biodiversity through green and blue infrastructure initiatives, wildlife-friendly gardening, and the expansion of urban trees and green spaces.

68% of respondents were very interested in helping wildlife in their garden.

7.8 Farmland
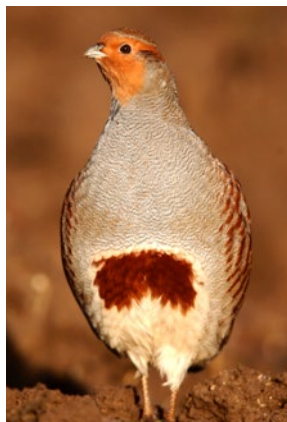
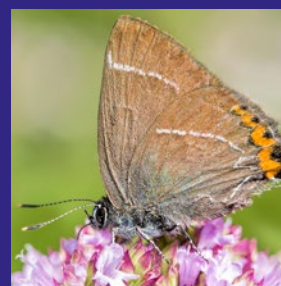Farmland in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland is a dominant land use and plays a vital role in supporting wildlife. Key farmland habitats include arable field margins, hedgerows, and traditional farm ponds. These habitats are crucial for sustaining biodiversity, particularly in areas of intensive agriculture.

Arable field margins consist of uncultivated strips of land between fields and hedgerows, providing shelter and food for a range of species. They are particularly important in intensively farmed landscapes where other natural habitats may be limited. These habitats are often part of Environmental Stewardship schemes, though they are rarely designated as standalone protected sites. Exact data on field margins is difficult to calculate, but they exist across hundreds of hectares within farming areas. Species benefiting from field margins include the **Grey Partridge**, **Skylark**, and **Yellowhammer** farmland birds that have seen dramatic declines in recent decades. Insects, such as bumblebees and butterflies, also use field margins for foraging, particularly wildflower-rich margins.

Hedgerows are critical wildlife corridors, allowing movement between fragmented habitats. They provide shelter, food, and nesting sites for many species, as well as acting as barriers that prevent soil erosion and support biodiversity. Many hedgerows in Leicestershire and Rutland are classified as important under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997, with some forming part of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). There are an estimated **17,000 km of hedgerows**, forming an extensive network across farmland. Hedgerows support **Hazel Dormice**, **Brown Hares**, and birds like the **Linnet** and **Tree Sparrow**. Insects such as the **White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly** also rely on hedgerows, particularly Elm-dominated ones.

Recent data estimates there are around **13,000** ponds across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. Farm ponds though small in size, are essential freshwater networks for supporting amphibians, invertebrates, and wetland plants, although many have been lost due to agricultural intensification, those that remain can be key biodiversity hotspots. Ponds on farmland are often included in agri-environment schemes but are rarely designated as protected sites unless part of a wider reserve. Farm ponds cover a small area, though they are widely scattered across the agricultural landscape. Ponds support species such as the Great Crested Newt, a priority species in the region, as well as amphibians like **Common Frogs** and **Common Toads**, and numerous invertebrates, including **Ruddy Darter Dragonflies** and **Banded Demoiselle Damselflies**.

> "**Its important to educate people, young and old about the value, intrigue and beauty of nature, and how to help it.**"
> (Charnwood resident)
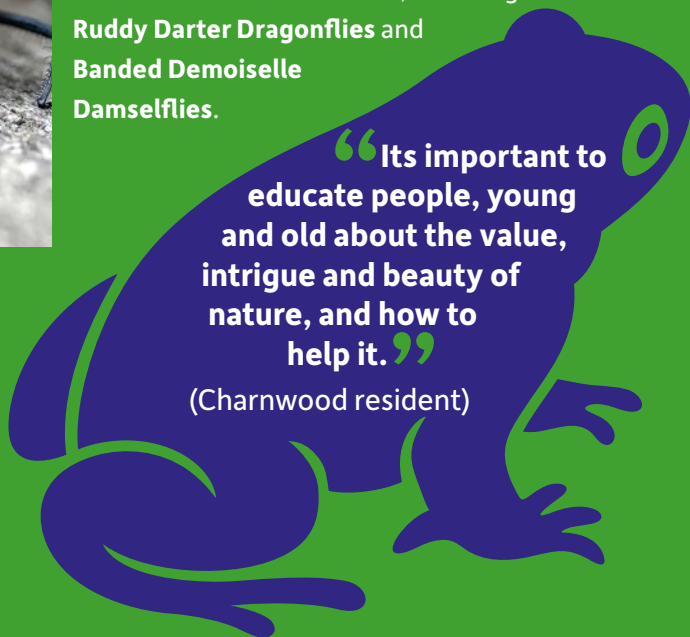
Lowland meadows and pastures cover approximately 2550 hectares, with good management they can become species-rich meadows which are vital for plants, pollinators, mammals, and birds. Traditional hay meadows and pastures, though in decline, support rare species such as the **Great Burnet** and **Green-winged Orchid**. Nationally, lowland meadow habitats have decreased significantly, and their restoration is a priority for enhancing biodiversity. In areas like the Soar Valley, floodplain grazing marshes are important habitats for wetland birds such as **Lapwings** and **Snipe**. These wetlands cover approximately **107 hectares** and provide flood mitigation services and support a large number of invertebrates and amphibians.

Small patches of woodland within farmland are critical for species such as woodland plants, beetles, fungi, amphibians' birds and bats. The woodland edges are particularly important for species that require mixed habitats. Farm woodlands also contribute to the overall ecological network, improving landscape connectivity for wildlife.

The main concerns of farmers and landowners were the increase in extreme weather events, the increase in pests and diseases and soil degradation.
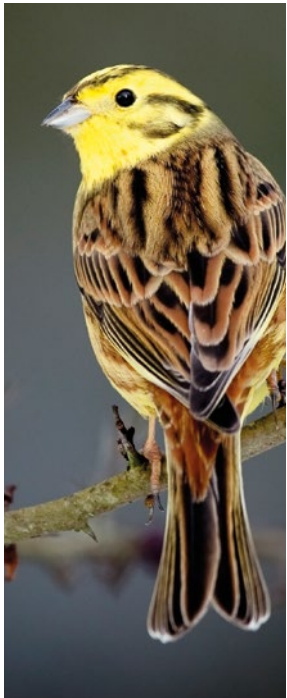
Farmland species have been among the most severely affected by agricultural intensification. The Farmland Bird Index shows that populations of key farmland birds have declined by **57% since 1970**. However, agri-environment schemes such as the Environmental Land Management (ELM) provide opportunities for farmers to adopt wildlife-friendly practices, including reduced pesticide use, wildflower planting, and the restoration of field margins and hedgerows.

The future of farmland habitats lies in sustainable farming practices that balance agricultural productivity with the needs of wildlife. By encouraging diverse crop rotations, hedgerow management, and the protection of semi-natural habitats, farmers can play a keyrole in biodiversity conservation.

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8. Key Environmental Considerations

8.1 Introduction

The health and resilience of natural environments are heavily influenced by a range of interconnected environmental factors. As we look toward the future, it is crucial to anticipate and address the growing pressures that threaten habitats and biodiversity in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. This section explores key environmental considerations that will shape the success of nature recovery efforts, including anticipated pressures such as climate change, land-use changes, and pollution. Additionally, it considers broader environmental issues like habitat fragmentation, invasive non-native species, and the implications of national and global environmental policies. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective strategies to safeguard ecosystems and promote long-term sustainability.

8.2 Anticipated Future Pressures

As Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland look to the future, several pressures are expected to impact species, habitats, and ecosystems. These pressures primarily arise from climate change, infrastructure developments and intensive farming, all of which could alter the natural landscape, affecting biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and ecosystem services.

Climate change is expected to intensify existing threats such as habitat fragmentation, degradation, and loss. Extreme weather events including floods, droughts, wildfires, and storms pose a significant risk to ecosystems by disrupting ecological processes and escalating biodiversity loss, altering habitats, and impacting agricultural productivity.

Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns will directly affect habitat suitability for many species. For instance, warmer temperatures could enable the expansion of thermophilic species, potentially outcompeting native species adapted to cooler conditions. Shifts in rainfall patterns may further impact freshwater ecosystems by altering hydrology, affecting the distribution of aquatic species, and leading to changes in ecosystem dynamics.

The recent Met Office climate report for the area predicts that the area, assuming a 1.5°C increase in average global temperatures, is likely to see an increase in the number of summer days where the daily maximum temperature is above 25°C (from 23 to 26) and above 30°C (from 3 to 4). The amount of winter precipitation (mm/day) is likely to increase by 4%, while average winter temperature is likely to increase by +1°C and average summer temperature to increase by +1.4°C.

27% of respondents felt they didn't have enough time to access nature.

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Ongoing and future developments, such as urban expansion and infrastructure projects, are poised to exert further pressure on biodiversity. Housing developments and commercial projects contribute to habitat loss and fragmentation, especially in areas of high ecological value. Converting natural habitats for residential and industrial purposes reduces habitat availability for native species and weakens ecological connectivity. See Appendix D 2.d Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt).

Additionally, linear infrastructure developments like road and railway expansions create physical barriers that hinder wildlife movement. Such barriers fragment populations, isolate species, and disrupt genetic flow, potentially increasing vulnerability to local extinctions. Construction activities often degrade habitat quality through soil compaction and pollution, further stressing wildlife and natural systems.

Intensive agriculture and certain farming methods pose significant pressure on habitats and biodiversity in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, particularly through habitat loss and fragmentation. Intensive farming practices, including monoculture cropping, contribute to a loss of habitat complexity, limiting resources for wildlife and increasing vulnerability to pests and diseases. This decline in biodiversity also impacts key ecosystem services such as pollination and soil health, vital for both natural systems and agriculture itself.

In addition to habitat loss, agricultural intensification leads to soil degradation and water quality issues. The heavy use of fertilisers and pesticides results in nutrient runoff, causing eutrophication in nearby rivers and wetlands, harming aquatic ecosystems. Water extraction for irrigation, coupled with the drainage of wetlands, depletes freshwater habitats, and disrupts natural flood mitigation. Moreover, agriculture is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating climate change, which in turn creates additional pressures on land use, driving further intensification and habitat loss. Sustainable farming practices are critical to mitigating these pressures and preserving biodiversity in agricultural landscapes.

8.3 Wider Environmental Issues

The broader environmental challenges facing Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland extend beyond localised habitat pressures. These challenges include issues related to water quality, flood risk management, and climate mitigation and adaptation, all of which require coordinated action to ensure the long-term sustainability of ecosystems and communities.

Water quality is threatened by sewage, agricultural runoff, urban pollution, and industrial discharges, which lead to issues like eutrophication and habitat degradation. These impacts result in biodiversity loss, particularly in freshwater ecosystems. The latest available figures for 2019 showed that 9.4% of Leicestershire rivers were in good ecological status, below the England average of 14%. While none were in good chemical status. See Appendix D 2.e Ecological Status of Catchment Map

To address these concerns, it is essential to implement sustainable land management practices such as establishing riparian buffer zones, restoring wetlands, and reducing chemical inputs. These actions will help mitigate pollution and improve the resilience of aquatic ecosystems, benefiting both biodiversity and human health.

Flood risk is a pressing concern for the area, exacerbated by the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and storms. Urbanisation and changes in land use have altered natural drainage patterns, leading to higher surface runoff, and contributing to more frequent and severe flooding in low-lying areas. Implementing natural flood management techniques such as floodplain restoration, tree planting, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) can help alleviate these risks by slowing floodwaters, improving water filtration, and promoting natural flood mitigation processes.

Poor air quality from vehicle emissions, industrial activities, and agriculture contributes to health issues in both humans and wildlife, as well as global warming. Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) are concerns around urban areas like the M1 corridor and Leicester City. The latest available figures for 2023 showed that the average annual mean for the amount of PM2.5 in the area was 9.2 μg m^{-3} (ranging from 8 μg m^{-3} in Rutland to 11 μg m^{-3} in Leicester). While the average annual mean for the amount of nitrogen oxides in the area was 20 μg m^{-3} (ranging from 8 μg m^{-3} in Rutland to 37 μg m^{-3} in Leicester)[5]. Enhancing urban green and blue infrastructure to reduce air pollution by planting trees and creating green spaces will filter pollutants and contribute to cleaner air. See Appendix D 2.b Air Quality Maps.

Figure 6: Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland air quality - PM2.5

[5] Source: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/compliance-data
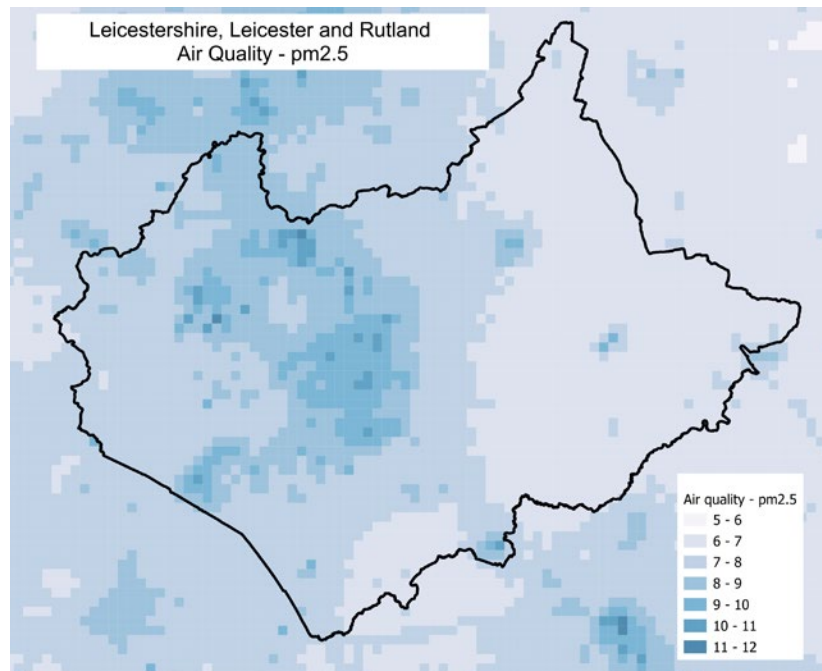
Disturbance from people, traffic and aircraft, along with artificial lighting, can disrupt wildlife behaviours, including breeding, migration, and predation. Disturbance can interfere with communication in birds, while light pollution impacts nocturnal species. It is important where appropriate to establish "quiet zones", and "keep out zones" and reduce noise and disruption in sensitive wildlife areas. Implementing dark-sky initiatives and use shielded lighting to minimise light pollutions will benefit nocturnal wildlife.

The spread of existing and new invasive non-native species (INNS), pests, and diseases often worsened by climate change and human activity threatens native species and ecosystems. Managing invasive species through control programs and promoting biosecurity measures and supporting research into disease-resistant species will help to mitigate threats to biodiversity.

As it stands there are over 2,000 plants and animals introduced to Britain, of these several are of particular concern in Leicestershire Leicester and Rutland, such as **Himalayan Balsam**, **Floating Pennywort**, **American Mink**, **American Signal Crayfish, Grey Squirrel** and non-native deer species such as **Muntjac**.

> **I am 71. I cannot think of a more important social and political issue. The fact that nature gets far less attention than it merits saddens me for those yet to live their lives in an ever-degrading world.**
>
> (Resident)

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9. Opportunities for Nature Recovery

9.1 Introduction

We have been guided by the 'Lawtonian' principles of bigger, better, and more joined up, as well as our additional local principle of nature being more protected. These have guided the recommended priorities and measures captured in this strategy.

To make space for nature, this Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies areas that hold the greatest ecological value, and the measures needed to achieve the greatest benefits for nature, to achieve bigger, better, and more joined up habitats that are protected, robust, resilient, and rich in biodiversity.

Here, we set out key opportunities for nature recovery across the strategy area, focusing on priority habitats and species. These opportunities can be realised by delivering the priorities and measures set out in section 9.3.

Achieving these benefits will be a collective effort, with various partners working collaboratively to create new, expand and connect priority natural habitats. The role of partnerships, individual actions, and funding mechanisms all present exciting and important opportunities to help us create space for nature that is bigger, better, connected and protected.

This section presents the key findings from ecological modelling conducted by a professional GIS consultant, highlighting strategic opportunities for nature across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. By identifying spaces for nature while considering constraints such as development, food production, and historical sites, the findings reveal valuable prospects for habitat creation and connectivity. Key areas of opportunity include flood zone 3[6], suitable agricultural lands (Grade 4, 5, and where appropriate, 3b), and historic railway lines, which offer significant potential for ecological enhancement. Additionally, improvements to habitats along existing railways, road verges, hedgerows and canals, including expanding habitats into adjacent land have been identified as promising opportunities. This work also factors species movement across core woodland, grassland, and urban areas, identifying strategic areas for habitat creation and buffering to expand and connect fragmented habitats, and establish a more resilient ecological network.

90% of respondents agreed that nature should be protected for its own sake.

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[6] Flood zone 3 includes land that has a 1 in 100 (1%) or greater annual probability of river flooding, or a 1 in 200 (0.5%) or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea.

9.1.1 New Bigger Areas for Nature

Creating new bigger areas for nature is a vital strategy for reversing biodiversity loss, increasing wildlife populations, and enhancing ecosystem resilience to climate change. A network of bigger, contiguous habitats and well-connected smaller, currently isolated habitats will benefit the local area, and contribute to national environmental objectives.

Additionally, bigger, better, more joined up and protected spaces for nature offer benefits that extend far beyond enhancing biodiversity. Increasing natural areas improves air and water quality, as woodlands and wetlands play a critical role in carbon sequestration, runoff reduction, and pollutant filtration. These habitats contribute to flood risk management by enhancing natural water retention and slowing surface runoff.

The creation of natural areas also offers significant societal benefits. Enhanced ecosystem services, such as carbon storage, water purification, and soil stabilisation, contribute to overall environmental and physical human health. Access to larger, well-managed natural areas promotes mental and physical wellbeing by providing opportunities for recreation, education, and a deeper connection with nature. Moreover, protecting and enhancing these areas can boost local economies through nature-based tourism, generating income and job opportunities for local communities, while also preserving the cultural heritage associated with traditional landscapes and rural livelihoods.

Flood zone 3 and grade 4 and 5 and where appropriate grade 3b agricultural lands are highly desirable and incredibly suited for creating new bigger, and more connected areas for nature. Their ecological potential, natural flood management capabilities, and the lower economic costs make these areas extremely attractive. Creating new areas for nature and connecting priority habitats through these landscapes can create rich habitats that support biodiversity, improve water quality, mitigate climate change, and provide valuable ecosystem services.

What follows are opportunities for creating bigger areas for nature within the aforementioned land types.

Image courtesy of James O'Brien

a) Flood Zone 3 - Key Opportunities

Opportunity: Floodplain grazing marsh

Creating new floodplain grazing marshes and increasing the size of these areas means more flood defences and more extensive habitats for wetland species such as **Curlew** and **Lapwing**. Rivers, streams, and wetlands connected to floodplain grazing marshes support rich biodiversity, including water voles, otters, and a wide variety of aquatic plants and invertebrates.

Floodplains naturally have rich, fertile soils deposited by floodwaters. Their diverse range of plant species attracts a variety of wildlife, making these areas prime areas for nature recovery.

Opportunity: Riparian and Catchment Woodland

Establishing new riparian woodlands along riverbanks can significantly enhance flood resilience by slowing down water flow, reducing erosion, and stabilising riverbanks. These woodlands also act as natural buffers, filtering pollutants from surface runoff before they reach waterways. Creating woodland in the wider catchment can help slow water flow, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and provide critical wildlife habitats, contributing to flood resilience and broader ecosystem restoration. Moreover, they create critical habitats for a wide range of species, including birds, insects, and mammals, while providing shade that helps regulate water temperature, fostering healthier aquatic ecosystems.

Opportunity: Wetland Creation and Reedbeds

Floodplains are typically well-supplied with water, essential for sustaining wetland habitats, supporting aquatic life, and fostering plant growth. This abundance of water resources creates ideal conditions for restoring and creating wetlands, ponds, reedbeds and other aquatic habitats.

b) Agricultural Land - Key Opportunities

Opportunity: Woodland

Grade 4, 5, and 3b agricultural lands offer excellent opportunities for woodland creation, particularly for the development of priority habitats like Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Wet Woodland. These woodlands can provide critical habitats for species such as bats, woodland birds, and invertebrates, while also acting as natural flood defences. By stabilising soil and reducing surface water runoff, they contribute to improved water management and increased carbon sequestration, making them valuable for both biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

Opportunity: Grassland

The conversion of these agricultural lands into grasslands can support the creation of priority habitats like Lowland Meadows and Calcareous Grasslands. These habitats are essential for a wide variety of plant species, pollinators, and ground-nesting birds such as Skylarks. Grassland restoration can also enhance soil health, improve water retention, and support grazing management strategies that contribute to sustainable land use.

Opportunity: Wetland

Flood-prone grade 4, 5, and 3b lands are ideally suited for the creation of priority wetland habitats such as Reedbeds, Floodplain Grazing Marsh, and Fens. These wetlands support a wide array of species, including amphibians, wading birds, and invertebrates, while improving water quality and acting as flood storage areas. Wetland creation can also contribute to the recovery of species like Otters, Water Voles, and Herons, offering a rich and dynamic landscape for nature recovery.

9.1.2 Better Quality Areas for Nature

Good quality habitats are just as crucial to nature recovery as habitat expansion. High-quality natural areas provide the necessary conditions for a diverse range of species to thrive and maintain healthy populations.

Healthy ecosystems perform a range of functions that are essential for both biodiversity and human wellbeing. These include nutrient cycling, water filtration, carbon sequestration, and pollination. High-quality habitats and ecosystem functions are fully operational and resilient to pressures including pollution, overgrazing, disturbance from human activities, and encroachment by invasive species.

Healthy habitats support greater levels of biodiversity, characterised, by a broad variety of physical features within an ecosystem, such as vegetation layers, water bodies, and terrain – known as structural diversity. This provides a range of niches and microhabitats that support different species with varying requirements. For example, a well-managed woodland might include a mix of mature trees, understory shrubs, deadwood, and open glades, each of which offers habitat for different birds, insects, mammals, and plants.

Creating high-quality habitats for nature involves a multifaceted approach that integrates:

• effective management and monitoring,

• thoughtful design and planning, and

• robust protection measures, particularly in urban areas.

To achieve better-quality habitats, this strategy identifies the following approaches:

a) Opportunity: Better habitat management

Management planning for nature conservation sites is very important and should include best practice guidance. Embracing the approaches recommended in best practice guidance for habitat restoration, maintenance, and monitoring is the starting point for creating higher quality habitats. These emphasise the importance of activities such as grazing and mowing regimes in grassland habitats, woodland management, natural flood management, invasive species management, and habitat connectivity. Proper management ensures that habitats remain suitable for native species, supports ecological balance, and enhance the resilience of natural areas against environmental changes.

With approximately 80% of the strategy area classified as agricultural land, nature-friendly farming is essential for enhancing habitat quality and supporting biodiversity on agricultural land. It involves practices that balance food production with conservation, such as creating wildlife corridors, maintaining hedgerows, and using less intensive farming methods to reduce pollution and habitat destruction. The implementation of Sustainable Farming Incentives (SFIs) under the UK's Environmental Land Management scheme (ELM) offers a practical framework for achieving this balance. SFIs encourage farmers to adopt environmentally beneficial practices, including improving soil health, reducing pesticide use, and enhancing water management. By integrating these measures, farmers can promote biodiversity, increase pollinator populations, and restore habitats such as wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands, ultimately leading to more resilient ecosystems and agricultural landscapes. These initiatives are pivotal in ensuring that agriculture contributes positively to nature recovery and the broader aims of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Links to management plans and good practice guides can be found in Appendix G.

b) Opportunity: Natural flood management

Natural Flood Management (NFM) techniques work by restoring or mimicking natural hydrological processes to reduce flood risk, while also offering significant benefits to wildlife. Below is a list of Natural Flood Management techniques, and their impact on both flood management and benefits to nature.

Wetland Creation and Restoration: Highest impact for flood management and biodiversity.

Floodplain Restoration and Reconnection: Significant dual benefits for nature and flood control.

Tree Planting (Riparian and Upland): Long-term benefits for flood risk reduction and wildlife.

Leaky Dams and Woody Debris Dams: Strong benefits for aquatic life and slowing water flow.

River Re-meandering: Medium impact on flood management, but excellent for riverine species.

Peatland Restoration: Important for flood risk in specific areas, with significant wildlife gains.

Gully Blocking: Focused on upland water flow control and habitat restoration for specialised species.

Buffer Strips and Grassland Management: Smaller flood impact but important for biodiversity in agricultural landscapes.

c) Opportunity: Design and planning - better green and blue infrastructure

Thoughtful design and planning are key to creating high-quality habitats. This includes integrating green (vegetation-based) and blue (water-based) infrastructure into urban and rural landscapes. By designing spaces that prioritise natural elements like parks, rivers, canals, gardens and street trees, planners can create interconnected habitats that support wildlife movement, improve water quality, and provide essential ecosystem services. Green roofs, sustainable urban drainage systems, permeable surfaces, and urban forests are examples of how urban areas can incorporate nature into their infrastructure, promoting both biodiversity and human wellbeing.

d) Opportunity: Better protection - especially around urban areas

Urban expansion often threatens natural habitats, making protection efforts critical. Implementing and enforcing conservation policies that protect green and blue spaces and prevent habitat fragmentation are vital, particularly in and around cities and other built-up areas. Strategies might include establishing protected areas such as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), creating wildlife corridors, and enforcing policy that limit development in ecologically sensitive regions. Engaging local communities in conservation efforts and raising awareness about the importance of conserving and enhancing natural habitats can help ensure that these areas are valued by those living nearby and so more likely to be protected for future generations.

9.1.3 More Joined Up Areas for Nature

Connecting habitats contributes to landscape-scale conservation. This approach recognises that biodiversity conservation cannot be achieved in isolated pockets. Instead, it requires assessing the entire landscape, including how different habitats and land uses interact. By integrating conservation efforts across agricultural lands, urban areas, woodlands, rivers, and wetlands, we can create a network of connected habitats that support biodiversity at a larger scale.

This approach often involves collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including farmers, landowners, conservation organisations, and local communities. Working together to identify and protect key habitats and wildlife corridors, can create a more connected and resilient landscape that benefits both wildlife and people. Connecting fragmented habitats to form new networks of continuous natural spaces is crucial for supporting biodiversity because it allows species to move freely across landscapes, maintain genetic diversity, and adapt to changing environmental conditions.

As climate change alters habitats and environmental conditions, species need to move to new areas where conditions are more suitable for their survival. For example, as temperatures rise, some species may need to move to cooler, higher altitudes or migrate northward. However, if their habitats are fragmented, they may be unable to make these necessary migrations, leading to local extinctions.

Joined-up areas for nature are critical for enabling species to adapt to climate change. By creating corridors and steppingstones that connect different habitats, we provide pathways for species to migrate and shift their ranges in response to changing conditions. This connectivity is essential for building resilience into ecosystems.

There are several barriers to connectivity which can be addressed through various solutions, creating a more cohesive landscape that supports wildlife movement and genetic exchange.

The two main opportunities for connectivity arise from corridors and steppingstones.

a) Opportunity: Corridors

A corridor is a continuous strip of natural habitat that connects different ecosystems, allowing wildlife to move freely between areas, which supports species migration, dispersal, and genetic diversity.

Hedgerows and trees: Planting and maintaining mixed hedgerows and tree networks of optimal conditions provides essential wildlife corridors, supports a wide range of species, and increases landscape connectivity.

Rivers: Taking a catchment-based approach to the protection and restoration of river habitats, to provide vital connections across landscapes, linking urban and rural areas (business, farming, and leisure), whilst enhancing different ecosystems, providing healthy natural corridors, facilitating the movement of species, and supporting biodiversity.

Riparian buffers: Planting native vegetation to create riparian buffers along streams and rivers. These buffers connect different water bodies and provide important habitats for wildlife.

Agricultural field margins: Enhancing field margins by planting native wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs provides important habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, creating a network of stepping-stones across agricultural lands.

Canals: Enhancing canal corridors, including a 20 metre buffer either side, by restoring adjacent wetland habitats, enhancing and connecting hedgerows and conserving native aquatic vegetation to create continuous green and blue corridors for wildlife.

Railway networks: Managing railway corridors, including a 20 metre buffer either side, adjacent land with native plants, wildflowers, ponds to create linear habitats that support pollinators and other wildlife while improving ecological connectivity.

Road verges: Restoring roadside verge grassland into biodiversity hotspots by allowing wildflowers to develop and thrive; reducing mowing frequency to support pollinators and small mammals.

Cycle network: Integrating green infrastructure along cycle networks by planting native trees and shrubs, creating shaded pathways that also serve as wildlife corridors.

Public rights of way: Planting hedgerows and wildflower borders, enhancing biodiversity and providing vital habitat connectivity across the landscape.

"Let hedgerows and roadside verges grow."
(Harborough resident)

b) Opportunity: Steppingstones

A steppingstone is a small, isolated patch of habitat that provides refuge and resources for species, allowing them to move between larger habitat areas, even if the patches are not directly connected.

Ditches: Managing drainage ditches for biodiversity and water management, maintaining a balance between regular clearance to prevent blockages and allowing vegetation to thrive. This encourages diverse plant and animal habitats, enhances water filtration, and reduces flood risk while supporting ecological health.

Pond networks: Establishing and restoring pond networks provides vital water sources that act as stepping-stones, allowing species to move, enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience across the landscape.

Private gardens: Supporting local communities to adopt wildlife friendly gardening approaches and create a network of microhabitats such as bug hotels, hedgehog highways, natural planting that feeds pollinators, and small garden ponds that support aquatic life and amphibians. Prioritising best practices to design garden connectivity (including hedgerows, open spaces, and corridors) via the planning process, so they are inbuilt in new developments enhancing the environment for biodiversity and residents.

Pocket parks: Developing small parks in urban areas that provide green space and habitat for wildlife. These parks can be planted with native vegetation and designed to support local fauna.

Green roofs and walls: Installing green roofs and living walls on buildings. These features provide habitat for birds, insects, and plants, acting as vertical stepping-stones in dense urban environments. They also contribute to mitigation against urban heat islands.

Street trees: Planting Street trees provides habitat for birds, insects, and plants, as well as stepping-stones for species movement. They also contribute to cleaner air, water management and climate adaption and mitigation.

Community gardens: Encouraging the establishment of community gardens with dedicated areas for native plants and species provides important refuges and stepping-stones for urban wildlife.

Agroforestry strips: Integrating strips of trees and shrubs, and isolated field trees into agricultural fields supports biodiversity by providing corridors and steppingstones, while also benefiting crop production.

Woodland glades and clearings: Creating small clearings or gaps within woodlands and forests promotes the growth of diverse understory plants. These clearings provide habitats for species that require open spaces within woodland environments and provides links through the sites and to the wider landscape.

Edge habitats: Enhancing the edges of forested areas with a mix of native plants creates rich transitional zones that support a variety of wildlife. These edges act as stepping-stones connecting larger forest patches.

Wildflower patches: Planting small patches of wildflowers within grasslands and meadows. These patches support pollinators and other insects, providing food resources and habitat connectivity.

No-mow zones: Changes to mowing regimes in public parks, golf courses, and along roadsides. These areas serve as refuges for wildlife and connect larger grassland habitats, as well as being popular with many members of the public.

Vegetated road verges: Enhancing Road verges with native vegetation adds linear habitats and stepping-stones for species moving through fragmented landscapes.

Golf courses: The creation of diverse habitats such as wildflower meadows, native woodlands, and wetland areas around ponds and water features provides valuable resources for pollinators, birds, and amphibians. Careful management practices like reducing chemical use, implementing no-mow zones, and maintaining natural rough areas further enhances biodiversity.

Fisheries: Well managed fisheries support wildlife by maintaining varied aquatic vegetation, offering shelter and breeding grounds for fish and invertebrates, as well as feeding areas for birds. Creating buffer zones of native plants around water bodies reduces runoff pollution and provides additional habitat for terrestrial species. Additionally, enhancing the structural diversity of the water's edge with logs, stones, and shallow margins supports amphibians, reptiles, and insects.

Schools: Establishing outdoor learning environments such as native plant gardens, pollinator habitats, and small wetlands can create microhabitats that support birds, insects, and small mammals. These green spaces not only enhance biodiversity but also serve as living classrooms where students can engage directly with nature, something actively encouraged by the public. Implementing green roofs or walls, rain gardens, and tree planting projects further increases the ecological value of school grounds.

Larger campuses: A similar approach can be taken, alongside best practice management of existing natural areas such as woodlands or grasslands to enhance their biodiversity and the wider learning environment. Maintaining and restoring these areas with native species, creating wildlife corridors, and establishing no-mow zones supports a diverse array of species. Campuses can also integrate sustainable water management practices, such as bioswales and permeable surfaces, to benefit both the environment and local wildlife.

Cemeteries: Managed into havens for nature by adopting a more naturalistic approach to grounds management. Allowing grass to grow longer in selected areas, planting native wildflowers, and preserving mature trees and shrubs creates a mosaic of habitats that support a wide range of species, from pollinators and small mammals to birds. By reducing the frequency of mowing and limiting chemical use, cemeteries can develop into rich ecological sites that also offer a peaceful, reflective space for visitors.

Allotments: Inherently diverse landscapes that can be further enhanced to support biodiversity. Encouraging the planting of native hedgerows, maintaining wildflower borders, and installing ponds or water features that are beneficial to insects, birds, and amphibians. Allotment plots can serve as miniature wildlife reserves, where the cultivation of a variety of crops alongside wild spaces creates a patchwork of habitats. Compost heaps, log piles, and bug hotels can provide shelter and breeding grounds for invertebrates and small animals, making allotments not just productive spaces for people but also vital refuges for wildlife.

Corporate green spaces: Promoting the development of green spaces around corporate buildings and industrial areas.

9.1.4 More Protected Areas for Nature

Gaining and enforcing the right protection for priority areas is crucial for biodiversity, safeguarding ecosystems, and mitigating the effects of climate change.

This approach emphasises the need to protect, often through legal status, the network of important habitats to ensure that diverse habitats, species, and geological features are conserved and enhanced.

The four types of protections the Local Nature Recovery Strategy seeks to increase are:

a) Opportunity: Local nature reserves (LNR)

Establishing new nature reserves is essential. These protected spaces offer opportunities to conserve large, contiguous areas that can support viable populations of plants and animals, maintain ecological processes, and provide refuges for species affected by habitat loss elsewhere. These reserves also serve as important sites for research, education, and eco-tourism, fostering a deeper understanding of natural ecosystems and generating support for conservation efforts.

b) Opportunity: Local wildlife sites (LWS)

Like nature reserves, local wildlife sites (LWS) are areas recognised for their biodiversity value at a local level. Identifying and protecting more local wildlife sites is important because they often represent the remaining fragments of semi-natural habitats within developed landscapes. The ongoing monitoring and provision of management advice for LWS's is crucial. These sites provide essential ecological functions, such as serving as steppingstones for species dispersal, contributing to habitat connectivity, and maintaining genetic diversity within populations. Protection of local wildlife sites is especially crucial in urban and peri-urban areas, where they often represent the only green spaces available for both wildlife and people. Any development proposal impacts on LWS's should be minimised and carefully mitigated in line with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

c) Opportunity: Regionally important geological sites (RIGS)

Regionally important geology sites (RIGS) also known as geosites, are designated areas that protect significant geodiversity sites. These sites are important not only for their scientific and educational value but also for understanding the geological history and processes that shape landscapes. Protecting regionally important geology sites helps preserve unique landforms, fossil records, and mineral deposits, which are essential for geoscientific research and education. Additionally, these sites contribute to biodiversity conservation by maintaining natural habitats associated with specific geological features, such as cliffs, caves, and karst systems.

d) Opportunity: Statutory designated sites

Statutory designated sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), are legally protected areas recognised for their outstanding natural value. These sites are often part of national or international conservation networks and are selected based on their importance for specific species, habitats, or ecological processes. Expanding the number of designated sites is critical for ensuring that representative examples of all ecosystems are protected and that the conservation of key species and habitats is legally enforced. Designated sites play a crucial role in meeting national and international biodiversity targets.

9.2 Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB)

9.2.1 Introduction

This section outlines the Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB) and the key opportunities for nature recovery and habitat conservation across the various landscape areas. It focuses on creating bigger, better, and more connected habitats while ensuring the long-term protection of existing biodiversity hotspots. Each landscape presents unique opportunities to create and restore priority habitats, enhance habitat quality, and strengthen ecological networks.

The Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB) have been identified and mapped using professional ecological modelling techniques and contributions from many stakeholder groups, government agencies and decision makers.

To view the Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB) , visit the online map here: https://haveyoursay.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy-local-habitat-map

9.2.2 Mapped Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB)

What follows are details of the opportunities for targeted nature recovery action within the areas that could become of particular importance, aligned mainly to Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes.

Figure 7: Showing the Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB).
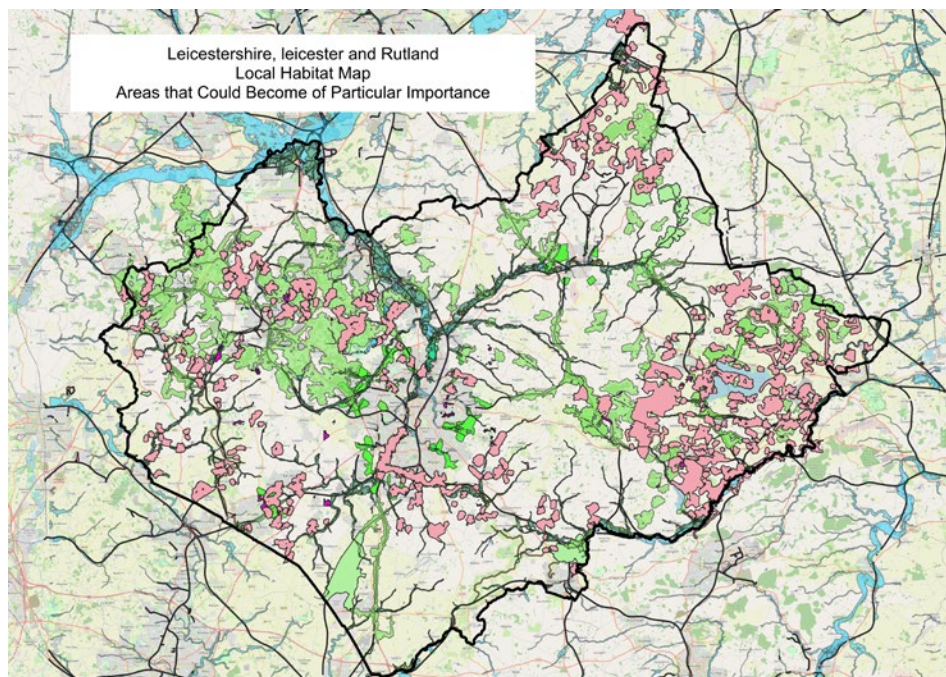
a) Charnwood Forest

Charnwood Forest presents significant opportunities for expanding ancient woodlands, restoring heathlands, and improving habitat connectivity to support key species and enhance ecosystem resilience.

Opportunity: Charnwood Forest offers significant opportunities to expand ancient woodlands, particularly lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, and ancient woodlands. These expansions will benefit species like the Hazel Dormouse, Willow Warbler, and Barbastelle Bats, and contribute to carbon sequestration, flood regulation, and ecosystem resilience.

Opportunity: Restoring degraded heathlands will expand priority habitats, such as lowland heathland, for species like Adders and Common Lizards.

Opportunity: Enhance grasslands and heathlands by reducing nutrient inputs and managing deadwood, which supports species like the Lesser Stag Beetle and Wood Warbler.

Opportunity: Enhance habitat connectivity by creating ecological corridors (hedgerows, wildflower strips, riparian buffer zones), aiding species like dormice, bats, and woodland birds.

Opportunity: Protect ancient woodlands such as Swithland Wood SSSI and The Outwoods. Additional protections could focus on lowland heathland sites and significant geological features in Charnwood Forest, given its potential as a UNESCO Geopark. Protecting Biodiversity Action Plan habitats like lowland mixed deciduous woodland will also be crucial.

b) Soar Valley and Wreake

The Soar Valley and Wreake landscape offers valuable opportunities to restore floodplains, enhance riparian woodlands, and create wetland networks to support biodiversity and improve natural flood management.

Opportunity: Restore floodplain meadows and create larger meadows to support species like Devil's-bit Scabious, Ragged-Robin and Meadow Buttercup.

Opportunity: Remove barriers to fish migration and improve habitats for key fish species such as salmon.

Opportunity: Enhance riparian habitats by planting native vegetation along riverbanks, controlling invasive species, and improving water quality.

Opportunity: Create a connected network of wetlands, supporting species like water beetles, newts, and dragonflies.

Opportunity: Protect existing habitats like Cossington Meadows, focusing on floodplain grazing marshes and riparian woodland. Further protections should target wetland Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, such as reedbeds, and riverside habitats for species like water voles and otters.

c) Rutland Water and Surrounding Landscape

Rutland Water and its surrounding landscape provide prime opportunities to restore grasslands and wetlands, enhance riparian buffer zones, and protect habitats for breeding and migratory birds and other species.

Opportunity: Restore species-rich meadows, hay meadows, and calcareous grasslands to support species like skylarks, brown hares, and orchids.

Opportunity: Establish large buffer zones to protect migratory bird populations and improve water quality.

Opportunity: Link woodlands, grasslands, and wetlands through green corridors, supporting species like bats, badgers, and butterflies.

Opportunity: Existing protections for Rutland Water should be expanded to include surrounding calcareous grasslands and ancient woodlands. These areas could support additional priority habitats, such as lowland meadow and wet woodland.

d) National Forest and Leicestershire Coalfield

The National Forest and Leicestershire Coalfield landscape offer large-scale opportunities for woodland creation and the restoration of former industrial sites to support diverse species and improve habitat connectivity.

Opportunity: The National Forest offers significant opportunities to create large-scale woodlands to support species like woodpeckers, bats, and butterflies, while enhancing ecosystem resilience.

Opportunity: Deliver River Mease restoration projects.

Opportunity: Restore former coal mining areas by planting native vegetation and creating ponds and grasslands for species like Common Lizards and pollinators.

Opportunity: Restore hedgerows and develop green corridors to connect fragmented landscapes, facilitating species movement.

Opportunity: Protect existing ancient woodlands within the National Forest, such as Martinshaw Wood and areas of reclaimed industrial land. Additionally, protect former industrial sites that have been restored into key habitats for species such as bats, reptiles, and invertebrates.

e) East Leicestershire and Rutland Clays

East Leicestershire and Rutland Clays present opportunities to convert arable land to species-rich grasslands, create and restore hedgerows, and enhance riparian buffers to improve biodiversity and water quality.

Opportunity: Restore low-productivity arable lands into species-rich grasslands to benefit species like Barn Owls, shrews, voles and wildflowers.

Opportunity: Create and restore hedgerows and plant native trees in the right places to improve habitats for farmland birds and pollinators.

Opportunity: Establish riparian buffer zones to improve water quality and support species like Brown Trout and Water Voles.

Opportunity: Focus on protecting areas of restored grasslands and riverside habitats. Ancient hedgerows and nearby priority habitats, such as arable field margins and lowland meadows, should be prioritised for protection.

f) Jurassic Limestone Area - Rutland, East Leicestershire, and Adjoining Lincolnshire

The Jurassic Limestone landscape across Rutland, East Leicestershire, and adjoining Lincolnshire provides a unique opportunity to enhance calcareous grasslands, woodlands, and species-rich meadows. This area supports rare chalk-loving flora, important pollinators, and farmland birds, while also offering potential for carbon sequestration and soil restoration.

Opportunity: Restore and expand calcareous grasslands to support priority species such as chalk hill blue butterflies, pasqueflowers, and pyramidal orchids. This will also improve soil health, reduce erosion, and enhance carbon storage.

Opportunity: Protect and connect fragmented limestone grasslands by establishing habitat corridors and buffer zones between existing sites, increasing biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Opportunity: Enhance and restore species-rich hay meadows and wildflower pastures, supporting pollinators such as bumblebees, solitary bees, and butterflies, as well as ground-nesting birds like skylarks and yellowhammers.

Opportunity: Promote regenerative agricultural practices on limestone soils to improve soil quality, water retention, and carbon sequestration, while reducing chemical runoff into watercourses.

Opportunity: Protect and enhance ancient woodland remnants while providing habitat for woodland birds, bats, and invertebrates.

Opportunity: Improve water quality and restore natural hydrology in limestone stream catchments by implementing buffer zones, wetland creation, and reduced nutrient pollution to benefit aquatic species.

g) Welland Valley

Welland Valley offers opportunities to restore meadows and wetlands, enhance grasslands, and create riparian woodland and buffers to improve habitat connectivity and flood resilience.

Opportunity: Restore floodplain meadows and wetlands to support species like Curlews, Snipes, and Scarce Chaser dragonflies.

Opportunity: Manage existing grasslands to promote wildflower growth, supporting invertebrates and small mammals.

Opportunity: Establish riparian buffers and create woodland along the River Welland to cool the river, support aquatic species and link fragmented habitats.

Opportunity: Expand protections around the Welland Valley floodplain meadows and River Welland itself. Designate new Local Wildlife Sites focused on priority habitats such as wet woodland and lowland meadows.

> **Beekeeping directly connects you to nature. Positively improving the environment and helping nature.**
>
> (Blaby resident)

h) Melton and Vale of Belvoir

Melton and the Vale of Belvoir offer opportunities for grassland restoration, hedgerow management, and pond creation to support farmland wildlife and improve landscape connectivity.

Opportunity: Create new woodlands in the right places and expand hedgerows to increase habitats for woodland species and support wider environment al benefits such as carbon sequestration, water storage and improved air quality.

Opportunity: Restore arable land to species-rich grasslands to support species like Linnets, Brown Hares, and pollinators.

Opportunity: Expand woodland and wildflower meadows to create connected habitat corridors along the historic railway line between Melton to and Nottingham.

Opportunity: Restore and optimise hedgerows and improve grasslands to benefit pollinators, farmland birds, and small mammals.

Opportunity: Landscape scale river restoration and sediment management projects in the Wreake below Melton Mowbray.

Opportunity: Landscape scale river restoration and sediment management projects in the Eye north of Melton Mowbray.

Opportunity: Protect and restore the area's ancient woodlands like Barkestone Wood and hedgerow networks, alongside designating important stream and pond habitats, especially those supporting priority species.

i) Leighfield Forest

Leighfield Forest presents opportunities for woodland expansion and connectivity, improving habitat quality and supporting woodland species such as dormice and bats.

Opportunity: Enhance and expand woodland, hedgerows, and wildflower-rich habitats along the historic railway line between Loddington and Melton.

Opportunity: Improve woodland conditions by managing deadwood and controlling deer and invasive non-native species.

Opportunity: Connect isolated woodlands through creation and management of new hedgerows, wood pasture and grassland networks to support species like Bluebell, Wood Anemones and Daubenton's Bats.

Opportunity: Focus on protecting existing ancient woodlands in Leighfield Forest. Designate new Local Wildlife Sites to protect ancient woodland and woodland priority habitats like lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

j) South and South West Leicestershire

South and South West Leicestershire offers significant opportunities for woodland creation, hedgerow expansion, and riparian woodland management to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Opportunity: Create new woodlands in the right places and expand hedgerows to increase habitats for woodland species and support wider environment al benefits such as carbon sequestration, water storage and improved air quality.

Opportunity: Restore grasslands, wildflower meadows, and scrubland along the disused railway line and the M1 corridor, between Ullesthorpe and Leicester City to improve connectivity for species between urban and rural areas.

Opportunity: Deliver River Anker restoration including barrier mitigation and longitudinal connectivity in Upper Anker which forms part of the Leicestershire County boundary near Atherstone.

Opportunity: Expand and enhance riparian woodlands and improve water quality through natural flood management.

Opportunity: Connect grasslands through wildflower margins and pond networks to support pollinators and amphibians.

Opportunity: River Avon (border between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) has the potential for future Natural Flood Management delivery.

k) Urban

Urban landscapes provide opportunities to expand green and blue infrastructure, enhance habitat quality in green spaces, and create steppingstones for wildlife in built environments.

Opportunity: Expand and create new urban green and blue spaces like pocket parks, sustainable urban drainage solutions, and community gardens to support urban wildlife.

Opportunity: Create new species rich habitats in 'Green Wedge Areas' and 'Areas of Separation', conserve natural habitats, provide recreational opportunities, support sustainable land use, and help mitigate climate effects in urban areas. Deploy exemplary urban/landscape design and biodiversity enhancement to sustain nature connectivity and mitigate any new development proposal impacts.

Opportunity: Enhance urban green spaces by planting native species and reducing mowing.

Opportunity: Create steppingstones for wildlife in urban areas, such as wildflower verges and hedgehog highways.

Opportunity: Designate existing urban green spaces, including brownfield sites, historic railway lines and canal corridors, as Local Wildlife Sites to protect their biodiversity potential.

Opportunity: Enhance and improve the blue green infrastructure of existing parks and gardens for the benefits of people and wildlife.
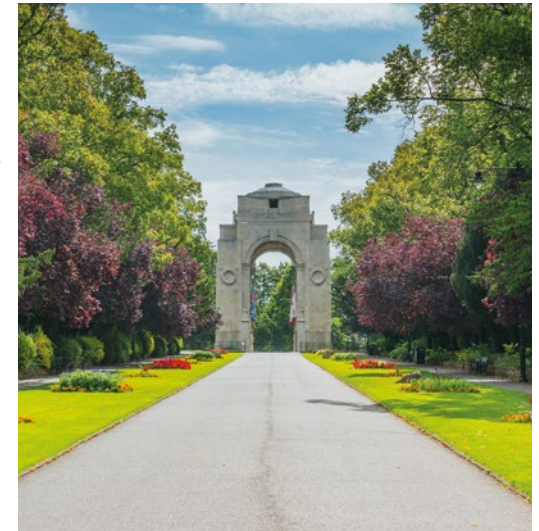
9.3 Habitat Priorities and Measures

9.3.1 Introduction

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies a range of priority habitats that are essential for supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services. Each of these habitats play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, supporting species, and providing environmental and social benefits to our communities. Our approach focuses on protecting, creating and enhancing, managing and connecting these habitats to ensure their resilience and sustainability for future generations.

The strategic priorities outlined in this Local Nature Recovery Strategy were meticulously developed through a comprehensive and inclusive process. To ensure alignment with both local and national environmental objectives, existing plans and strategies, including Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and Local Plans were thoroughly assessed (See Appendix G). This extensive review produced over 400 potential priorities, each of which was evaluated against the specific criteria of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as well as the National Environmental Objectives.

All these were then systematically categorised and organised into a long list of priorities, forming the foundation for an extensive consultation process. Key partners, including those on our Steering Group, Strategic Reference Group, farmers, landowners, community groups, and residents, were engaged to provide feedback and insights. Through this collaborative approach, both the long list of priorities and the specific measures required to deliver them were carefully refined. This ensured that the resulting set of strategic priorities and associated actions not only aligned with broader environmental goals but also reflected the needs and aspirations of stakeholders.

The guiding principles for this work were identifying the priorities most important in achieving bigger, better, more joined up, and protected spaces for nature, as well as ensuring conservation and enhancement of our most precious irreplaceable habitats, threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems.

These selected priorities will guide our efforts to enhance and protect biodiversity, support sustainable land management, and contribute to the overall resilience of our natural environment.

The tables that follow pull together the sum of the work set out above, and show the 'habitat-focused' priorities, opportunities and measures that have been mapped on the Local Habitat Map and should be adopted by anyone contributing to the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The codes shown against each measure are there for cross referencing measures with the ACB map.

To view the priorities and measures for the Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB), visit the online map here:

https://haveyoursay.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy-local-habitat-map

85% of respondents agreed that nature is important for tackling climate change.

9.3.2 Habitat Priorities and Measures

Woodland

Woodlands are vital ecosystems that support a rich diversity of species and provide essential services such as carbon capture and storage, water management, air purification, and recreational spaces for communities.

Protecting and enhancing, creating, and expanding, and connecting woodland habitats will not only improve biodiversity but also contribute to climate change mitigation and adaption, and enhance the wellbeing of residents by providing accessible natural spaces for relaxation and recreation.

Priority	Measure	
Protection and expansion: Ensure existing woodlands are protected and conserved, and new woodlands are established to increase overall forest cover.	WD001	Buffer and connect ancient and priority habitat woodlands to reduce fragmentation and create wildlife corridors.
	WD002	Restore plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) to native broadleaf species composition.
	WD003	Manage ancient and veteran trees, including identification of successors to ensure habitat continuity.
	WD004	Expand woodland cover through a range of establishment methods and using a diverse mixture of tree species.
	WD005	Increase structural diversity of woodlands to support a diverse range of flora and fauna.
Connectivity: Develop and maintain wildlife corridors that link fragmented woodlands, promoting biodiversity and ecosystem health.	WD006	Create and maintain wildlife corridors linking woodlands with other habitats, promoting biodiversity, and facilitating species movement.
	WD007	Increase transitional habitats around and between woodlands to increase ecotones and establish wildlife rich dynamic mosaics.

Priority	Measure	
Management and Resilience: Implement sustainable management practices to enhance woodland health and resilience against climate change and pests.	WD008	Increase and implement sustainable woodland management practices to enhance biodiversity and bring all woodlands into good ecological condition.
	WD009	Enhance resilience of new and existing woodland through the creation of diverse, mixed species stands using tree species best suited to individual site characteristics, and future climate projections.
	WD010	Restore woodlands impacted by ash dieback, target management actions to diversity species compositions to aid ecological and climate resilience.
	WD011	Follow best practice to control invasive non-native plant species and minimise the risk of introducing pests and diseases within woodlands.
	WD012	Control and monitor deer and grey squirrel populations, especially in sensitive priority habitats and ancient woodlands.
	WD013	Manage water levels within wet woodlands to maintain suitable hydrological conditions for associated species.
	WD014	Buffer priority wet woodlands with appropriate vegetated habitats to reduce incursion of pollutants.

Freshwater

Freshwater habitats, including rivers, canals, lakes, and wetlands, are critical for supporting aquatic life and providing clean water for human use. These habitats also play a key role in flood regulation and water purification. By protecting, enhancing, and connecting freshwater habitats and wider catchment habitats, we will improve water quality, increase resilience to flooding, and support a diverse range of species, while also ensuring that local communities have access to clean water and recreational opportunities.

Priority	Measure	
Natural Flood Management: Implement natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risk, enhance water quality, and support biodiversity.	FW001	Connect rivers to their floodplain and utilise wetlands for natural flood management.
	FW002	Create and maintain new floodplain meadows to manage excess water and provide priority habitat for species.
	FW003	Implement other natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risk and improve water retention. Such as re-meandering rivers, woodland and scrub planting, leaky dams, buffer strips, gully blocking and pond and scrape creation.
Protection and Restoration: Safeguard freshwater habitats and restore them to achieve favourable ecological status.	FW004	Control and manage invasive species in freshwater habitats.
	FW005	Promote the better management of soils and use of fertilisers on farmland to reduce sediment and phosphate entering rivers and damaging water ecology.
	FW006	Take a catchment-based approach to the protection and restoration of river habitats, recognising the unique features of the river system at every stage, from headwater to confluence with other waterbodies.
	FW007	Safeguard freshwater habitats and restore them to achieve favourable ecological status.
	FW008	Restore rivers in rural areas that have been artificially widened and straightened to support improved water quality and increased habitat.

Priority	Measure	
Protection and Restoration Cont'd	FW009	Restore rivers that have been heavily modified in urban areas to improve water quality and habitat.
	FW010	Manage water levels within wetland habitats to maintain suitable hydrological conditions.
	FW011	Enhance fish habitat through gravel bed restoration and instream structures.
	FW012	Restore riparian habitats along waterbodies.
Creation and Connectivity: Enhance connectivity between freshwater bodies to strengthen ecological resilience and create new freshwater associated habitats to facilitate species recovery and movement.	FW013	Create and manage wetland habitats to support diverse aquatic and semi-aquatic species.
	FW014	Create new pond networks and restore existing ones to increase habitat and prevent pollution.
	FW015	Connect waterbodies with other priority habitats, creating resilient networks of ecologically favourable habitats.
	FW016	Improve fish and other aquatic life passage by removing barriers like dams and weirs.

Grasslands

Grasslands are home to a variety of plant and animal species, many of which are rare or endangered. These habitats are important for pollinators, soil health, and carbon storage. Protecting and enhancing, creating and expanding, and connecting important grassland habitats will boost biodiversity, improve agricultural productivity through better pollination services, and contribute to carbon sequestration. Moreover, well-managed grasslands provide beautiful landscapes for public enjoyment and promote cultural and historical connections to the land.

Priority	Measure	
Protection and Expansion: Conserve and enhance existing grasslands and create new ones to expand these vital ecosystems.	GL001	Protect and restore species rich grassland.
	GL002	Create new or expand existing species rich grassland.
Connectivity: Establish networks of grasslands to improve habitat connectivity and support diverse wildlife populations.	GL003	Connect areas of priority grassland with other habitats to support diverse species populations, facilitate movement and build resilience to pressures.
	GL004	Create new heath grassland habitats to increase connectivity and create wildlife corridors.
Management and Resilience: Apply best practices for grassland management to boost their ecological health and resilience.	GL005	Implement appropriate management and grazing regimes to maintain habitat structure.
	GL006	Manage water levels and drainage within grasslands to maintain suitable conditions.
	GL007	Control invasive plant species and encroaching scrub in grasslands.

Urban

Urban habitats, including parks, gardens, and green roofs, are increasingly important as cities expand. These habitats provide essential green spaces for urban wildlife and enhance the quality of life for residents by offering recreational spaces and reducing the urban heat island effect. Protecting, enhancing, and connecting urban habitats will support biodiversity within cities, promote mental and physical health among residents, and contribute to climate resilience by managing stormwater and reducing temperatures. Retaining existing green and blue habitats in urban areas also contributes to the national environmental objective that everyone in England lives within a 15-minute walk of woodlands, wetlands, parks, canals, and rivers.

Priority	Measure	
Protection and Enhancement: Conserve and enhance green spaces within urban areas to support biodiversity and provide ecosystem services.	UB001	Protect brownfield sites with habitats that that support important biodiversity, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species and locally important species.
	UB002	Protect, restore, and enhance existing green and blue spaces into favourable ecological conditions.
	UB003	Increase the urban tree canopy by planting native and climate-resilient tree species in streets, parks, and other public spaces to provide habitat, reduce urban heat islands, and improve air quality.
	UB004	Protect and enhance urban rivers and their riparian boundary recognising their key role in supporting nature in towns and cities.
	UB005	Create new green and blue spaces and manage them to keep them in favourable ecological conditions.
Connectivity: Create green and blue corridors and networks to link urban habitats, facilitating wildlife movement and ecological interactions.	UB006	Connect existing green and blue spaces with other habitats (urban, sub-urban and rural) through best management practices, protection, and design of urban green corridors.
Management and Resilience: Implement urban habitat management strategies that increase resilience to environmental stresses and climate change.	UB007	Manage habitats within buildings (including roof spaces) when considering energy retrofits, change of use or new build; and use of appropriate mitigation measures.
	UB008	Create and manage high quality sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) based on urban design expertise and following the Leicester City Technical Guidance (2021).
	UB009	Integrate biodiversity into urban planning and development processes and promote sustainable urban design practices that incorporate green spaces.

Agricultural

Agricultural habitats, vital for food production, also have the potential to support a wide range of wildlife through sustainable farming practices. Protecting, enhancing, and connecting agricultural habitats can increase biodiversity on farmland, improve soil health, and support pollinators, essential for crop production. In addition, promoting sustainable agriculture can enhance food security and provide economic benefits to local communities.

Priority	Measure	
Sustainable Food Production: Promote sustainable and viable food production practices that increase biodiversity and improve soil health.	AG001	Promote suitable Agri-environment schemes that incentivise nature-friendly farming practices.
	AG002	Implement sustainable farming systems that enhance soil health, improve water management and quality, and increase and supports biodiversity.
Habitat Management: Manage agricultural landscapes to support biodiversity, including the conservation and enhancement of hedgerows, field margins, and wetlands.	AG003	Implement appropriate management and grazing regimes to maintain habitat structure.
	AG004	Manage water levels and drainage within agricultural land to maintain favourable conditions.
	AG005	Control invasive plant species on agricultural land.
Priority Habitat Creation: Develop and maintain priority habitats on agricultural land to support key species and enhance ecosystem services.	AG006	Create and manage priority wildlife habitats in agricultural landscapes.
	AG007	Create and manage priority habitat connections between existing habitats.

Open mosaic habitats

Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land are characterised by a mix of bare ground, grassland, scrub, and wetland, providing unique opportunities for colonising species and biodiversity. Protecting, enhancing, and connecting these habitats will help to sustain rare and specialist species, improve landscape diversity, and contribute to the ecological recovery of degraded lands. These habitats also offer opportunities for community engagement in restoration projects and can serve as unique recreational spaces.

Priority		Measure
Protection and Expansion: Ensure existing important open mosaic habitats are preserved and new open mosaic are established to increase transitional habitats between priority habitats and species populations.	OM001	Protect existing important open mosaic habitats and associated species in a manner consistent with national planning policy to make effective use of brownfield land.
	OM002	Create new or expand existing open mosaic habitats.
Connectivity: Develop and maintain wildlife corridors that link fragmented habitats, promoting biodiversity and ecosystem health.	OM003	Connect important open mosaic habitats with other priority habitats.
Management and Resilience: Implement sustainable management practices to enhance open mosaic habitats and resilience against climate change and pests.	OM004	Implement appropriate management regimes to maintain habitat structure.
	OM005	Manage water levels and drainage within open mosaic habitats to maintain suitable conditions.
	OM006	Control invasive plant species in open mosaic habitats.

Green and blue corridors

Sometimes referred to as Nature Networks, green and blue corridors, such as hedgerows, railways, road verges, canals, rivers, and streams, are crucial for connecting fragmented habitats and allowing species to move freely across the landscape. Protecting, improving, and connecting these corridors will enhance ecological connectivity, support species migration, and increase resilience to climate change. Additionally, these corridors provide scenic routes for walking and cycling, promoting outdoor activities and enhancing the wellbeing of local communities.

Priority	Measure	
Protection and Expansion: Ensure existing important green and blue corridors are conserved and enhanced and new habitats are established.	NN001	Protect existing hedgerows and promote the planting of new native hedgerows.
	NN002	Manage and enhance biodiversity along railway corridors with native vegetation.
	NN003	Create wildlife-friendly road verges with native wildflowers and grasses.
Connectivity: Develop and maintain wildlife corridors that link fragmented habitats, promoting biodiversity and ecosystem health.	NN004	Use hedgerows to create wildlife corridors.
	NN005	Restore, enhance and manage Local Wildlife Sites to recognise their ecological value and strengthen their role as stepping stones across the wider ecological network.
	NN006	Enhance ecological value of canal paths, cycle networks and public rights of way as green infrastructure corridors.
	NN007	Recognise the value of watercourse in urban spaces as unique connected habitats and manage them to keep them in favourable ecological conditions.
	NN008	Create green and blue corridors and networks to link urban habitats, facilitating wildlife movement and ecological interactions.
	NN009	Utilise railway lines (operational and disused) to create new bigger, better habitats, connecting existing priority habitats at landscape scale.
Management and Resilience: Implement sustainable management practices to enhance green and blue corridors and resilience against climate change and pests.	NN010	Encourage traditional hedgerow management techniques.
	NN011	Enhance biodiversity along green corridors with native vegetation and wildflower meadows.
	NN012	Promote pollinator-friendly habitats along networks.
	NN013	Control invasive plant species along networks.

Geodiversity

Geodiversity, encompassing the variety of rocks, minerals, soils, and landforms, underpins the health of all other habitats. Protecting, enhancing, and connecting geodiversity sites will help to maintain soil health, support unique ecosystems, and conserve geological heritage. This also provides educational opportunities and promotes tourism, which can bring economic benefits to local communities.

The development of the Charnwood Forest Geopark provides an opportunity to deliver the priorities and measures within this habitat.

Priority		Measure
Protect and Manage: Protect important geological sites and implement sustainable management practices to conserve and enhance these sites.	GE001	Promote geoconservation through the protection and management of important geological sites, such as National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Regionally Important Geological Sites, Geological Conservation Review sites. This includes work to prevent human actions that may damage geoheritage, as well as measures to mitigate erosion and vegetation growth, where appropriate.
	GE002	Through collaboration with Natural England, academia, voluntary groups, and others, ensure that geoheritage sites are adequately monitored.
	GE003	Seek to safeguard new sites of geological significance where necessary to ensure representative sections of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland's geodiversity are conserved.
	GE004	Integrate geodiversity data, including bedrock, superficial, and soil information, into biodiversity assessments, nature recovery plans, and special planning processes to inform integrated nature-based policy.
	GE005	Improve geodiversity public engagement by increasing public awareness of geodiversity, both for its inherent value and the vital role to biodiversity, through activities such as in-situ interpretation, guided tours, and educational materials.
	GE006	Promote soil conservation practices that enhance fertility, reduce soil erosion, and increase carbon sequestration.
Create and Connect: Transform quarry and mineral sites into thriving natural habitats that enhance biodiversity and support sustainable ecosystems.	GE007	Follow best practices for Phased Restoration.
	GE008	Use native plants, with ability to thrive on existing soils - connectivity to other habitats.
	GE009	Water to be properly managed to fit with character of area and to provide important wetland habitats.

9.4 Species

9.4.1 Introduction

Species are the building blocks of our natural world, each playing a unique and irreplaceable role in the intricate web of life. In Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, our diverse array of species ranging from the smallest invertebrates to the largest mammals contributes not only to the health and functionality of our ecosystems but also to the richness of our cultural and natural heritage.

Every species has intrinsic value, meaning it is valuable in and of itself, regardless of its utility to humans. The mere existence of a species, with its own unique evolutionary history and ecological role, is a testament to the complexity and beauty of life on Earth. Protecting species is an ethical obligation, reflecting our responsibility to conserve the diversity of life for its own sake and for future generations.

Species are deeply intertwined with human culture, art, and inspiration. Throughout history, the natural world has been a source of fascination, creativity, and spiritual fulfilment. From the songs of birds inspiring music to the beauty of wildflowers influencing art and poetry, species have always been integral to human expression. In Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, our local species contribute to a sense of place and identity, connecting communities to the landscapes around them.

Species are not isolated entities; they are integral components of ecosystems, interacting with one another in complex and dynamic ways. These interactions such as pollination, seed dispersal, and predation are vital for the functioning of ecosystems. Healthy, biodiverse ecosystems are more resilient to environmental changes, such as climate shifts and invasive non-native species, and are better able to provide essential natural services like clean air, water purification, and soil fertility. Every species, no matter how small, has a role and contributes to the stability and productivity of the ecosystems that humans depend on for survival.

The presence of a rich variety of species is crucial for maintaining environmental balance. For example, bees and other pollinators are essential for the reproduction of many plants, including those we rely on for food. Trees and plants not only provide habitat for wildlife but also sequester carbon, helping to mitigate climate change. Predator species help control populations of other animals, preventing overgrazing and maintaining vegetation diversity. In this way, species help sustain the environment that sustains us.

Species have inspired countless scientific discoveries and innovations. The study of wildlife behaviour, physiology, and ecology has led to advancements in medicine, agriculture, and technology. Biomimicry, where nature's designs inspire human innovation, is just one example of how species can influence new ways of thinking and problem-solving. Conserving the diversity of species is therefore not only an environmental imperative but also a source of potential future innovations.

Species also provide significant economic and recreational value. Ecotourism, birdwatching, fishing, and other wildlife-related activities generate income and employment for local communities. Moreover, the presence of diverse species enhances the beauty and appeal of natural landscapes, drawing visitors from near and far and contributing to local economies. Additionally, many species play a role in agriculture and horticulture, whether as pollinators, pest controllers, or sources of genetic diversity for crops.

Given their intrinsic and practical values, the protection and restoration of species in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland is a cornerstone of our Local Nature Recovery Strategy. By focusing on species conservation, we not only safeguard the biodiversity that makes our strategy area unique but also ensure the continued health of the ecosystem services that support our own wellbeing. Protecting species is about more than conservation; it is about conserving the fabric of life that sustains our planet and enriches our human experience.

9.4.2 Priority Species and Measures

Priority species refer to species that are identified as being of principal importance for biodiversity conservation. These species are typically selected based on their conservation status, ecological importance, and vulnerability to habitat loss, climate change, and other environmental pressures. The designation of priority species helps focus conservation efforts and resources on those species most in need of protection and recovery.

In developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, we have identified a range of priority species requiring targeted conservation action. However, nature is dynamic, and as ecosystems change due to climate shifts, habitat restoration, and rewilding efforts, we must also recognise the importance of naturally colonising species. Species such as the Eurasian Beaver, once extinct in England, are beginning to re-establish populations through both natural dispersal and reintroduction projects. These species can play a crucial role in ecosystem restoration, enhancing biodiversity, water retention, and flood mitigation. The strategy must therefore take a flexible, forward-looking approach, ensuring that conservation efforts support not only existing priority species but also create resilient landscapes where species can return, thrive, and contribute to ecosystem recovery.

Key rational for selection of the Priority Species:

Legislative Basis: Priority species lists are often derived from statutory designations, such as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) or the species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These species are of principal importance for conserving biodiversity at the national level.

Habitat-Specific Needs: Priority species are typically associated with specific habitats, such as ancient woodlands, wetlands, or grasslands. For example, species like the **Adder**, which depends on undisturbed acid heath grasslands, and the Curlew, which relies on open wet grassland, are often listed as priority species due to their specific habitat requirements.

Vulnerability and Decline: These species are often experiencing significant population declines or are at risk of local extinction due to habitat degradation, pollution, climate change, or other anthropogenic pressures. Protecting and restoring the habitats these species depend on is central to their conservation.

Ecological Importance: Priority species often play critical roles in their ecosystems, such as pollinators (e.g. **Grizzled Skipper Butterfly**) or apex predators. Protecting these species helps to maintain healthy and functional ecosystems.

Targeted Conservation Actions: Local Nature Recovery Strategies typically suggest bespoke measures for priority species, which may include habitat restoration, species reintroduction programs, and specific management practices to improve population resilience. These measures are designed to be locally specific, addressing the unique needs of the species in the context of the surrounding landscape.

The health of priority species populations is often seen as an indicator of the overall health of the ecosystem they inhabit. If priority species are thriving, it is usually a sign that the habitat is in good ecological condition.

Priority species lists help conservation practitioners and policymakers prioritise limited resources. These lists inform decisions on where to focus habitat restoration efforts, species reintroduction projects, and land management practices.

While many priority species are identified at the national level, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy enables these species to be contextualised for local landscapes, ensuring that actions are relevant to the specific ecological needs of Leicestershire, Leicester, Rutland, or any other area under the strategy.

In total 113 species were identified against the criteria. These are species which require bespoke action to protect and enhance their populations. The list is made up of **1 amphibian (Palmate Newt), 1 reptile (Adder), 12 birds (including Turtle Dove), 1 crustacean (White-clawed Crayfish), 6 invertebrates (including Glow worm), 3 fish (Including Brown Trout), 6 mammals (including Hedgehog), 77 rare vascular plants (including Purple Milk Vetch) and 6 lichen (including Lasallia pustulata).**

In summary, priority species within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy framework are those species most in need of focused conservation action due to their ecological importance, vulnerability, and the role they play in maintaining local biodiversity.

The full priority species list, including distribution maps and proposed conservation measures can be accessed in Appendix C.

9.4.3 Indicator Species

The **100 Indicator Species** have been carefully selected to serve as vital tools for monitoring the health of the environment across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. Representing a range of taxonomic groups, including mammals, birds, invertebrates, amphibians, plants, and fungi, these species are distributed across all major habitats, from woodlands and grasslands to freshwater ecosystems and urban areas.

The concept behind indicator species is straightforward: they are representatives of habitats in good ecological health. When these species thrive, it suggests that their ecosystems are functioning well, and when their populations decline, it signals environmental stress or degradation. Therefore, tracking the trends in the populations of these species provides valuable insights into the state of biodiversity and ecological balance within the area.

Chosen for their relative ease of identification and their broad appeal to citizen scientists and conservationists, these species are not rare but are known to be in decline. This makes them reliable indicators of changing environmental conditions. Their population trends can help detect issues such as habitat loss, climate change impacts, pollution, and other pressures on biodiversity.

It is our hope that this list will be adopted in future initiatives, helping to create a unified approach to monitoring the state of nature in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. By tracking these indicator species over time, we can more effectively assess the success of conservation efforts and make informed decisions to support the recovery of local ecosystems.

Species selected are based on the following criteria:

- association with quality habitats (including species found in multiple habitats)

- firmly established in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy area but have declined or maintained a low base level over the last 10 years.

- recorded sufficiently frequently to provide adequate data for analysis.

- can be seen without specialist sampling and be identified without detailed examination.

- Come from a wide range of taxon groups.

The Indicator Species list includes species such as **Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly**, which are found in nettles and gardens; **Lesser Stag Beetle**, the largest beetle found in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and is a good indicator of healthy woodland understorey; and, **Glow-Worm**, found in healthy species rich grassland, and can thrive along roadsides and many local wildlife sites.

Farmland birds such as **Linnet** and **Yellowhammer** have well established but declining populations. These birds are easily identifiable and improvements in their numbers could be attributed to well managed hedgerows and field margins in arable fields.

Swan Mussel is a good indicator for clean flowing water. These are known to be declining but will recover with improvements to water quality and good management.

By monitoring these species, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy aims to create a robust and sustainable framework for biodiversity conservation, ensuring that all species and their habitats are preserved for future generations.

The full indicator species list and supporting selection process documents can be accessed in Appendix C.

68% of respondents very interested in helping wildlife in their garden.

81

9.5 Landscape Scale Priorities and Measures

9.5.1 Introduction

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy identified several key landscape-scale priorities that are essential for improving biodiversity and ecosystem health. These priorities address issues that affect large areas of the landscape and cannot be confined to specific mapped locations. Instead, they require widespread implementation across different land types and habitats.

A holistic approach to land management considers the ecological, social, and economic aspects of a landscape. It is complex as it often involves working in partnership and across multiple land ownerships. Hedgerow management, roadside grass verge management, woodland management, the control of invasive non-native species (INNS) and pests, nature-friendly farming and natural flood management need to be actioned at a landscape scale because these elements play a critical role in maintaining and enhancing ecological connectivity across large areas. These habitats serve as vital wildlife corridors, linking fragmented habitats and enabling species to move freely, essential for genetic diversity and resilience against environmental changes. Addressing invasive non-native species and pests at a landscape scale is crucial to prevent their spread and to protect native ecosystems. By taking a coordinated, large-scale approach, we can create a more cohesive, biodiverse landscape that supports the recovery and sustainability of priority species and habitats.

The following sections outline the measures associated with each priority, as well as additional landscape-scale initiatives that will contribute to nature recovery.

46% of respondents very interested in growing fruit and vegetables.

82

9.5.2 Landscape Scale Priorities and Measures

a) Landscape Hedgerow Optimisation

Hedgerows are crucial ecological corridors in the rural and urban landscapes of Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. They provide habitat and movement pathways for a range of species, including birds, mammals, insects, and plants. However, many hedgerows are poorly managed, fragmented, or over-trimmed, reducing their ecological value. Optimising hedgerow management at a landscape scale will support wildlife, enhance connectivity, and contribute to climate resilience.

Hedgerow Priority:

Optimise Hedgerows: Plant new, enhance existing and expand Hedgerows to create continuous habitat corridors that support wildlife movement improve habitat quality, and boost biodiversity across the landscape.

Measures:

- Prioritise planting new hedgerows in areas of low hedgerow density comparable to the strategy area.

- Implement a rotational cutting, planning different sections of hedgerows in different years to allow flowering and fruiting, which benefits pollinators and provides food for wildlife.

- Encourage the growth of wider and thicker hedgerows by planting additional native shrubs and trees, which provide better shelter and nesting opportunities for birds and small mammals.

- Fill in gaps in existing hedgerows with native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, and hazel to create continuous wildlife corridors.

- Retain and promote the growth of standard trees within hedgerows, which provide habitat diversity and long-term ecological benefits.

- Following best practice guides, prioritise planting a variety of native hedgerow species to enhance biodiversity.

- Establish wildflower margins alongside hedgerows to increase nectar sources and habitat for pollinators.

- Ensure hedgerows are connected to other habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands to facilitate wildlife movement across the landscape.

- Identify areas where historical hedgerows have been lost and work towards restoring these to reconnect fragmented habitats.

b) Landscape Roadside Grass Verges

Roadside grass verges across the strategy area represent an extensive but underutilised habitat for wildlife. When managed correctly, they can act as wildflower corridors, support pollinator populations, and provide connectivity across fragmented landscapes. Unfortunately, road verges are often mown too frequently or at inappropriate times, limiting their ecological potential.

Roadside Grass Verge Priority:

Optimise Roadside Grass Verge: Manage and enhance roadside grass verges to create biodiverse corridors that support pollinators, improve habitat connectivity, and contribute to local wildlife conservation.

Measures:

- Implement a reduced mowing regime, cutting verges only once or twice a year, preferably after the flowering season to allow plants to set seed and support pollinators.

- Adopt staggered cutting practices where different sections of verges are mowed at different times, maintaining habitat diversity throughout the growing season.

- Introduce native wildflower species to road verges, focusing on species that are beneficial for pollinators and resilient to roadside conditions.

- Avoid planting non-native or invasive species and instead promote the establishment of native grasses and flowers that support local wildlife.

- Where appropriate, allow for the growth of small patches of scrub and native trees to provide shelter and nesting sites for birds and insects.

- Design road verges to function as pollinator corridors, ensuring they connect with other green spaces such as parks, farmland, woodlands, and nature reserves.

- Create buffer strips between the road and the verge to reduce pollution impacts and protect sensitive plant species from road runoff.

- Manage road verges in a way that balances safety for road users with the needs of wildlife, maintaining clear sightlines while promoting biodiversity.

- Promote pollinator-friendly planting in urban gardens, parks, and road verges by encouraging the use of native wildflowers and reducing chemical use. This will provide essential food sources and nesting habitats for pollinators like bees and butterflies.

c) Landscape Invasive Non-Native Species and Pest Management

Invasive non-native species and pests pose a significant threat to native biodiversity by outcompeting native species, altering habitats, and spreading disease. The control and management of invasive non-native species and pests are essential to protect the ecological integrity of habitats across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland.

Invasive Non-Native Species Priority:

Invasive Non-Native Species and Pest Management: Implement coordinated efforts to monitor, control, and eradicate invasive non-native species to protect native biodiversity and restore ecological balance.

Measures:

- Establish a comprehensive monitoring program to identify the presence of invasive non-native species early, particularly in sensitive habitats such as wetlands, woodlands, and along waterways.

- Sustainable pest management is essential to maintaining balanced ecosystems and preventing adverse impacts on biodiversity and food production.

- Form rapid response teams that can act quickly to control new infestations before they become widespread.

- Focus on eradicating the most harmful invasive species first, which have the greatest negative impact on native biodiversity.

- Follow best practice guides to choose the correct methods to manage invasive species, ensuring that the methods used are safe for the environment and non-target species.

- After removal of invasive species, promptly revegetate the area with native plants to prevent re-invasion and restore the ecological balance.

- Improve habitat conditions that favour native species over invasive ones, such as enhancing soil health, water management, and light conditions.

- Implement long-term monitoring and management plans to ensure that eradication efforts are sustained and that areas cleared of invasive species do not become reinfested.

d) Landscape Woodland Management

Woodlands play a crucial role in biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and water management. However, many woodlands in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland suffer from poor management, including overgrazing by deer, lack of structural diversity, and a limited age range of trees. Optimising woodland management at a landscape scale will help create healthier, more resilient woodlands.

Woodland Management Priority:

Woodland Management: Implement sustainable management practices to enhance woodland health and resilience against climate change and pests.

Measures:

- Increase woodland management to bring all woodlands into good ecological condition.

- Encourage active woodland management through coppicing, thinning, and the promotion of structural diversity. This will create varied microhabitats and increase light penetration to support ground flora and invertebrates.

- Implement sustainable deer management practices to reduce browsing pressure on young trees and understorey vegetation. This will allow natural regeneration and enhance the overall biodiversity of woodlands.

- Retain deadwood both standing and, on the ground, as it provides essential habitat for fungi, invertebrates, birds, and mammals.

- Promote the management of woodland edges to create transitional zones between woodland and grassland, which are particularly valuable for species such as butterflies and small mammals.

- Engage local communities in woodland management activities, including volunteering programs to plant trees, control invasive species, and monitor biodiversity.

- Explore the use of trees and woodland as nature-based solutions and increase tree cover throughout the landscape.

- Implement strategic tree planting on non-productive agricultural land to sequester carbon, enhance biodiversity, and improve soil health.

e) Landscape Nature-Friendly Farming

Nature-friendly farming: Nature-friendly farming plays a critical role in supporting biodiversity and promoting sustainable land use. By integrating conservation practices with agricultural production, farmers can help create habitats, support wildlife populations, and contribute to ecosystem health across the landscape. This approach also improves the resilience of farmland to environmental changes, ensuring long-term productivity.

Nature-Friendly Farming Priority:

Encourage farming practices that align with Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) schemes to support wildlife conservation while maintaining productive and viable agriculture. Enhance habitat quality, protect soil health, and boost biodiversity within the agricultural landscape.

Measures:

- Consider adopting diverse planting schedules and crop rotations, which can benefit soil health and support pollinators, as outlined in the relevant SFI standards.

- Explore options to establish field margins, buffer strips, and hedgerows to provide habitats for wildlife, supporting the goals of SFI.

- Review opportunities to reduce pesticide and chemical fertiliser use, focusing on enhancing natural pest control and pollinator-friendly practices through SFI guidance.

- Look into integrating agroforestry or introducing trees and shrubs into farmland to enhance habitat diversity, potentially supported by SFI funding.

- Consider creating or maintaining ponds or wetland features to support amphibians and insects, contributing to SFI priorities for water management and biodiversity.

- Allow for fallow areas or wildflower patches to encourage pollinator populations, in line with SFI options for habitat improvement.

- Explore organic or reduced-input practices as an approach that complements SFI schemes focused on natural ecosystem enhancement.

f) Landscape Grassland Management

Grasslands are vital habitats for a variety of species, including plants, insects, birds, and small mammals. They provide essential ecosystem services such as pollination, soil stabilisation, and carbon storage. However, many grasslands are poorly managed or have been converted to other land uses, leading to a decline in biodiversity. Managing and creating species-rich grasslands at a landscape scale will help restore ecological balance, support pollinator populations, and contribute to climate resilience.

Grassland Management Priority:

Enhance and Create Species-Rich Grasslands: Manage existing grasslands and create new species rich grasslands to increase habitat diversity, support pollinator species, and promote connectivity across fragmented landscapes.

Measures:

- Identify and restore degraded grasslands through re-seeding with native wildflower and grass species that are beneficial to pollinators and other wildlife.

- Promote traditional hay meadow management, including late-season cutting and reduced grazing, to allow wildflowers to set seed and maintain plant diversity.

- Encourage rotational grazing practices that avoid overgrazing and allow for periods of rest and regeneration, supporting diverse plant communities.

- Establish new grassland habitats in areas of low grassland cover to increase landscape connectivity and provide corridors for wildlife movement.

- Introduce conservation grazing using native breeds to maintain grassland structure and prevent scrub encroachment, preserving the diversity of plant and animal species.

- Work with local landowners and farmers to create wildflower strips alongside arable fields, supporting pollinators and creating steppingstones between larger grassland habitats.

- Encourage the use of agri-environment schemes to support the creation and management of species-rich grasslands, particularly in areas of high landscape connectivity. Integrate grassland creation and enhancement with other habitat types, such as woodland edges, to create transitional zones that are valuable for a range of species.

g) Landscape Freshwater and Wetland Management

Freshwater and wetland habitats such as rivers, ponds, and marshes are essential for supporting diverse aquatic life and providing important ecosystem services like water filtration, flood control, and carbon sequestration. However, these habitats have been significantly reduced and degraded. Managing and creating new freshwater and wetland areas will enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and contribute to landscape-scale resilience against climate change.

Freshwater and Wetland Management Priority:

Restore and Create Freshwater and Wetland Habitats: Manage existing freshwater systems and create new wetlands, ponds, and riparian areas to support biodiversity, improve water quality, and reduce flood risk.

Measures:

- Restore natural hydrology in existing wetlands by re-establishing water flow regimes, removing artificial barriers, and reconnecting wetlands with floodplains.

- Create new ponds, scrapes, and wetland areas in suitable locations to provide habitats for amphibians, invertebrates, and wetland birds, focusing on areas with low wetland coverage.

- Enhance riparian zones along rivers and streams by planting native vegetation to stabilise banks, filter pollutants, and provide habitat for wildlife.

- Introduce buffer strips along freshwater bodies to reduce runoff from surrounding agricultural fields and improve water quality.

- Re-naturalise river channels through re-meandering and removing hard engineering structures to create more diverse habitats and slow down water flow, reducing downstream flood risks.

- Promote the restoration of ghost ponds and marshes to enhance carbon sequestration and water storage capacity, particularly in areas vulnerable to flooding.

- Work with local communities and landowners to create new wetland features that can act as steppingstones for wildlife, contributing to increased connectivity across the landscape.

- Encourage sustainable land use practices in catchment areas to prevent nutrient loading and improve the overall health of freshwater ecosystems.

h) Landscape Flood Management and Natural Solutions

Natural flood management (NFM) uses processes like tree planting, wetland creation, and river restoration to slow water flow and reduce flooding. These methods not only protect communities but also create habitats for wildlife. However, limited awareness and support often restrict their full potential.

Natural Flood Management Priority:

Natural Flood Management: Implement natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risk, enhance water quality, and support biodiversity.

Measures:

- Collaborate on Catchment-Based Natural Flood Management (NFM): Work within catchment areas to implement NFM measures such as re-meandering rivers, restoring natural floodplains, and creating connected wetland networks. These actions will slow water flow, reduce peak flood levels, and improve water infiltration. These efforts are especially vital in flood-prone areas to reduce the downstream impacts of heavy rainfall.

- Enhance Riparian Vegetation: Establish and maintain riparian buffer zones with native tree and shrub planting. These areas help stabilise riverbanks, filter pollutants, and provide important habitats for wildlife, while also slowing water runoff and reducing erosion.

- Restore and Create Wetlands: Prioritise the restoration of degraded wetlands and create new wetlands where feasible. Restored wetlands can act as natural sponges, absorbing excess water, acting as carbon sinks, and providing critical habitat for various species. Focus on areas where wetland restoration can provide co-benefits, such as carbon sequestration, enhanced biodiversity, and improved water regulation.

- Reconnect Floodplains: Enable natural floodplain connectivity by removing physical barriers where possible. Reconnected floodplains can store excess floodwater, alleviate downstream flooding, and allow sediment deposition, which helps improve soil quality and prevent nutrient loss.

- Soil and Land Management: Encourage sustainable soil management techniques that enhance water retention and reduce surface runoff. Techniques such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, and maintaining permanent grasslands can significantly mitigate flood risks by improving soil structure and organic matter content.

- Promote Woodland Creation: Identify strategic areas where woodland planting can reduce the speed of water flow into rivers and streams. Woodlands enhance water infiltration and act as natural barriers that reduce surface runoff, while also offering valuable habitat for wildlife and sequestering carbon.

- Community Involvement and Monitoring: Engage local landowners, farmers, and communities in NFM initiatives, ensuring they understand the benefits of these measures and are involved in the process. Use citizen science and monitoring programs to track the effectiveness of NFM projects and adapt strategies as necessary.

10. Delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

10.1 Introduction

We do not want the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to gather dust on a shelf, or the electronic equivalent. Instead, we want the strategy to be a catalyst for action. In order for such action to take place there needs to be a number of fundamental elements in place. This chapter sets out what these need to be and the key next steps that will be taken to mobilise the strategy into action.

10.2 Leveraging Partnerships

Collaboration among different stakeholder groups is essential for amplifying the impact of nature recovery efforts. As environmental challenges become more complex and widespread, it is increasingly clear that no single entity be it government, businesses, non-governmental organisations, or local communities can turn around nature's fortunes alone. By working together, diverse stakeholder groups can combine their resources, knowledge, and influence to achieve greater outcomes for nature recovery than any could accomplish independently.

One of the most significant benefits of collaboration is the ability to pool resources and expertise. Different stakeholders bring unique strengths to the table - financial resources, technical skills, local knowledge, and policy influence, which can all complement one another. For example:

- **Farmers and farm clusters** offer intimate knowledge of the land and practical insights into what approaches will work best on the ground.

- **Local communities, Parish Councils and landowners** offer detailed insights of the land and practical experience on what will work in reality.

- **Government agencies** can provide funding, regulatory frameworks, and access to public lands for conservation projects.

- **Businesses** can offer financial investment, innovative technologies, and influence in supply chains to promote sustainable practices.

- **Non-governmental organisations** such as environmental conservation organisations and catchment partnerships often bring expertise in conservation science, project management, and public engagement.

- **Local authorities and neighbouring responsible authorities** should liaise and adopt standard best practice to ensure nature recovery approaches are aligned across political boundaries

> **Good ideas but consistency is important. Because we start and never finish and help nature improve consistently.**
>
> (Young resident)

Through collaboration and formal partnerships, these groups should seek to leverage their collective resources more effectively, leading to more comprehensive and well-funded nature recovery initiatives.

Environmental issues such as habitat fragmentation, climate change, and biodiversity loss are often best addressed at a landscape scale, which requires coordinated efforts across large areas and multiple jurisdictions. Collaboration among stakeholders allows for the development of landscape-scale conservation strategies that are more effective and cost-efficient than isolated, piecemeal efforts.

For instance, farmers, landowners, conservation organisations, and government bodies need to work together to deliver the strategic objectives of the strategy, such as establishing strategic wildlife corridors that span agricultural lands, woodlands, and urban areas.

Collaborative efforts also ensure that conservation actions are strategically aligned, avoiding duplication, and maximising the impact across the entire landscape.

Key stakeholder partnerships should seek to deliver nature recovery projects that involves local communities, farmers, conservationists, and businesses. These initiatives will be seen as more legitimate and inclusive than one led by a single entity. This broad-based support can also lead to more sustainable outcomes, as partners will voluntarily sign up to binding agreements, ensuring they are more likely to remain committed to the project over the long term.

Collaboration fosters the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and best practices among stakeholders, leading to more innovative and effective solutions. Different groups often approach problems from unique perspectives, and when these perspectives are shared, it can lead to the development of new strategies and technologies that enhance nature recovery efforts.

For example, such a broad, formal but voluntarily entered into partnership could oversee a collaboration between a tech company and a conservation organisation, leading to the development of new monitoring tools that use satellite imagery or drones to track habitat restoration progress. Similarly, farmers working with ecologists might develop new ingenious farming practices that enhance biodiversity while maintaining agricultural productivity.

Collaboration allows successful nature recovery projects to be scaled up and replicated across different regions and contexts. When a collaborative approach proves effective in one area, it can serve as a model for others, and the lessons learned can be applied more broadly. This scalability is essential for addressing the global scale of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

Nature recovery efforts often require long-term commitment and long-term management to be successful. Collaboration helps ensure that these efforts are more sustainable by distributing responsibilities and creating a network of support that can endure beyond the life of individual projects.

Local authorities, partners and key stakeholders working and investing in projects together are more likely to maintain their involvement over time, providing ongoing support, monitoring, and adaptive management. For example, a conservation easement involving a land trust, local government, and a community group is more likely to be maintained over the long term than a project managed by a single entity.

Working with local communities to develop nature-based tourism can provide economic benefits while also promoting conservation. Similarly, engaging with farmers to implement agri-environment schemes can enhance biodiversity while supporting sustainable livelihoods. Collaboration ensures that the needs and rights of all stakeholders are considered, leading to more holistic and just outcomes.

10.3 Farmers Supporting Biodiversity Through Conservation Initiatives

Farmers, including tenant farmers, land managers and landowners can participate in government-backed agri-environment schemes which provides financial incentives for adopting environmentally friendly practices. These schemes often include measures to enhance wildlife habitats, improve water quality, and reduce carbon emissions, aligning farm management with broader conservation goals.

Formalised partnership working, including farms, farming clusters, conservation organisations, and local communities, could support farmers and land managers to contribute to landscape-scale conservation initiatives. These collaborative efforts are essential for creating large, interconnected habitats that support wide-ranging species and enhance ecosystem resilience. Farmer-led conservation groups and clusters are increasingly recognised as effective vehicles for driving these initiatives, enabling the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices.

Farmers have a unique voice in advocating for sustainable agriculture policies and practices at the local, regional, and national levels. By championing the importance of nature recovery in farming, they can influence policy development, encourage wider adoption of sustainable practices, and help secure the necessary support and resources for conservation efforts.

Farmers have an important role to play in conserving and enhancing nature on their land. Through financial schemes like Environmental Land Management (ELM), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and other incentives that aim to support the delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, farmers are provided with opportunities and financial benefits to make space for nature, contributing to the recovery of biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture. These initiatives align with the UK's goals for nature restoration and climate change mitigation.

The integration of agriculture and nature conservation through these schemes not only ensures sustainable and viable food production but also contributes to national and global efforts to tackle the biodiversity and climate crises.

Image courtesy of Charnwood Forest LPS

Farmers and landowners most prepared to contribute to the restoration and management of wetlands, heathland and grassland to protect and enhance nature, with the right support.

Some conservation routes open to farmers and landowners include:

Local Nature Recovery Strategy delivery

- **Targeted nature recovery:** Local Nature Recovery Strategy identifies priority habitats and species in specific areas. Farmers can align their land management practices with local nature recovery goals by creating or restoring habitats that support these regional priorities.

- **Collaborative conservation:** Farmers including tenants can work together with other landowners, conservation groups, and local authorities to form landscape-scale conservation projects. These collaborative efforts can focus on restoring wildlife corridors, floodplains, and woodlands, creating connected landscapes that are more resilient to environmental changes.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Local Nature Recovery Strategies encourage partnerships between the public sector, private landowners, and non-governmental organisations. Farmers can engage with these partnerships to access funding and expertise for large-scale habitat restoration or species recovery initiatives.

- **Tailored approaches:** Local Nature Recovery Strategies aim to be locally relevant, meaning farmers can adopt conservation practices suited to their region's unique landscape and ecological challenges, ensuring that their efforts contribute effectively to biodiversity and climate resilience.

Environmental Land Management

Environmental Land Management (ELM) focuses on paying farmers to deliver "public goods" such as clean air, water, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration. ELM consist of Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Countryside Stewardship (CS), Landscape Recovery, each offering different opportunities for farmers

to integrate nature into their operations. What follows is a summary of how these schemes can support farmers in delivering for nature recovery. For more information on these schemes: Environmental land management schemes: details of actions and payments - Farming (blog.gov.uk)

Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship

- Farmers are encouraged to adopt practices that improve soil health, such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, and organic farming. Healthy soils store carbon, improve water retention, and support diverse ecosystems, including beneficial invertebrates, fungi, and plant species.

- Integrating trees and shrubs into farming systems (agroforestry) can provide habitats for wildlife while improving soil fertility and carbon sequestration. Agroforestry can also increase resilience to climate change impacts, such as drought.

- Habitat creation and restoration of habitats such as wetlands, meadows, and woodlands. Farmers can establish flower-rich grasslands, ponds, and riparian buffers along watercourses, creating havens for pollinators, birds, and aquatic species.

- Funding is available for linking habitats across farms, helping species to move and disperse. Farmers can plant hedgerows or manage field margins in ways that promote connectivity between fragmented habitats.

- Farmers may be incentivised to implement measures that benefit threatened species, such as providing nesting sites for birds or restoring habitats for amphibians and reptiles.

Landscape Recovery

- Large-Scale Habitat Restoration: Farmers who own larger areas of land may be able to participate in large-scale restoration projects, such as restoring peatlands, wetlands, or forests. These projects contribute significantly to carbon sequestration, flood management, and biodiversity recovery.

- River and Wetland Restoration: There are opportunities to restore natural watercourses and wetland systems on farmland, improving water quality, reducing flooding risk downstream, and creating habitats for aquatic and wetland species.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain requires developers to ensure that any habitat loss due to construction or development is not only compensated but results in an overall measurable net gain in biodiversity. This is achieved by creating or enhancing habitats either on-site or off-site, with the level of compensation influenced by the strategic significance multiplier. This multiplier increases the value of biodiversity units where habitat creation aligns with local nature recovery priorities, ensuring that offsetting contributes to landscape-scale ecological restoration rather than isolated interventions. By directing habitat enhancement towards priority areas identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain can deliver greater ecological connectivity, resilience, and long-term biodiversity benefits.

This presents benefits and opportunities for farmers and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to make long-term commitments to nature recovery through:

- **Habitat creation as offsetting:** Farmers can create or enhance habitats on their land to sell biodiversity credits to developers who need to offset their environmental impacts. This could involve creating woodlands, wetlands, or species-rich grasslands.

- **Management of existing habitats:** Farmers who manage their land for wildlife can enter agreements to conserve or enhance existing habitats, such as woodlands, ponds, or wildflower meadows, ensuring long-term biodiversity benefits.

- **Financial incentives:** By participating in Biodiversity Net Gain, farmers can access a new revenue stream that commits them to long-term habitat management or creation. This allows them to diversify their income while supporting wildlife recovery.

- **Alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategy Aims:** Farmers participating in Biodiversity Net Gain can contribute directly to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy by creating or enhancing habitats that align with the conservation priorities identified in their local area. This could help secure additional funding and recognition for their efforts in contributing to regional and national biodiversity targets.

- **Community and Regional Benefits:** By participating in Local Nature Recovery Strategy-aligned schemes, farmers support not only biodiversity on their own land but also contribute to larger, landscape-level conservation initiatives, fostering stronger community ties and regional environmental improvements.

Additional opportunities across these schemes are well suited to less productive areas of farms and may enable farmers to reduce costs and increase efficiencies across the rest of their holdings:

- Carbon sequestration and climate resilience: In addition to biodiversity benefits, many of the habitat creation and enhancement activities under ELMs, BNG, and LNRS also provide opportunities for carbon sequestration. Practices such as tree planting, restoring peatlands, and improving soil health capture carbon, helping farmers contribute to climate change mitigation.

- Water quality and flood management: Restoring wetlands, creating riparian buffers, and planting hedgerows and trees can improve water quality by reducing nutrient runoff and trapping sediments. These features also slow down water flow, reducing the risk of flooding, which benefits both farmers and downstream communities.

- Pollinator support: Farmers can create pollinator habitats through wildflower meadows, field margins, and hedgerows, which are essential for supporting crops that depend on pollination. These actions also benefit a wide range of other wildlife, from birds to insects.

10.4 Individual Actions

Nature recovery is not solely the result of large-scale projects or sweeping policy changes; it is also driven by the cumulative impact of countless individual actions taken by people, communities, and organisations. Each small action, whether it's planting a tree, reducing pesticide use, creating a pond, or restoring a hedgerow, contributes to the larger goal of enhancing biodiversity and restoring ecosystems. When these actions are multiplied across a landscape, they collectively create significant positive change.

The principle behind this cumulative impact is that small, local efforts can add up to large, landscape-scale benefits. For example, if many farmers in a region adopt more sustainable land management practices, such as reducing chemical inputs or establishing wildlife corridors, the overall health of the strategy area's ecosystems can improve dramatically. Similarly, if residents in urban areas collectively increase green spaces, plant native species, and reduce waste, the urban environment can become much more supportive of biodiversity.

This cumulative effect underscores the importance of engaging and empowering individuals and communities to act. When people understand that their contributions matter, they are more likely to participate in and support nature recovery efforts. Moreover, these individual actions can inspire others, creating a ripple effect that amplifies the impact across broader regions.

Opportunities for individual involvement:

- Community-led planning: Parish Councils and neighbourhood planning groups can play a key role in embedding nature recovery within local plans and influencing land use decisions that benefit nature.

- Giving nature a home: Taking action that supports nature in spaces that individuals have control of. For example, private gardens, community spaces, schools and allotments.

- Citizen science: Encouraging individuals to participate in species monitoring and habitat surveys.

- Sustainable living practices: Promoting actions such as reducing pesticide use, planting native species, and supporting local conservation efforts.

- Volunteering: Opportunities for individuals to contribute time and skills to local nature recovery projects.

53% of respondents enjoy or access nature every day.

10.5 Securing Funding and Resources

While individual actions are crucial, the success of this Local Nature Recovery Strategy also hinges on securing adequate funding and resources. Achieving the ambitious goals of nature recovery often requires significant financial investment, access to specialised knowledge, and the deployment of practical tools and technologies. Without sufficient funding and resources, even the most well-intentioned plans can struggle to achieve their full potential.

Securing funding allows for the implementation of large-scale projects, such as habitat restoration, the creation of nature reserves, or the development of green and blue infrastructure. These projects often require capital for land acquisition, restoration activities, and ongoing management. Additionally, resources are needed for research, monitoring, and public engagement, all of which are essential components of a successful nature recovery strategy.

Funding can support capacity building and training for those involved in nature recovery efforts. This includes providing farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to adopt sustainable practices, training volunteers in habitat management, or supporting local authorities in developing and enforcing conservation policies.

The importance of securing funding also extends to ensuring the long-term sustainability of nature recovery efforts. Many environmental initiatives require ongoing maintenance and management to remain effective. For example, reforested areas may need continued protection from invasive species, and restored wetlands may require regular water quality monitoring. Without long-term funding commitments, these efforts may falter, leading to a loss of hard-won gains.

A further benefit of a formal partnership arrangement is the increased ability to leverage collective skills and resources to access public and private investment for those positioned to deliver action for nature.

10.6 Sharing Knowledge and Creating Capacity

One of the most significant challenges in nature recovery is the fragmentation of efforts across different sectors and organisations. Businesses, conservation groups, local authorities, farmers, and community organisations often work independently, each with valuable insights and resources but limited interaction with others engaged in similar work. This can lead to duplication of efforts, inefficient use of resources, and missed opportunities for synergy.

The ability to monitor, support and review nature recovery would be greatly enhanced with a centralised knowledge and resource sharing platform. This would present a transformative opportunity for enhancing nature recovery efforts at the local and regional levels. As environmental challenges grow more complex and interconnected, the need for coordinated action, informed by the latest knowledge and best practices, becomes increasingly critical. Such a platform would not only streamline access to information and resources but also foster collaboration and innovation across diverse sectors involved in conservation.

A centralised platform would address fragmentation by bringing all relevant stakeholders together in a single, accessible digital space. It would enable organisations and volunteer groups to align their efforts, share data, expertise and knowledge, and coordinate actions more effectively. This kind of coordination is essential for tackling complex environmental issues that span multiple jurisdictions and require a landscape-scale approach.

By pooling resources, stakeholders can access a richer and more diverse set of information than they would be able to gather independently. This includes access to the latest research, case studies, management guides, and technical expertise, all of which can significantly improve the effectiveness of nature recovery initiatives.

Innovation often arises from collaboration, especially when diverse perspectives come together to solve common problems. A centralised knowledge and resource sharing platform would foster such collaboration by connecting stakeholders who might not otherwise interact. This could lead to the development of new partnerships, joint ventures, innovation, and collaborative projects that might otherwise remain localised. For example, a farming cluster in one region might develop a novel method for enhancing biodiversity on agricultural land. Through the platform, this method could be shared and adapted by other farmers across the country, amplifying its impact and contributing to wider environmental benefits.

Access to resources whether financial, technical, or information is often a limiting factor in the success of nature recovery projects. A centralised platform would serve as a hub where stakeholders can find the support they need, whether it's through grants and funding opportunities, expert advice, or tools and templates for project management.

For catchment partners, smaller organisations and community groups, in particular, the ability to tap into a broader network of support can be crucial. The platform would provide access to resources, ensuring that all stakeholders, regardless of size or capacity, could contribute effectively to nature recovery efforts.

A centralised platform would build and focus efforts on a shared vision for nature recovery across all sectors. By bringing together stakeholders with diverse interests but common goals, the platform would facilitate the development of a coherent and unified strategy for environmental stewardship. This shared vision is essential for creating the momentum and public support needed to achieve large-scale, lasting change.

The opportunity to create a centralised knowledge and resource sharing platform for nature recovery would represents a significant step forward in addressing the environmental challenges we face. By improving coordination, leveraging collective expertise, enhancing access to resources, promoting collaboration, and building a shared vision, this platform has the potential to transform how we approach conservation and sustainability. It is an opportunity to move beyond isolated efforts and toward a more integrated, effective, and impactful strategy for restoring and protecting our natural environment.

10.7 Next Steps

To effectively deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the immediate next steps involve setting up robust governance structures, developing a delivery plan, developing detailed work plans, and understanding the availability of funding and resources.

- Establish Governance Structures: A formal governance framework will be created to oversee the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including the evolution of the Steering Group and Strategic Reference Group, setting up working groups, and securing key roles for stakeholders. This governance structure will ensure accountability and provide clear leadership throughout the implementation phase.

- Develop a Delivery Plan: A structured delivery plan will be created to outline the key steps, timelines, and responsibilities necessary for implementing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This plan will provide a clear framework for action, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and milestones are met. It will also establish mechanisms for monitoring progress, adapting to challenges, and maintaining stakeholder engagement throughout the process. By setting out clear deliverables and performance indicators, the delivery plan will support the effective coordination of efforts across all involved parties.

- Develop Work Plans: Work plans will be developed to instruct the specific actions required to achieve the strategies aims. This will include identifying priority areas for habitat restoration, species recovery efforts, and nature-based solutions. The work plans will also allocate responsibilities among partners and stakeholders, ensuring a coordinated approach across sectors.

- Securing Funding and Resources: A critical next step is to assess potential funding streams and resource availability. This will involve identifying funding opportunities, from local or national funding sources, and in-kind support from stakeholders. We will work to ensure a sustainable financial model that supports the long-term delivery of the strategy.

- Partnership Engagement: We will continue engaging with existing partners and identify new stakeholders to broaden the collaborative effort. This includes strengthening ties with local authorities, farmers, land managers and landowners, community groups, government agencies and environmental organisations, ensuring that all relevant parties are involved in the strategy's delivery.

- Monitoring and Reporting Framework: A framework for monitoring and evaluating progress will be developed to track the effectiveness of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This will include setting key performance indicators (KPIs), timelines, and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.

- Training and Capacity Building: To ensure the successful implementation of the strategy, we will assess and address any skills gaps among partners and stakeholders. This might involve providing training or facilitating knowledge exchange to build capacity for biodiversity management and restoration activities.

Appendices

Appendix A
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term	Definition
Adaption	In the context of climate change, it is the altering our behaviour, systems, and in some cases ways of life to protect our families, our economies, and the environment in which we live from the impacts of climate change.
Biodiversity Net Gain	BNG is an approach to development. It makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Citizen Science	When the public participates voluntarily in the scientific process to address real-world problems.
Ecological Decline	Also called Ecosystem Decline. The process by which an ecosystem suffers a drastic, possibly permanent reduction in the carrying capacity for all organisms. This can often result in mass extinction. This can happen slowly over time but more often occurs over a short timescale.
Ecosystem Services	The direct and indirect contributions ecosystems (known as natural capital) provide for human wellbeing and quality of life e.g. food, water, health benefits.
Green Blue Corridors	The use of waterways, land e.g. disused rail line, as a sustainable design solution to establish an interconnected passageway between natural habitats.

Term	Definition
Flood Zones	Flood zones are based on the likelihood of an area flooding from rivers or the sea with catchments greater than 3km². Flood Zone 1 areas are least likely to flood and Flood Zone 3 areas more likely to flood.
Greenhouse Gases	A group of gases which contribute to global warming and climate change. Includes carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride, perfluorocarbons, and nitrogen trifluoride.
Green Infrastructure	The network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. We also include 'blue infrastructure' (landscape elements linked to water) within our use of this phrase.
Hydrology	Is the movement, distribution, and management of water on Earth, including the water cycle, water resources, and drainage basins.
Keystone Species	Any organism - from animals and plants to bacteria and fungi – which is the glue that holds a habitat together.
Lawtonian Principles	Originating from the 2010 Lawton report, it is the principle of creating an ecological network that operates more naturally and effectively, the Lawton report called for some simple measures - more, bigger, better and joined-up sites within the landscape.

Term	Definition
Leaky Dam	Is a dam made of natural woody materials, laid in streams and ditches. They are designed to reduce the downstream flood peak by temporarily storing water by holding it back within the stream's channel or encouraging it to spill onto the banks behind the barrier and slowing the flow.
Local Habitat Map	The Local Habitat Map is a key component of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It maps areas of particular importance for biodiversity, and areas that could become of particular importance.
Mitigation	In the context of climate change, it means avoiding and reducing emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to prevent the planet from warming to more extreme temperatures, e.g. reducing use of fossil fuels, protecting existing woodland.
Natural Capital	The sum of all our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals air and seas. They provide value by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards. It is the source of all other types of capital whether it is manufactured, financial human or social.
Natural Capital Features	These are many and varied but include hedgerows, woodlands, semi-natural grasslands, air and water quality.
Natural Flood Management	Natural flood management (NFM) uses natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding. These processes protect, restore, and mimic the natural functions of catchments, floodplains and the coast to slow and store water. NFM measures can include: soil and land management, river and floodplain management.

Term	Definition
Nature Based Solutions	Are approaches that address societal challenges through actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems, benefiting people and nature at the same time e.g. creating a natural floodplain, planting trees to provide shade.
Oolitic Limestone	A type of rock made up of small spheres which were formed when calcium carbonate was deposited on the surface of sand grains rolled by wave action under a shallow sea during the Jurassic period.
Open Mosaic Habitat	Usually located on previously developed land they are complex and diverse habitats that emerge on post-industrial or urban land, such as former quarries, brownfields, or derelict urban areas.
Red List Species	A species that has been assessed as being close to becoming extinct.
Ridge and Furrow	A type of landscape, characterised by parallel ridges and troughs, created by the methodical ploughing of fields with oxen during the medieval period.
Riparian	Relates to the land along the bank of a watercourse such as a river, lake or stream.
Sustainable Drainage Systems	Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) mimic natural drainage processes to reduce the effect on the quality and quantity of run-off from developments and provide amenity and biodiversity benefits.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACB	Area that Could Become of particular importance
AES	Agri-Environment Scheme
APIB	Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CRoW	Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000
CS	Countryside Stewardship
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
ELMS	Environmental Land Management Schemes
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
LR	Landscape Recovery
LRERC	Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre
LRWT	Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust
LWS	Local Wildlife Sites
NBN Atlas	National Biodiversity Network Atlas
NBs	Nature Based Solutions
NCAs	National Character Areas
NERC	Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act

NFC	National Forest Company
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIA	Nature Improvement Area
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NO2	Nitrogen Dioxide
PAWS	Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites
PM2.5	Particulate Matter 2.5 (the matter has a size of 2.5 micrometres or smaller)
PM10	Particulate Matter 10 (the matter has a size of 10 micrometres or smaller)
RA	Responsible Authority
RIGs	Regionally Important Geology Sites
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SFI	Sustainable Farming Incentives
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
UK CEH	UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
WeBS	Wetland Bird Surveys
°C	Degrees Celsius
mm/day	Millimetres per day
µg m⁻³	The amount of pollutant in one cubic metre of air in micrograms

Appendix B
Methodology and Criteria

1. FPCR Ecological GIS Technical Report

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/what-a-local-nature-recovery-strategy-is

This report summarises the technical details for the creation of the GIS outputs suitable to be used to locate areas of key importance for nature in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland.

The objectives were to:

• Create a habitat map of the project area

• Model habitat connectivity within the project area

• Overlay various data sources suitable for the determination of key areas for nature in a format that can be understood by various stakeholders

2. Species Recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) must describe opportunities, set priorities, and propose potential measures for the recovery and enhancement of species. This document sets out an approach to help responsible authorities (RAs) achieve this goal in a consistent way. The approach involves two broad stages: identifying threatened and other locally significant species relevant to the strategy area and determining which of these species should be prioritised for recovery action. This process is aligned with the LNRS preparation steps described in the LNRS statutory guidance, and it is closely supported by Natural England (NE) and other partners.

3. Indicator Species Selection

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

The Indicator Species are intended to offer a means of monitoring progress towards the objectives of the Local Species Recovery Strategy. The selected species should be indicative of good ecological health, particularly in the priority habitats, and offer a representative sample of local species to provide monitorable, broad-based data to assess the changing status of biodiversity in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Appendix C
Species-Specific and Habitat-Specific Information

1. Species Profiles

a. Table of Priority Species and Measures

(The full list of Priority Species including 76 Vascular Plants and 6 Lichens can be accessed in the resource section on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy website.)

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
1. Amphibian		Palmate Newt	A small amphibian often found in ponds and slow-moving water bodies. Recognizable by its smooth skin and webbed feet during the breeding season.	Restoration and enhancement of pond networks in underrepresented acid grassland areas, creating fish-free breeding ponds with surrounding scrub and vegetation to prevent drying. Consider translocation efforts to suitable, restored sites in Charnwood Forest. Focus on areas where historical records show Palmate Newt presence but where ponds have deteriorated, e.g. northern Charnwood Forest.
2. Reptile	NT	Adder	The UK's only venomous snake, known for its zigzag pattern along its back. Found in heathlands, grasslands, and woodland edges.	Habitat connectivity improvements by restoring and creating heathland and open mosaic habitats. Use controlled reintroduction from healthy populations to establish Adders in previously occupied sites. Prioritise area specific locations for restoration and reintroduction.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
3. Bird	LC	Osprey	The Osprey is a large raptor known for its striking plumage and fish-eating habits. It migrates between Europe and Africa, returning to the UK to breed.	Opportunity for national reintroduction / trans-relocation projects stemming from Rutland Osprey Project at Rutland Water. Encourage the establishment and maintenance of artificial nesting platforms near key water bodies to increase suitable breeding opportunities.
4. Bird	CR	Turtle Dove	A migratory dove, famous for its soft "purring" call. It breeds in hedgerows and open woodlands and has experienced severe population declines.	Establishment of seed-rich feeding areas and supplementary feeding programs during the breeding season. Partner with landowners to manage hedgerows and restore areas for foraging and nesting. Focus on farmlands in the East Leicestershire and Rutland, Belvoir Vales, Welland Valley and Charnwood Forest for hedgerow restoration and supplementary feeding efforts.
5. Bird	VU	Nightingale	Renowned for its powerful and beautiful song, this elusive bird breeds in dense, low vegetation in woodlands and scrub.	Scrub regeneration projects, especially in woodland edges and abandoned farmland. Create dense scrub and thicket habitats specifically managed for nightingales, using grazing or cutting to prevent succession. Focus on the areas near Rutland Water and other woodland fringes where nightingale populations have previously existed.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
6. Bird	EN	**Willow Tit**	A small, shy bird of damp woodlands and wetlands, easily confused with the Marsh Tit. It is in serious decline in the UK.	Create decayed wood habitats in wet woodland areas by deliberately felling trees or managing deadwood. Install artificial nesting cavities to increase breeding success. the Soar and Wreake Valleys for re-establishing suitable habitats.
7. Bird	EN	**Swift**	A migratory bird that spends most of its life in the air, catching insects. Swifts breed in cavities, often in buildings, and are known for their fast, scythe-shaped wings.	Swift brick installation programs in urban and semi-urban areas. Swift bricks are a universal nest brick for small bird species and should be installed in new developments including extensions, in accordance with best practice guidance. Promote swift tower installations in parks and near water bodies to provide nesting opportunities. Focus on urban areas like Leicester City and major towns such as Loughborough and Oakham.
8. Bird	VU	**Starling**	Famous for its murmurations, this glossy blackbird-like species is highly social and often found in urban areas, though its population has declined.	Establishment of foraging habitats such as permanent grasslands and wet meadows managed for invertebrates. Encourage the installation of starling nest boxes in urban areas. Engage with farms and urban areas across Leicester and Leicestershire to enhance invertebrate-rich habitats and create nesting opportunities.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
9. Bird		**House Sparrow**	A familiar urban bird, found in gardens and farmlands. Its population has dropped significantly in recent decades, making it a priority species.	Urban greening and community garden initiatives that include hedge planting, native shrubs, and wildflower meadows to provide both food and shelter. Promote the installation of sparrow nest boxes in residential areas. Work with housing associations in Leicester City and suburban areas to install nesting boxes and improve urban habitat. Monitor existing populations to find out what makes these populations stable.
10. Bird	VU	**Woodcock**	A wading bird with cryptic plumage, found in woodlands where it probes the soil for invertebrates. It is also known for its nocturnal display flight, called "roding."	Restoration and creation of damp woodland areas with rides, particularly with dense undergrowth for foraging and nesting. Consider trial reintroduction from healthy populations in adjacent counties. Focus on large wooded areas such as the National Forest and areas surrounding Rutland Water.
11. Bird	NT	**Marsh Tit**	A small bird that prefers deciduous woodlands and wetlands. It has a black cap and is closely related to the willow tit.	Maintain deadwood and rotting tree stumps within damp woodland. Create artificial nest sites and enhance woodland structure with low canopy cover. Target woodland around known breeding populations.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
12. Bird	EN	**Curlew**	The UK's largest wader, with a distinctive long, curved bill used for probing mudflats and grasslands. Known for its haunting call.	Create and enhance suitable grassland habitats and restore lowland floodplain meadow areas. Predation control and nest protection schemes should be implemented during the breeding season. Prioritise sites like Rutland Water Nature Reserve and the Soar Valley floodplains for nest protection efforts and habitat management.
13. Bird	VU	**Lapwing**	A farmland and wetland bird with a striking black-and-white plumage and an iridescent green back. Known for its aerial displays during the breeding season.	Create wet grassland mosaics and maintain short, open vegetation structure. Encourage rotational grazing in breeding areas and introduce predator control programs during breeding. Focus on agricultural land restoration projects in the Welland Valley and near Rutland Water.
14. Bird	VU	**Tree Pipit**	A small bird of open woodlands and heathlands, often seen performing parachute-like flight displays. Its population is declining due to habitat loss.	Create and manage open, wooded heathland habitats with scattered trees for breeding and foraging. Promote low-level grazing and periodic scrub clearance to maintain suitable habitat. Target heathland restoration in Charnwood Forest.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
15. Crustacean		**White-clawed Crayfish**	A native freshwater crayfish that inhabits clean rivers and streams. It is under threat from habitat degradation and the invasive signal crayfish.	Removal of invasive signal crayfish and reintroduction of white-clawed crayfish to suitable watercourses after invasive species are controlled. Focus on smaller watercourses in rural Rutland and Leicestershire where signal crayfish populations are lower, such as tributaries of the River Soar, and re-naturalised Quarries and Mineral Sites.
16. Insect - Butterfly		**Dingy Skipper**	A small, brownish butterfly that prefers grasslands with patches of bare ground. Its "dingy" appearance provides effective camouflage.	Restoration of chalk and limestone grassland to provide larval food plants, particularly Bird's-foot trefoil. Introduce a grazing regime to create suitable open patches for egg-laying. Focus on limestone quarries and disused railway lines such as those around Ketton Quarry.
17. Insect - Butterfly	VU	**Grizzled Skipper**	A small, fast-flying butterfly, with a checkered black-and-white pattern, often found in sunny grasslands and woodland edges.	Manage grasslands and clear scrub on a rotational basis to promote larval food plants like wild strawberry and creeping cinquefoil. Target railway cuttings and grasslands in Rutland for specific management interventions.
18. Insect - Butterfly	EN	**Black Hairstreak**	A rare and elusive butterfly, confined to blackthorn thickets in ancient woodlands. It is one of the UK's rarest butterflies.	Ensure the continuation of rotational scrub management to maintain blackthorn-rich scrubland. Reintroduce to suitable sites if population surveys indicate local extinction. Focus on blackthorn-rich hedgerows and woodland edges in areas like Charnwood Forest.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
19. Insect - Butterfly	VU	**White-letter Hairstreak**	This butterfly, often overlooked due to its habit of staying high in elm trees, has suffered due to the loss of elm trees to Dutch elm disease.	Elm tree disease resistance programs and planting of disease-resistant elms to support larvae. Promote connectivity between elm populations to support genetic diversity. Focus elm restoration efforts in hedgerows and woodland edges in central Leicestershire.
20. Insect - Butterfly	NT	**Dark Green Fritillary**	A striking orange butterfly with dark spots, typically found in grasslands and woodland clearings, where it feeds on violets.	Restore and manage large, open grassland habitats with plenty of violets, the butterfly's larval food plant. Introduce grazing or cutting regimes to maintain open swards. Identify suitable translocation programmes in Leicestershire from Rutland populations.
21. Insect - Beetle (Coleoptera)		**Glow Worm**	A beetle whose females glow in the dark to attract males. It is most often found in grasslands, hedgerows, and woodland edges.	Restore and maintain species-rich grasslands, avoiding chemical usage and ensuring low-level grazing to support snail populations, the larvae's prey. Implement light pollution control in key glow worm sites. Focus on suitable roadside grass verges, chalk grassland and railway embankments in Rutland and Leicestershire.
22. Bony Fish (Actinopterygii)		**Brown Trout**	Brown trout are a native freshwater fish and important indicators of good water quality. Found in clean fast flowing rivers and streams. It is probable the fast-flowing streams in Charnwood Forest are a site for the pure native breeding population. Wild populations of the species are threatened.	River restoration projects to enhance spawning gravels and increase flow variability, with strict pollution control and habitat improvement for young trout.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
23. Bony Fish (Actinopterygii)		Spined Loach	A small, bottom-dwelling fish that inhabits slow-flowing rivers and canals. It is easily identified by the small spines beneath its eyes. Located in Rutland Water, River Mease, River Soar- the species is confined to only a select number of sites in Britain therefore the populations with Leicestershire and Rutland are in key locations.	Implement riverbed restoration schemes to reintroduce areas of silt and sand for spawning. Ensure water quality improvements by reducing agricultural runoff.
24. Bony Fish (Actinopterygii)	CR	European Eel	A migratory fish that breeds in the Sargasso Sea but spends its adult life in European rivers. It is critically endangered due to overfishing, barriers to migration, and habitat loss.	Remove barriers to migration, such as weirs, by installing eel passes. Improve river connectivity between feeding and spawning grounds.
25. Terrestrial Mammal	VU	Barbastelle	A rare and elusive woodland bat species, vulnerable due to loss of main habitat – roost sites in numerous mature trees within a well-structured broadleaved woodland and connecting hedgerows for foraging. This species is sensitive to light pollution and will avoid feeding or commuting near to lit areas.	Increase the coverage of broadleaved woodland and protect and restore old growth woodland. Accelerate maturity of trees through ringbarking and veterenisation to increase natural roosts and install bat boxes specifically designed for Barbastelles within woodlands. Develop and/or enhance the habitat edges to increase the density of moth populations (main food source) with a focus on restoring and increasing wetland and woodland habitats that support a high moth biomass e.g. maintain open rides with scalloped edges in mature woodlands. Retain and enhance hedgerows with mature tree standards to provide roost habitat and foraging corridors between mature woodland sites. Avoid light pollution.

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Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
26. Terrestrial Mammal		**Daubenton's Bat**	This Bat is closely associated with water ways and open waters where it feeds on aquatic insects and terrestrial insects alongside riparian habitat edges. The optimal habitat are slow-flowing rivers and canals, and sheltered lakes, reservoirs, and flooded gravel pits.	Avoid light pollution along waterside edges and disturbance of Bat roosts by discouraging access to potential/known roost sites and sensitive management of trees, hedges, and bankside vegetation. Enhance riparian and hedgerow habitat by planting waterside trees, maintain aquatic plants and control fish stocks to encourage freshwater insects. Retain and manage veteran waterside trees and establish trees on both banks of wider water courses. Retain and maintain open water to allow Bats to freely forage over waterbodies.
27. Terrestrial Mammal	NT	**Leisler's Bat**	A fast-flying Bat often found in open woodland and parkland, relying on large, old trees for roosting. They will forage over a range of areas from rivers, lakes, pastures, meadows and hedgerows This bat is locally scarce due to loss of suitable habitat and fragmentation. It will also forage around white light.	Retain and conserve roost sites in buildings and mature trees wherever possible. Install and monitor specified Bat boxes in known locations to mitigate and encourage roost sites in across strategic areas. Avoid felling mature trees, especially parkland trees where roosting opportunities are present.
28. Terrestrial Mammal	EN	**Water Vole**	Once widespread, this semi-aquatic rodent is now in decline due to habitat loss and predation.	Restore and manage riparian habitats with dense vegetation along water margins. Implement predator control measures and reduce pollution to improve water quality.

Taxon and Picture	Status	Common Name	Information	Measures
29. Terrestrial Mammal	VU	**Hedgehog**	A familiar nocturnal mammal found in gardens, hedgerows, and woodlands. Its population has declined due to habitat loss and fragmentation.	Create wildlife-friendly gardens, schools and campuses with hedgehog highways and reduce the use of pesticides. Promote the conservation and connectivity of hedgerows for safe movement.
30. Terrestrial Mammal	VU	**Hazel Dormouse**	A small, arboreal mammal that inhabits dense woodlands and hedgerows. It is a highly endangered species in the UK due to habitat loss.	A priority species for reintroductions. Enhance woodland connectivity through the planting of native hedgerows and the creation of new woodlands. Implement rotational coppicing to maintain dense understorey habitats.
31. Vascular Plant Gene-bank Assemblage		**65 Species**	Rare vascular plants found at 3 or fewer locations across the strategy area.	Vascular plants needing protection and gene-banking (Ex Situ Conservation) Protect existing populations and collect seeds and store them in a seed bank under controlled conditions to preserve genetic diversity for future restoration efforts.
32. Vascular Plant In-situ Conservation Assemblage		**12 Species**	Rare vascular plants found at 3 or fewer locations across the strategy area.	Vascular plants needing In Situ Conservation: Protect and manage the natural habitats where the plants occur, ensuring that the ecological conditions remain suitable for their survival
33. Lichen In-situ Conservation Assemblage		**6 Species**	Rare Lichens found at 3 or fewer locations across the strategy area.	Lichen needing In Situ Conservation: Protect and manage the natural habitats where the plants occur, ensuring that the ecological conditions remain suitable for their survival

b. Priority Species Maps

https://haveyoursay.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy-local-habitat-map

These maps can be access on the Local habitat Map Website. They show where priority species have been recorded in recent decades and we have confidence these locations could be suitable for measures that protect and enhance their populations. These records are displayed as either 2km squares, landscape areas such as the Soar Valley, or boundary lines. Each of these priority species has a bespoke measure designed to protect and enhance their populations. These measures can be viewed in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Appendix C 1a.

c. Table of 100 Indicator Species and their Habitats

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resource

This table lists 100 indicator species identified for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, along with their associated habitats. This table provides a reference for assessing habitat suitability and biodiversity index across varied landscapes, supporting conservation and habitat management planning. The full table can be accessed in the resource section on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Website.

2. Habitat Profiles

a. Table of Habitats of Principle Importance in England and the estimate total extent they cover within the strategy area

Habitat of Principle Importance in England		Estimated Total Extent
Arable and Horticultural	**Arable field margins**	No data on extent of overall resource
Boundary and Linear Features	**Hedgerows**	17,000 Km
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (all)**	12,300 ha
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (Ancient Woodland)**	2679
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Wet woodland**	c. 300 ha
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Wood-pasture and parkland**	4,500 ha

Habitat of Principle Importance in England		Estimated Total Extent
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Traditional orchards**	36 ha
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Mature Trees (all)**	20,000 trees
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	**Ancient Trees**	1,800 trees
Calcareous Grassland	**Lowland calcareous grassland**	< 200 ha
Neutral Grassland	**Lowland meadows - Neutral**	2,550 ha
Acid Grassland	**Lowland dry acid grassland**	<100 ha
Dwarf Shrub Heath	**Lowland heathland**	<500 ha
Improved Grassland	**Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh**	c. 200 ha
Fen, Marsh and Swamp	**Purple moor-grass and rush pastures**	<20 ha
Fen, Marsh and Swamp	**Lowland fens**	<100 ha
Fen, Marsh and Swamp	**Reedbeds**	c. 30 ha
Rivers and Streams	**Rivers**	TBC
Standing Open Waters	**Eutrophic standing waters (canals, Reservoirs)**	TBC
Standing Open Waters	**Ponds**	c. 13,000

Habitat of Principle Importance in England		Estimated Total Extent
Standing Open Waters	Ponds (Sphagnum)	<50 ponds
Inland Rock	Inland rock outcrop and scree habitats	TBC
Inland Rock	Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	TBC

Other important habitats

Urban	Built environment and Gardens	TBC
Urban	Railways	c. 205 km
Urban	Railways (historic)	c. 195 km
Roadside verges	Roadside verges of local wildlife site standard	104 km
Springs and flushes	Springs and flushes	c.500

b. Habitat Description and Distribution Maps

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

Detailed habitat description and local distribution maps can be accessed in the resource section of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy website and in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 - 2026.

Appendix D
Supporting Maps, Figures, and Data Tables

1. Tables

a. Significant Rivers and Waterbodies

Table D1.a: Examples of Significant Waterbodies of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

Name	Location	Importance
Rivers		
River Soar	The River Soar flows northward through central Leicestershire, passing through major urban areas such as Leicester City and the town of Loughborough before joining the River Trent near Ratcliffe on Soar.	The River Soar is the most prominent river in Leicestershire, flowing through the heart of the county. It is central to the region's hydrology, draining a large portion of Leicestershire and ultimately joining the River Trent. The Soar is vital for flood management, particularly in urban areas like Leicester, where it helps mitigate the risk of flooding. Several stretches of the River Soar are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), particularly where it supports rich aquatic habitats and species, including wetland areas and floodplain meadows.
River Mease	The River Mease is located in the northwestern part of Leicestershire, flowing eastward through the rural areas near Measham and joining the River Trent near Croxall.	The River Mease is a highly significant watercourse due to its ecological importance, recognised by its designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It supports rare and protected species, including the spined loach and bullhead fish. The high-quality water and associated habitats of the Mease are crucial for the conservation of these species. Additionally, the Mease plays an important role in local agriculture, providing water resources and contributing to the agricultural landscape in northwestern Leicestershire.

Name	Location	Importance
Rivers		
River Wreake	The River Wreake flows north-eastward from the outskirts of Leicester City, passing through rural areas near Syston and Melton Mowbray, before joining the River Soar.	The River Wreake, meandering through agricultural landscapes in central Leicestershire, is an important tributary of the River Soar It contributes to local floodplains and wetlands, which are vital for maintaining regional biodiversity. The river supports various habitats, including those for fish species like Brown Trout and aquatic plants. It also plays a key role in local water management, particularly in supporting agricultural activities and managing flood risks in its catchment area.
River Trent	The River Trent forms the northern boundary of Leicestershire, although it does not flow extensively through the county itself. It passes close to the towns of Kegworth and Ratcliffe on Soar, where Leicestershire meets Nottinghamshire.	The River Trent is one of the major rivers in England, playing a crucial role in draining a large portion of the Midlands. Its significance to Leicestershire lies in its role as a receiving body for several of Leicestershire's rivers, including the Soar and Mease. The Trent is vital for regional water management, flood control, and it supports a diverse range of habitats along its course, contributing to both local and regional biodiversity.
River Welland	The River Welland flows through the eastern part of Leicestershire and Rutland. It originates near Sibbertoft in Northamptonshire and flows northeast through Market Harborough in Leicestershire and Stamford in Lincolnshire before continuing eastward towards the Wash.	The River Welland is crucial for supporting the wetland habitats along its floodplain, several areas are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Seaton Meadows Nature Reserve. The river provides important ecological connectivity, supporting species such as otters and kingfishers, and plays a key role in regional water management and flood control.
River Eye	The River Eye is a tributary of the River Wreake, flowing through the eastern part of Leicestershire. It originates near the village of Owston and passes through Melton Mowbray before joining the Wreake near Kirby Bellars.	The River Eye is significant for its contribution to the agricultural landscape of Leicestershire, supporting wetland habitats and providing water for irrigation. It also plays a role in local flood management and supports a variety of species, including fish, mammals and birds.

Name	Location	Importance
Rivers		
River Sence (and Hinckley Sence)	The River Sence rises from the village of Billesdon, just east of Leicester City, before flowing westwards until it joins the River Soar to the west of Blaby.	The River Sence is crucial for managing local flood risks, particularly in its lower reaches where it contributes to the floodplain systems of the River Soar. It supports a range of wetland and riparian habitats that are important for biodiversity, including species such as otters, water voles, and various bird species. The Sence also plays a significant role in agricultural drainage and water management in the rural areas through which it flows.
River Tame	The River Tame flows through the northeastern part of Leicestershire and is a major tributary of the River Trent. The Tame originates in the West Midlands, passing through urban areas like Tamworth before it meets the Trent near Alrewas.	The River Tame is one of the key rivers in the Tame and Anker catchment area. It is crucial for flood management, especially in the more urbanised parts of its catchment. It has undergone significant modifications for flood defences and water quality improvements. The river's catchment also supports diverse habitats, particularly in its more rural stretches where wetlands and floodplain meadows are prevalent.
River Anker	The River Anker flows through the western part of Leicestershire, primarily along the boundary with Warwickshire. It originates near the village of Wolvey and flows northeastwards through Nuneaton, eventually joining the River Tame near Tamworth.	The Anker supports a mix of urban and rural environments, with its upper catchment dominated by agricultural land. It plays a key role in local water management and supports important habitats, including those for species like otters and kingfishers. Parts of its floodplain are significant for biodiversity, particularly in terms of wetland conservation.
River Gwash	The River Gwash flows through Rutland, originating near the village of Knossington and passing through the towns of Empingham and Ryhall before feeding into Rutland Water and eventually flowing into the River Welland near Stamford.	The Gwash is particularly important for feeding into Rutland Water, which is a critical water reservoir and a site of international importance for bird conservation. The river supports various aquatic species and helps maintain the water balance of Rutland Water, contributing to the reservoir's ecological health.

Name	Location	Importance
Rivers		
River Chater	The River Chater also flows through Rutland, originating near Whissendine and flowing eastward through villages such as Ketton before joining the River Welland near Tinwell.	The River Chater is important for maintaining local biodiversity in Rutland, providing habitats for aquatic species and contributing to the ecological significance of the Welland catchment. It also plays a role in sustaining the water levels in the surrounding agricultural and rural landscapes.
River Swift	The River Swift is a tributary of the River Avon. It flows through the southern part of Leicestershire, near the town of Lutterworth, before joining the Avon near the village of Rugby in Warwickshire.	The Swift's catchment is primarily rural, with agricultural land dominating the landscape. While not as prominent as the Soar or Welland, it contributes to the local hydrology and supports small-scale wetland habitats.
River Avon	The River Avon flows through southern Leicestershire, near the town of Lutterworth, and eventually joining the River Severn in Warwickshire.	The Leicestershire Avon is significant for its role in regional water management and biodiversity. It drains a predominantly rural catchment and provides essential water resources for agriculture. The river supports a variety of wetland and riparian habitats that are important for species such as otters, water voles, and a range of fish. Additionally, the Avon is part of a broader river system that ultimately flows into the River Severn, playing a role in the hydrological connectivity of the region. The river's natural beauty also makes it a valuable resource for local recreation and tourism.
River Devon	The River Devon flows through north-east Leicestershire, originating near the village of Eastwell. It meanders through rural landscapes, including Belvoir and Bottesford, before crossing into Nottinghamshire and eventually joining the River Trent.	The River Devon is ecologically significant for its contribution to riparian and wetland habitats, supporting species such as kingfishers, otters, and aquatic invertebrates. It plays a key role in local water management, sustaining floodplain meadows and agricultural irrigation. Additionally, the river is important for water quality and hydrological connectivity within the Trent catchment, influencing biodiversity and ecosystem health. The surrounding landscape, including Belvoir Castle's estate and associated parklands, adds heritage and recreational value, making it an asset for both wildlife conservation and public enjoyment.

Name	Location	Importance
Lakes and Reservoirs		
Rutland Water	Situated in the heart of Rutland, near the towns of Oakham and Uppingham, Rutland Water is one of the largest artificial lakes in Europe, centrally located within the county.	Rutland Water is essential for regional water supply and flood management. It is also a key site for bird conservation, particularly for Osprey reintroduction and as a major stopover for migratory birds. The reservoir supports a wide range of recreational activities, including sailing, fishing, and birdwatching, making it a significant ecological and social resource. Specific designations within Rutland Water include: **Ramsar Site:**[7] recognised as a wetland of international significance, particularly for its importance as a habitat for waterfowl. **Special Protection Area (SPA):** Designated due to its critical role in supporting significant populations of overwintering wildfowl, including species like the Tufter Duck and Pochard. **SSSI:** Noted for its rich biodiversity, especially its bird populations, aquatic habitats, and surrounding woodlands.
Eyebrook Reservoir	Straddling the border between Leicestershire and Rutland, Eyebrook Reservoir is located near the villages of Caldecott, Stoke Dry and close to the town of Uppingham.	Eyebrook Reservoir plays a crucial role in water storage for surrounding agricultural areas and is an important site for birdlife. Its tranquil environment supports various recreational activities including birdwatching, and its diverse habitats contribute to the conservation of both local and migratory bird species. It is a SSSI, recognised for its importance to bird populations, particularly for wintering waterfowl and waders like Teal, Wigeon, and Lapwing.
Swithland Reservoir	Located in Charnwood Forest in northwestern Leicestershire, near the village of Swithland and the town of Loughborough.	Swithland Reservoir is vital for local water supply and is part of a larger network of protected areas within Charnwood Forest, which is known for its geological and ecological significance. The reservoir and its surrounding woodlands are home to rare species and provide important recreational opportunities for the local community. SSSI designated for its significant bird populations, including wintering and breeding birds, as well as its diverse aquatic and woodland habitats

[7] A Ramsar site is a wetland that has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention

Name	Location	Importance
Lakes and Reservoirs		
Cropston Reservoir	Situated in Charnwood Forest, near the villages of Cropston and Newtown Linford, adjacent to Swithland Wood.	Cropston Reservoir, along with Swithland Reservoir, contributes to the water supply for the surrounding areas and supports a variety of wildlife habitats. The area is popular for walking, birdwatching, and other outdoor activities, contributing to both ecological conservation and public recreation.
Thornton Reservoir	Located near the village of Thornton in western Leicestershire, close to the town of Coalville.	Thornton Reservoir provides an important habitat for local wildlife, including species of birds, mammals, and aquatic life. The reservoir is also a key site for recreational activities such as fishing and walking, serving as a valuable green space for the local community. It has Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designation for its local importance to biodiversity, particularly for aquatic species and surrounding woodlands.
Blackbrook Reservoir	Situated in the Charnwood Forest area, near the village of Shepshed, Leicestershire.	Blackbrook Reservoir plays a crucial role in the local water supply and supports a variety of habitats that are important for biodiversity. The area is also a popular spot for birdwatching and walking, contributing to both ecological preservation and public enjoyment. It has SSSI recognition for its importance to wildlife, particularly bird species, and its surrounding woodlands.
Canals		
Grand Union Canal (Leicester Line)	This section of the Grand Union Canal runs through the eastern part of Leicestershire, passing through areas such as Market Harborough and Foxton, known for its historic locks.	The Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal is significant both for its historical importance as a key transportation route and for its ecological value. The canal and its surrounding habitats support a variety of wildlife, including birds, invertebrates, fish, and aquatic plants. The Foxton Locks area is a popular tourist destination, highlighting the canal's role in both cultural heritage and recreation. It includes sections designated as SSSI, particularly around the Foxton Locks, emphasising historical and ecological importance.

Name	Location	Importance
Canals		
Ashby Canal	Runs through western Leicestershire, from Ashby-de-la-Zouch to Moira, moving through Market Bosworth and ending near Bedworth in Warwickshire connecting to the Coventry Canal.	The Ashby Canal is approximately 35 kilometres long and is important for leisure activities and biodiversity, serving as a corridor for various species and offering recreational opportunities like boating and fishing. While not formally designated as a nature reserve, the canal is recognised for its ecological value and is an important feature in the western part of the county.
Oakham Canal	The Oakham Canal was historically located in Rutland, connecting the market town of Oakham to the Melton Mowbray Navigation. Although no longer fully navigable, remnants of the canal still influence the local landscape.	Although the Oakham Canal is no longer in use for navigation, its traces are important for local history and landscape structure. The former canal route contributes to the region's heritage and provides green spaces that support local biodiversity, including various aquatic plants and animals.
Leicester Navigation	The Leicester Navigation is part of the Grand Union Canal, running through Leicester City and connecting to the River Soar.	This section of the Grand Union Canal is particularly important for urban biodiversity, providing a green corridor through Leicester that supports both wildlife and recreational activities.
Melton Mowbray Navigation	This historical canal runs through the town of Melton Mowbray, connecting to the River Wreake.	Although no longer in active use, remnants of the Melton Mowbray Navigation still influence local hydrology and contribute to the cultural heritage of the region. Its historical structures and associated water bodies are important for local wildlife.

b. Examples of Important Priority Woodland and Grassland

Table D1.b: Examples of Important Woodlands and Grasslands of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

Name	Location	Priority Habitat Type	Importance
Charnwood Forest	Northwestern Leicestershire	Ancient woodland, grasslands, and heathland	Charnwood Forest is one of the oldest landscapes in England, characterised by ancient woodlands, heathlands, and rocky outcrops. The area supports rare plant species, ancient trees, and diverse wildlife, including populations of rare invertebrates and birds such as **Tree Pipit** and **Woodcocks**. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Forest.
Rutland Water Nature Reserve	Rutland, near the town of Oakham	Grassland, wetland, and woodland	This reserve is internationally recognised for its importance as a wetland habitat, especially for bird species. The grasslands and surrounding woodlands support a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Rutland Water is especially noted for being a key stopover for migrating birds and has a significant population of breeding **Ospreys**. **Designations:** SSSI, Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site.
The National Forest	Spanning parts of Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire	Woodland, grassland, and reclaimed habitats	The National Forest is a large-scale, multi-use forest project that aims to transform a landscape heavily affected by mining into a mosaic of habitats, including new woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands. It supports a diverse range of wildlife, and provides important recreational, educational, and climate mitigation benefits. It is also key for connecting fragmented woodlands and increasing biodiversity. **Designations:** Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), National Forest.

Name	Location	Priority Habitat Type	Importance
Aylestone Meadows	Situated along the River Soar, just southwest of Leicester City centre	Floodplain grassland, wetland, and woodland	Aylestone Meadows is an important green space within an urban setting, offering a range of habitats, including floodplain meadows, wetland areas, and patches of woodland. It supports a variety of wildlife, including birds, invertebrates, and plant species adapted to wet conditions. The meadows and wetlands are particularly valuable for species such as **Reed buntings**, **Water Voles**, and various amphibians such as **Smooth Newt**. The site plays a crucial role in flood management, acting as a natural buffer that absorbs excess water during periods of heavy rain. **Designations:** Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Part of River Soar Green Corridor.
Bardon Hill	Near Coalville, Leicestershire	Woodland and grassland	Bardon Hill is the highest point in Leicestershire and features both woodland and grassland habitats. The hill supports a variety of rare plants and insects, and the quarrying activity in the area has revealed important geological formations. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
Leighfield Forest	East of Oakham, Rutland	Ancient woodland	Leighfield Forest is a large area of ancient woodland that has remained relatively unchanged for centuries. It is significant for its rich ground flora, including **Bluebells** and **Wild Garlic**, and supports a variety of woodland birds and mammals, including **Badgers** and **Bats**. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Name	Location	Priority Habitat Type	Importance
Swithland Wood	Near Loughborough, Leicestershire	Ancient woodland	Swithland Wood is a remnant of the ancient Charnwood Forest and is known for its diverse range of tree species, including **Oak**, **Birch**, and **Ash**. The woodland supports a rich variety of wildlife, including bats, birds, and invertebrates. The site also contains important archaeological features, such as medieval earthworks. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve.
Bradgate Park	Near Leicester, Leicestershire	Ancient Woodland, heathland, grassland	Bradgate Park is a historic parkland with a mix of grassland, heathland, and ancient woodland. It is particularly noted for its veteran trees, which provide habitats for various fungi, insects, and birds. The park is also home to herds of red and fallow deer and is an important site for the study of ancient landscapes and ecology. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve.
Burley and Egleton Meadows	Near Oakham, Rutland	Neutral grassland	These meadows are some of the best remaining examples of neutral grassland in the region. They are rich in wildflowers, including several species of orchid, and support a wide variety of insects, including butterflies and bees. The meadows are traditionally managed by hay cutting and grazing, maintaining their biodiversity. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
Launde Big Wood	East of Leicester, Leicestershire	Ancient woodland	Launde Big Wood is one of the largest ancient woodlands in Leicestershire, with a rich ground flora and a diverse range of tree species. It is particularly important for woodland birds, such as Greater Spotted Woodpeckers and Tawny Owls, and is a haven for invertebrates. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Name	Location	Priority Habitat Type	Importance
Launde Park Wood	East of Leicester, Leicestershire	Ancient woodland	Close to Launde Big Wood, Launde Park Wood is another important ancient woodland with a diverse flora and fauna, including several rare plant species and a variety of woodland birds and mammals. It is managed traditionally, which has helped preserve its rich biodiversity. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
Ketton Quarry	Near Stamford, Rutland	Limestone grassland and scrub	Ketton Quarry is a significant site for limestone grassland, supporting a wide range of plant species, including several rare orchids. The site is also important for its geological features and is a key area for the study of quarry restoration and management for biodiversity. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
Cribbs Meadow	Near Wymondham, Leicestershire	Unimproved neutral grassland	Cribbs Meadow is an excellent example of species-rich unimproved neutral grassland. The site is notable for its array of wildflowers, including **Early Purple Orchids** and **Cowslips**, and supports a variety of invertebrates, particularly butterflies and grasshoppers. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
Prior's Coppice	Near Uppingham, Rutland	Ancient woodland	Prior's Coppice is one of the best-preserved ancient woodlands in Rutland, known for its diverse ground flora and old coppice management regime. The wood supports a rich community of woodland birds, including woodpeckers and Nuthatches, and is home to various protected bat species. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Name	Location	Priority Habitat Type	Importance
Bloody Oaks Quarry	Near Empingham, Rutland	Limestone grassland	This small but botanically rich limestone grassland is significant for its variety of calcareous plants, including several species of orchids. The site also provides habitat for butterflies and other invertebrates and is a good example of how old quarries can become important wildlife habitats. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
Holwell Reserves	Near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire	Grassland and scrub	The Holwell Reserves comprise several small sites of calcareous grassland and scrub, important for their plant communities which include orchids and other wildflowers. The area is also notable for its invertebrate fauna, particularly butterflies and moths.
Lyndon Nature Reserve	Rutland, along the southern shore of Rutland Water	Grassland, scrub, and woodland	Lyndon Nature Reserve is part of the broader Rutland Water ecosystem. It includes a mix of grassland, scrub, and woodland habitats that support a variety of bird species, particularly those associated with water bodies. The reserve is also important for butterflies and other invertebrates. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), (part of the larger Rutland Water designation).
Goss Meadows	Leicester, just northwest of Leicester City centre	Grassland	Goss Meadows is a locally important site for grassland biodiversity, particularly wildflowers and invertebrates. This area of linear grassland is managed to encourage the growth of native plant species and provide habitat for local wildlife, making it an important green space and valuable green corridor within the urban landscape. **Designations:** Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

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Name	Location	Priority Habitat Type	Importance
Great Merrible Wood	Near Market Harborough, Leicestershire	Ancient woodland	Great Merrible Wood is a fine example of ancient woodland with a diverse flora, including many woodland indicator species. The wood is also significant for its birdlife, including various warblers and woodpeckers, as well as for its populations of bats. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Clipsham Old Quarry and Pickworth Great Wood	Near Clipsham, Rutland	Woodland and limestone grassland	This area combines ancient woodland with limestone grassland, creating a unique habitat mosaic. The site is important for its diverse plant communities, including rare orchids, and supports a variety of wildlife, including butterflies, bats, and woodland birds. **Designations:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
Knighton Spinney	Leicester, within Knighton Park south of Leicester City centre.	Woodland	This small but significant area of woodland set within the wider urban park includes several mature trees, including numerous impressive oak specimens and well-developed woody understory. Ground flora includes some ancient woodland indicator species. Standing deadwood and mature trees provide roosting and nesting sites for birds and bats. **Designation:** Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

2. Maps

a. Air Quality NOx: This map shows nitrogen oxide (NOx) concentrations across the area, highlighting areas affected by vehicle emissions and industrial activities impacting air quality.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Air Quality - NOx

Air quality - NOx
6 - 10
10 - 15
15 - 20
20 - 25
25 - 30
30 - 35
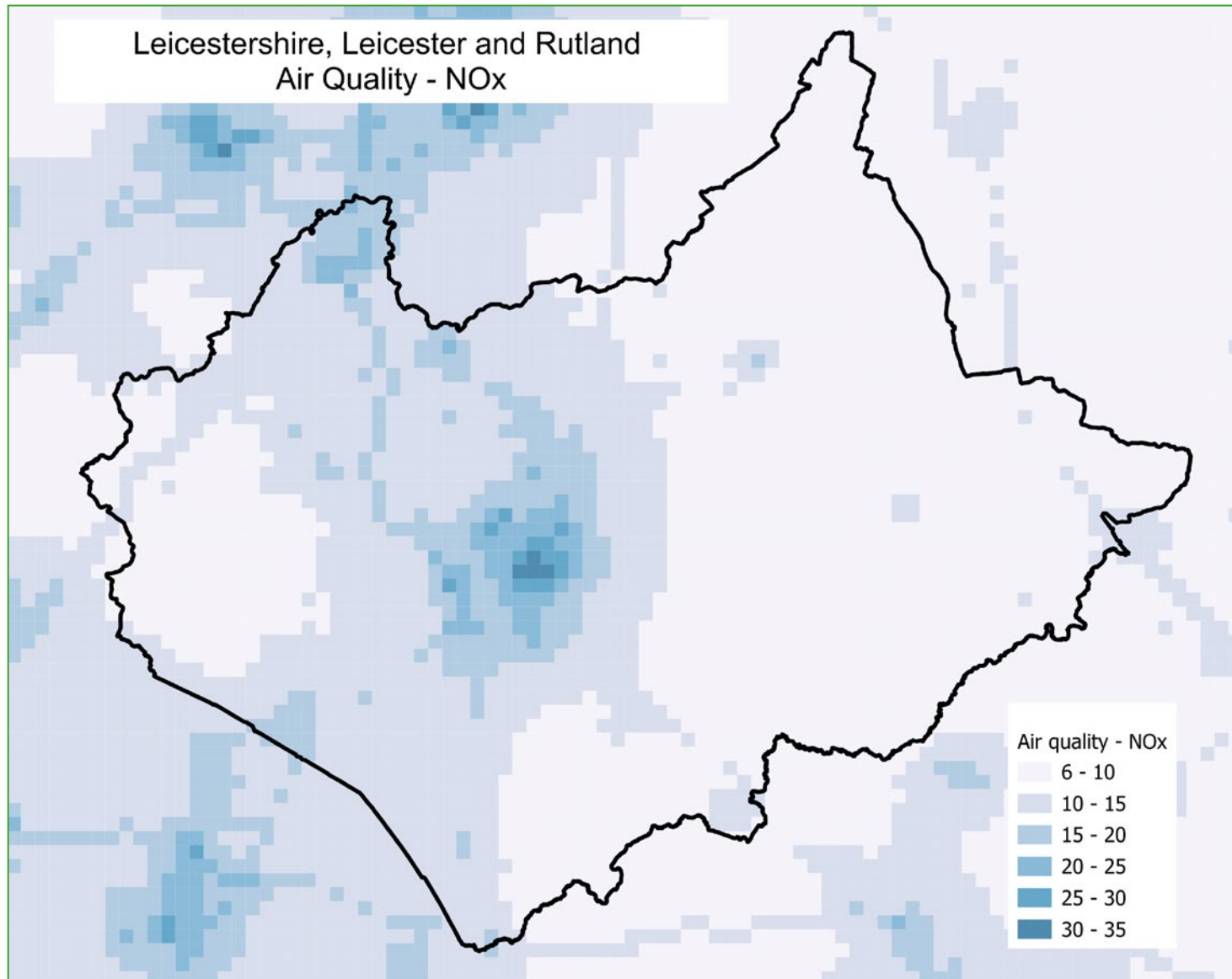
b. Air Quality PM10: This map displays the distribution of PM10 particulate matter, indicating areas with elevated coarse particles due to sources like construction and traffic.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Air Quality - PM10

Air quality - PM10
- 10 - 12
- 12 - 14
- 14 - 16
- 16 - 18
- 18 - 19
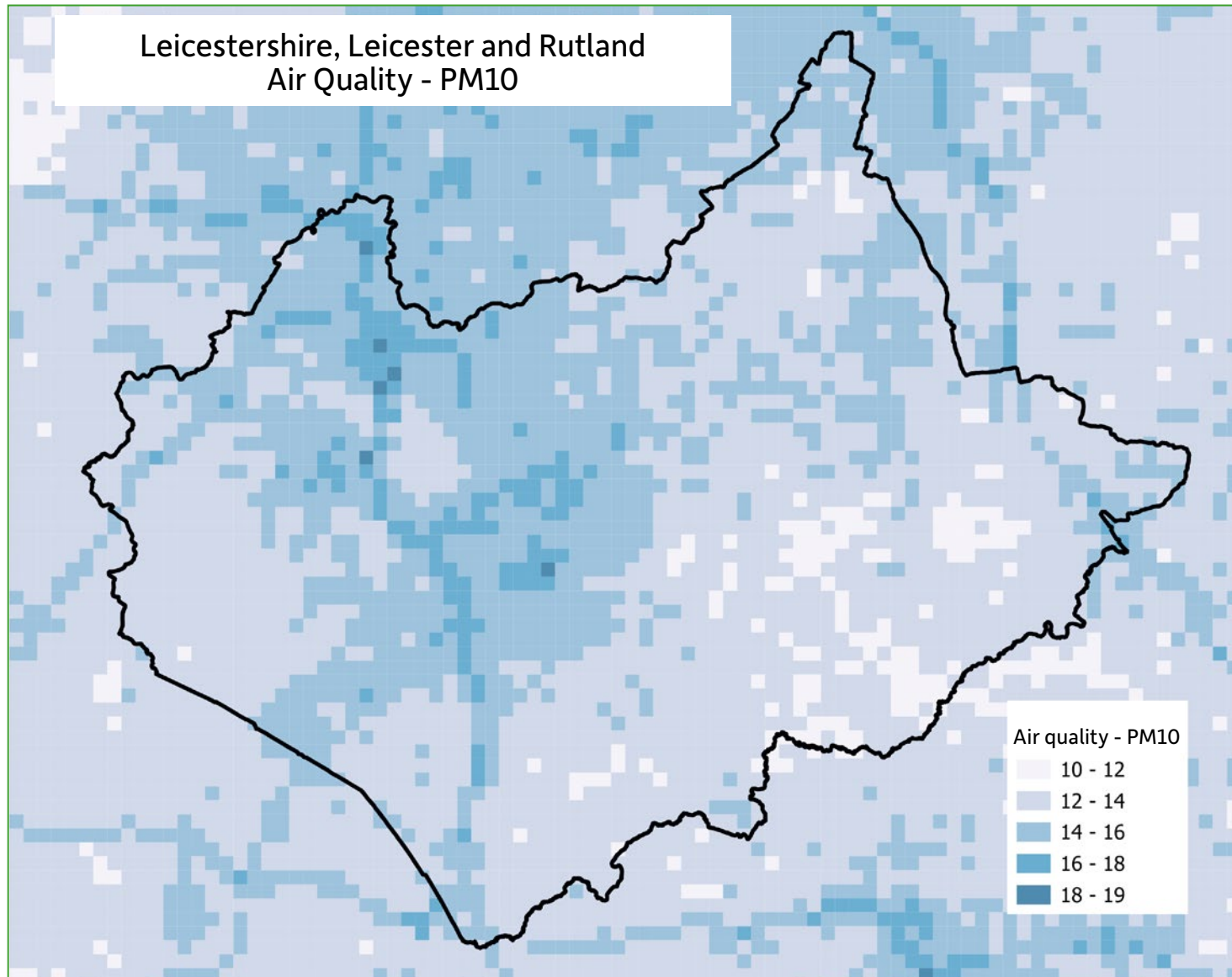
c. Air Quality PM2.5: This map presents PM2.5 levels, reflecting fine particulate pollution from sources such as combustion, affecting respiratory health.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Air Quality - PM2.5

Air quality - PM2.5
- 5 - 6
- 6 - 7
- 7 - 8
- 8 - 9
- 9 - 10
- 10 - 11
- 11 - 12
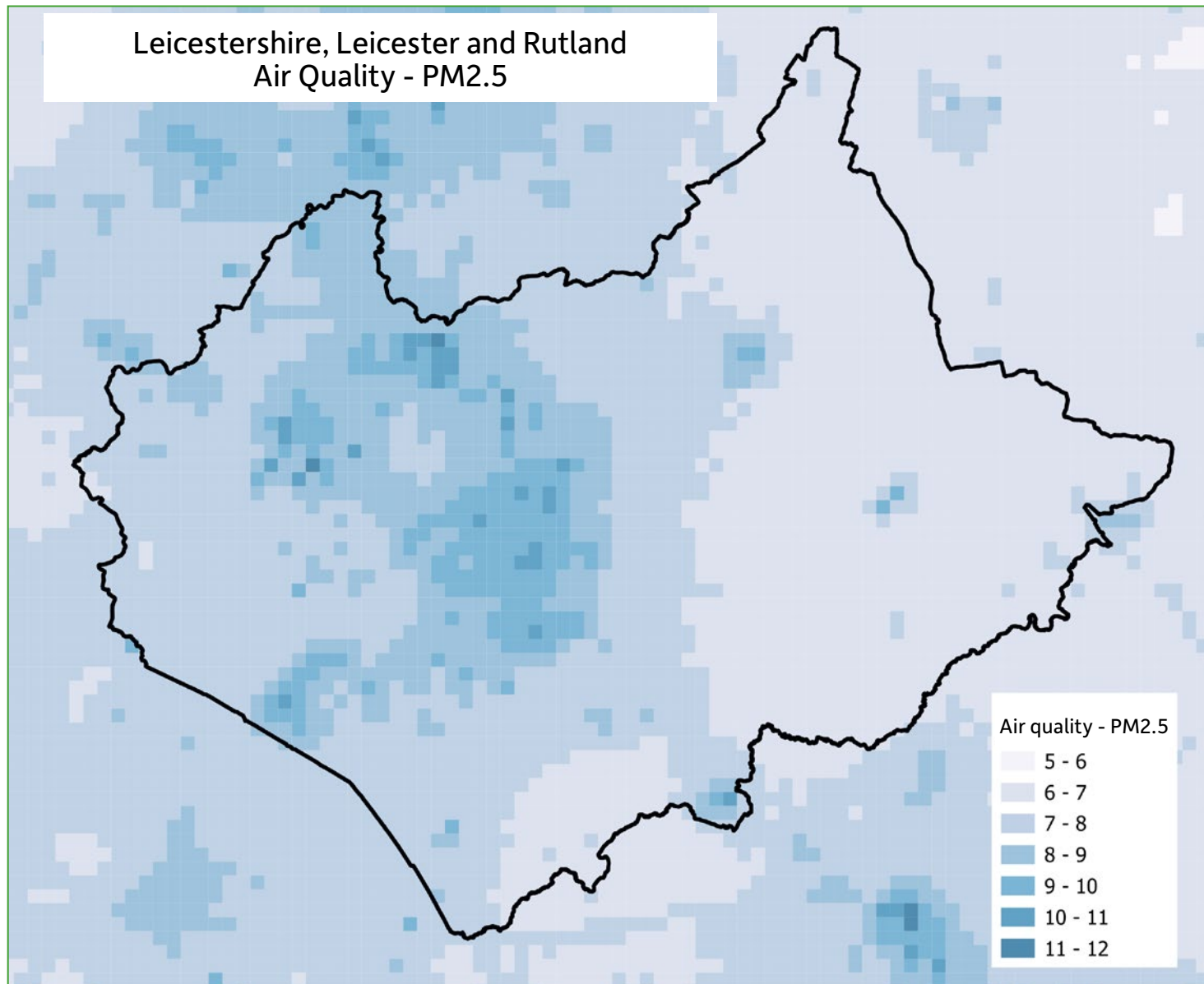
d. Ecological Status of Catchment Areas: This map illustrates the ecological health of water catchments, based on assessments of water quality and biodiversity.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Ecological Status of Operational Catchments

Ecological status of operational catchments
- Good
- Moderate
- Poor
- Bad
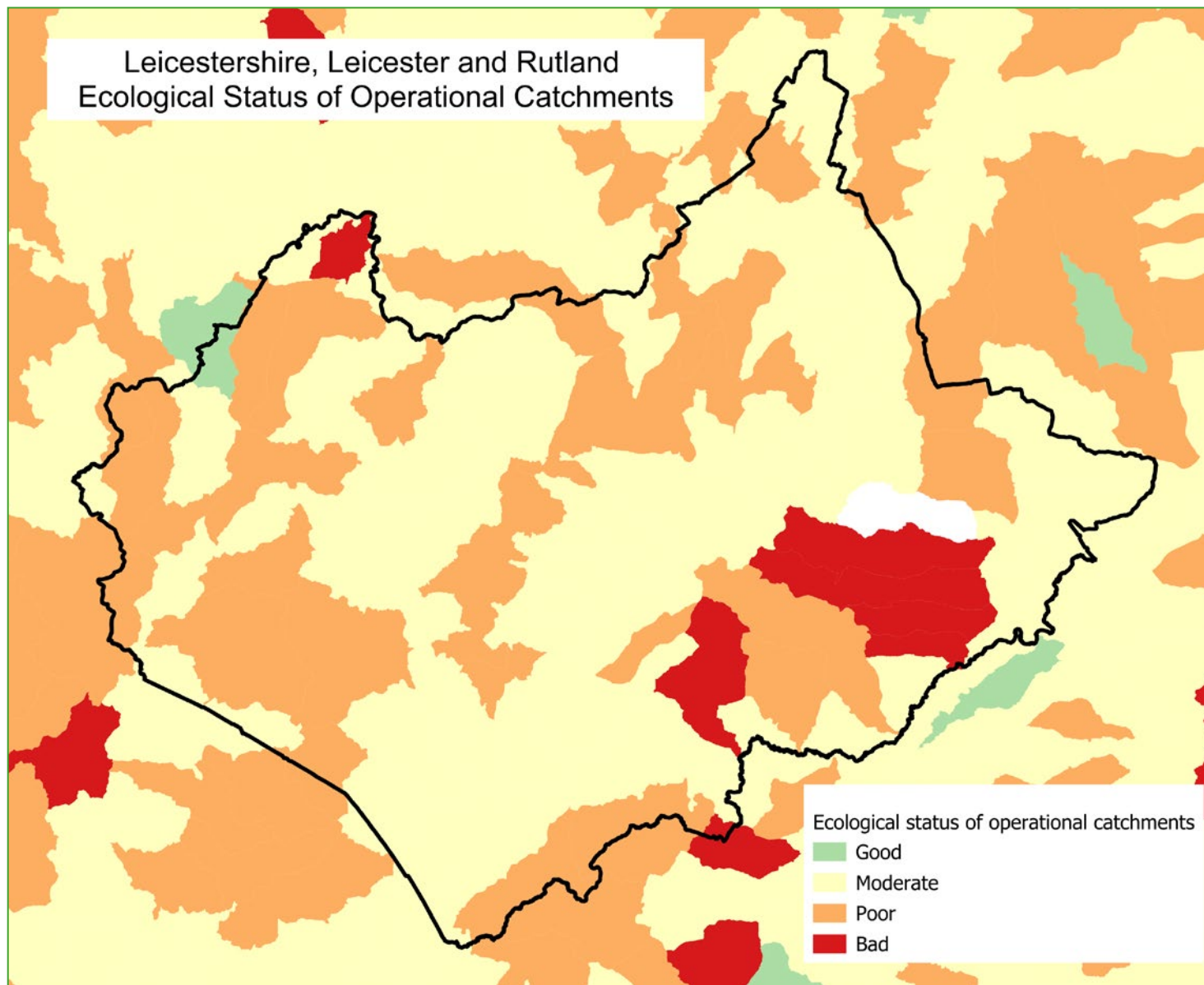
Source: Environment Agency.

e. Natural Flood Management: This map identifies potential areas for natural flood management, including reconnecting rivers and streams to their floodplains, floodplain woodland and riparian woodland enhancement and creation.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Natural Flood Management
Working With Natural Processes (WWNP)

Working with Natural Processes (WWNP)
- WWNP_Floodplain_Reconnection_Potential
- WWNP_Floodplain_Woodland_Potential
- WWNP_Riparian_Woodland_Potential
- WWNP_Wider_Catchment_Woodland_Potential
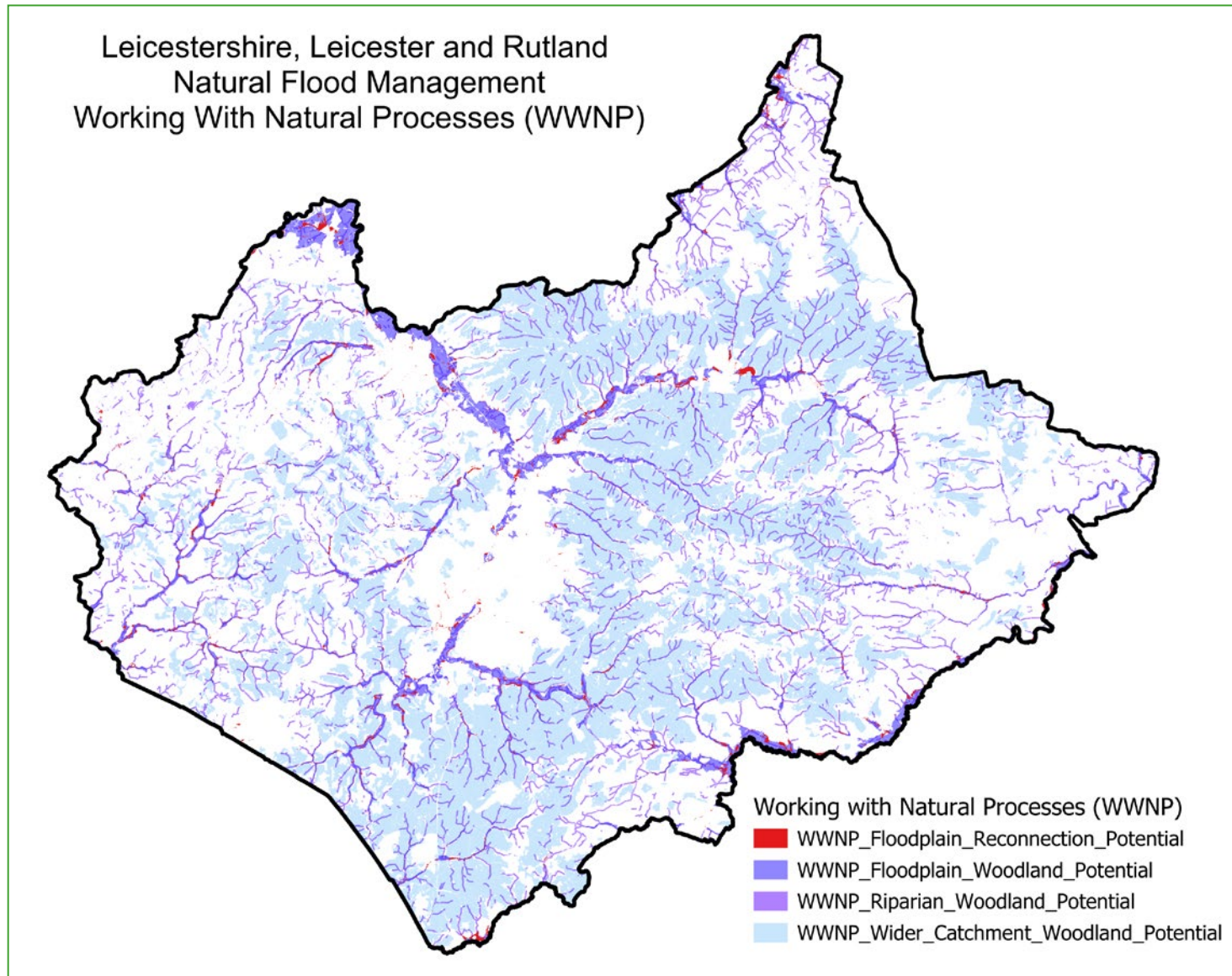
Source: Environment Agency.

f. Woodland and Tree Canopy Cover: This map shows the extent of woodland and tree canopy cover, emphasising areas contributing to biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and ecosystem resilience.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Woodland and Tree Canopy Cover

Woodland and Trees

Broadleaved	Mixed mainly broadleaved
Conifer	Mixed mainly conifer
Felled	Shrub
Low density	Young trees
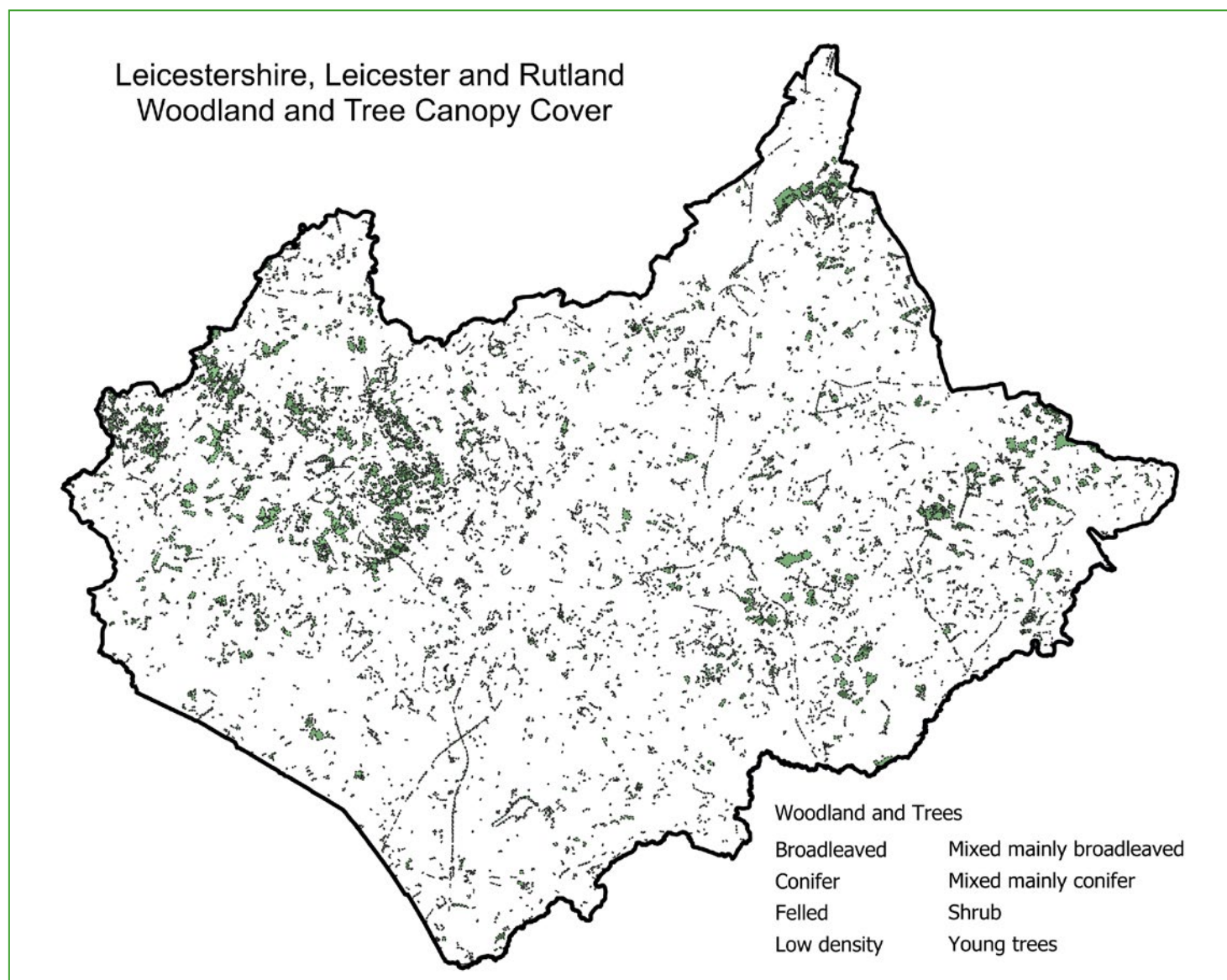
Source: National Forest Inventory 2021.

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g. Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) Map: This map shows the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) developed by Natural England. This is a framework for evaluating and improving access to natural spaces within communities.

The ANGSt guidelines suggest that people should have:

- A green space of at least 2 hectares within 300 meters (about a 5-minute walk) from their home.

- At least one accessible 20-hectare site within 2 kilometres.

- A larger natural area (100 hectares) within 5 kilometres.

- One very large site of at least 500 hectares within 10 kilometres.

These standards aim to ensure that everyone has adequate access to green spaces for recreation, mental well-being, and connection to nature, which is increasingly recognised as essential for health and quality of life.

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

Accessible Greenspace Standards
- Poor
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- Very Good
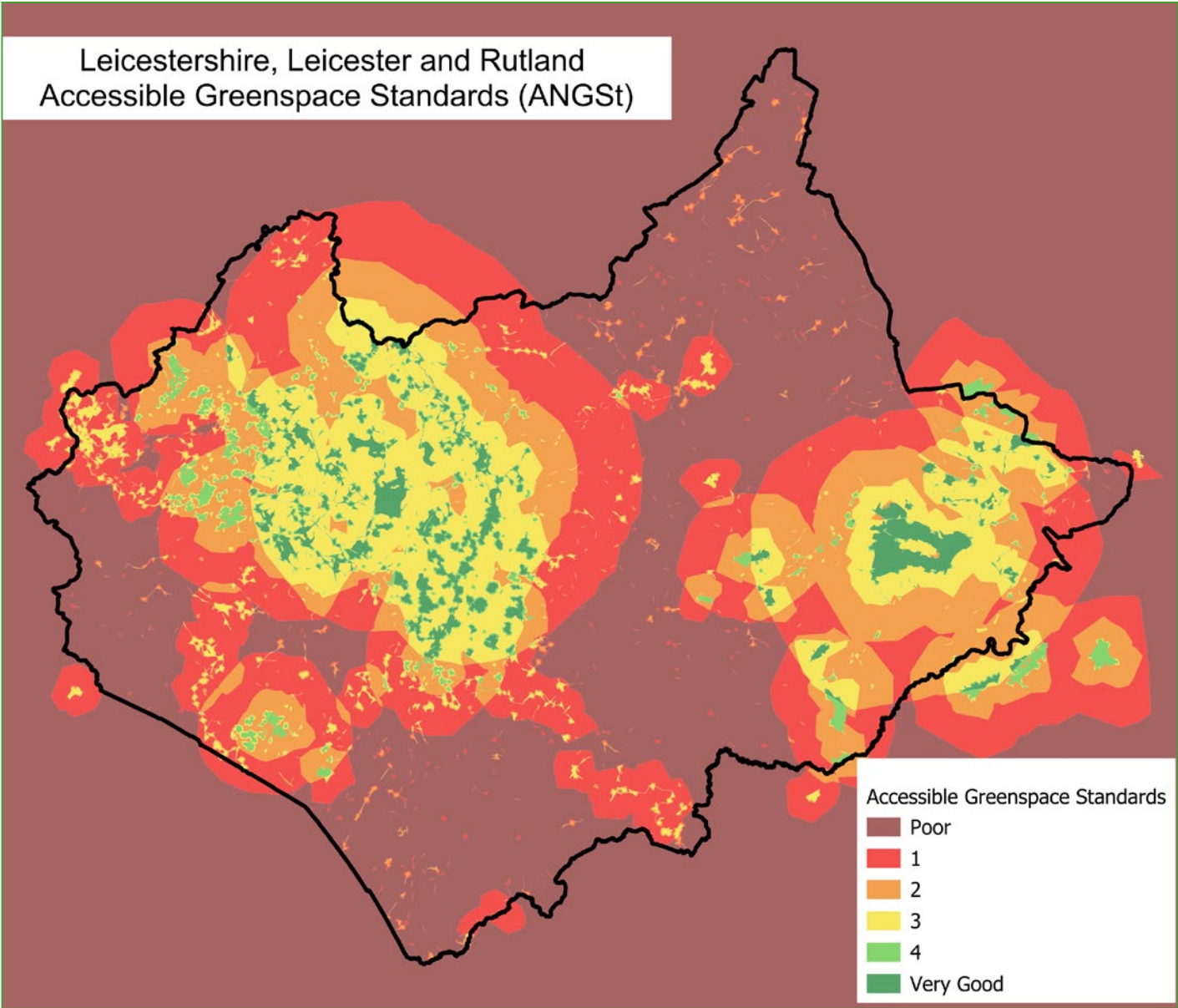
h. Hedgerows: This map shows the distribution and density of hedgerows in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, including how many kilometres of hedgerow are in each kilometre square.

Leicestershire, Leicester &
Rutland, Hedgerows
Per Kilometre Square

Hedgerow KM2
0 - 3km
3km - 4.5km
4.5km - 5.5km
5.5km - 6.5km
6.5km - 10km

0   7.5   15 km
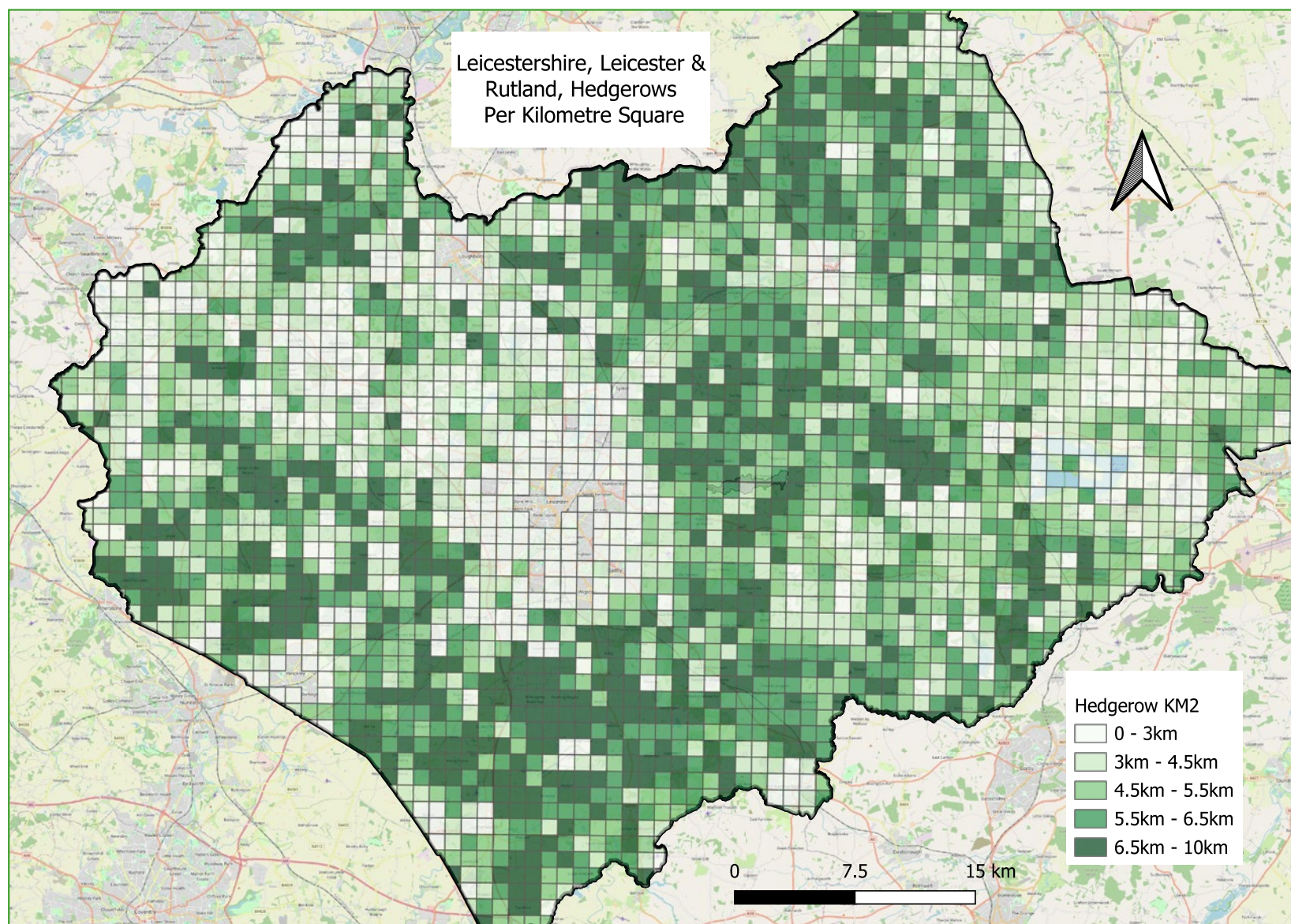
Source: UKCEH Land Cover Map & Hedgerows.

Appendix E
Stakeholder Engagement Records

1. Stakeholder Engagement Report

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

Trueman Change was engaged through a competitive quotation process by Leicestershire County Council, as the responsible authority. Their role was to support and facilitate comprehensive engagement with the public and key stakeholder groups, achieving valuable input of opinions and perspectives to inform the creation of the draft strategy, in readiness for full public consultation prior to adoption. The full engagement report can be accessed in the resources section of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Website.

Appendix F
Relevant Legislation and Policies

The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) (procedure) Regulations 2023: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/made

Environment Act 2021: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006:
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents

Biodiversity Net Gain: www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain

Biodiversity Duty: www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty

HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationery Office) 1981:
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, HMSO, London.

Appendix G
References and Further Reading

1. Bibliography

All sources referenced in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy are available in the resources section of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy webpages. This can be accessed here: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/lnrs-resources

These sources are organised into two main tables for easy reference:

a. Table of existing strategies and plans assessed in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

This table includes all the 100 strategic documents assessed and referenced to establish the aims, priorities, and measures that underpin the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

b. Management plans and good practice guidance documents

This table lists the management and best practice resources that inform effective strategies for delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy measures, priorities and aims.

2. Further Reading

JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) (2019).
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Cox, P., Trew, J., & Nicolson, T. (2016).
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Cambridge University Press.

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Nature Recovery Network – A National Framework for Action.
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Froglife. (2021).
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Strategy for the East Midlands.
Froglife Trust.
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Stoate, C. (2022).
Farming with the Environment: Thirty Years of Allerton Project Research.
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Leicestershire County Council

Leicester City Council

Rutland County Council

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Blaby District Council
the heart of Leicestershire

Charnwood

DISTRICT OF HARBOROUGH

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Melton Borough Council

North West Leicestershire District Council

Oadby & Wigston BOROUGH COUNCIL
STRONGER TOGETHER

NATURAL ENGLAND

Environment Agency

THE NATIONAL FOREST

Forestry Commission

SEVERN TRENT

love every drop
anglianwater

WOODLAND TRUST

Made possible with
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CLA

GWCT THE ALLERTON PROJECT

Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust

NFU

NatureSpot

River Soar Catchment Partnership

CHARNWOOD FOREST GEOPARK

MIDLANDS ENGINE

Making Space For Nature
in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland

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Agenda Item 12

	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 17 June 2025	Matter for Information and Decision

Report Title: **Local Plan - Local Housing Need Consultation**

Report Author(s):   **Ed Morgan (Principal Planning Policy Officer)**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval to publicly consult on the Local Plan - Local Housing Need Consultation for a 6-week period commencing on Friday 20 June 2025, running until Friday 1 August 2025.
Report Summary:	The Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024 which resulted in an increase to the Borough of Oadby and Wigston's Local Housing Need (LHN) to 389 homes per year, as opposed to 240 homes per year.
	Therefore, for a Plan-period of 2025 to 2042 (17 years) the Borough now has a new mandatory housing target of 6,613 homes.
	This Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) consultation seeks to gather the local community's thoughts on what this uplift in our housing need means in real terms for the Borough and our local community, as well as to explain what work the Council is doing this summer to evidence its position moving forwards.
Recommendation(s):	**That Members approve the Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) for the purposes of public consultation commencing on Friday 20 June 2025, running until Friday 1 August 2025.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Teresa Neal (Strategic Director) (0116) 257 2642 Teresa.Neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 2645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Jamie Carr (Planning Policy & Development Manager) (0116) 257 2652 jamie.carr@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Ed Morgan (Principal Planning Policy Officer) (0116) 257 2650 ed.morgan@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Economy (SO3) Our Environment (SO4) Our Partners (SO5)

Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Customer & Community Focused (V1)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. Initial EA Screening (See Appendices)
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	This report is seeking approval to consult with the public and other key stakeholders.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Local Plan - Local Housing Need Consultation Leaflet 2. Equality Assessment Initial Screening

1. Information

Local Plan - Local Housing Need Consultation

1.1 In producing a Local Plan, the Council is required to undertake a number of formal public consultations at specific times and milestones (as set by national legislation and the Council's Local Development Scheme). The Council has undertaken all the required public consultations to date, including public consultations during, September and October 2021, April and May 2024, and most recently between January and February 2025.

1.2 The Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024 which resulted in an increase to the Borough of Oadby and Wigston's Local Housing Need (LHN) to 389 homes per year, as opposed to 240 homes per year. Therefore, for a Plan-period of 2025 to 2042 (17 years) the Borough now has a new mandatory housing target of 6,613 homes, which could equate to circa 16,900 additional people living in the Borough by 2042.

1.3 This increase to the Borough's housing target meant that the Council had to 'pause' its progress on the then emerging new Local Plan at the Regulation 19 public consultation

stage in February 2025. After taking stock of its options, the Council formally took the decision to approve a revised timetable for preparing the Plan, which will see revisions made, an updated Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan consulted upon, and then that Plan will be submitted to the Government by June 2026 for an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

1.4   This Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) consultation seeks to gather the thoughts of the community as to what this uplift in our housing need means in real terms for the Borough and for our local community. It is crucial that we continue to positively prepare and progress this phase of the evidence that will underpin the Borough's future Plan, to consider if we can sustainably accommodate the new housing need.

1.5   This is not a statutory period of public consultation required by Legislation, but rather, this is an opportunity for the Council to communicate with all key stakeholders, in particular our local community, to explain the current situation the Borough is in as a result of the sharp increase to the housing target that came into force early this year in the Borough.

1.6   The Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) Consultation Leaflet sets out a series of Questions that stakeholders are invited to respond to as part of their response. The Leaflet also explains that the Council has now received a total of 47 individual site submissions from landowners and / or developers to date, of which, 14 were received as part of the most recent Call for Sites exercise in March to April 2025. It also explains that the Planning Policy Team is working on a number of key evidence-based documents to inform its position this Summer, including work on a Local Transport Assessment; a Housing Market Absorption Study; and the Whole Plan Viability Assessment.

1.7   The Leaflet explains that if the evidence based work this summer concludes that 389 homes per year cannot be sustainably delivered for the duration of the plan-period, then the Council will proactively engage with neighbouring Districts and Boroughs in Leicester and Leicestershire via our Duty to Cooperate to enter discussions with them about how to deal with any 'unmet need' (those homes the Council can't accommodate in the Borough).

1.8   This public consultation provides the Council with an opportunity to engage with all key stakeholders, including statutory consultees, neighbouring local authorities, infrastructure delivery partners, key organisations, local businesses and members of the public, to help inform the work the Council is carrying out this Summer to inform its position moving forward.

1.9   As part of this period of public consultation, Planning Officers will attend a series of exhibitions throughout the Borough, as set out in the Consultation Leaflet, as well as be available in person by pre-arranged appointment to speak to members of the local community every Wednesday from Wednesday 9 July to Wednesday 30 July.

1.10   Due to the very tight timescales that the Planning Policy Team is working to in order to complete all evidence-based work this Summer to inform the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan that will be consulted on early next year, this non-statutory Local Housing Need public consultation must be completed within 6-weeks. This will allow enough time for Officers to take account of representations received and importantly, will ensure that the overall objective of submitting the updated Plan to the Government by June 2026 remains achievable.

1.11   Alongside the Consultation Leaflet, the Council will also publish an updated Call for Sites Document (Summer 2025) which will set out all 47 site submissions received to date with a summary of the proposed use, as submitted.

Conclusion

1.12   Subject to Committee approval, the Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) public consultation period is proposed to commence on Friday, 20 June 2025 for a 6-week period.

Oadby & Wigston | Our borough - the place to be

Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN)

Consultation Leaflet

Summer 2025

Introduction

The Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024 which has resulted in an increase to the Borough of Oadby and Wigston's Local Housing Need (LHN) to 389 homes per year, as opposed to the 240 per year that the Council was proposing to deliver.

This increase meant that we had to take the decision to pause progress on the then emerging new Local Plan at the **Regulation 19** public consultation stage. After taking stock of the options, the Council formally took the decision to approve a revised timetable for preparing the Plan, which will see revisions made and an updated version consulted upon. The Plan will then be submitted to the Government by June 2026 for an independent review by the Planning Inspectorate.

This consultation document seeks to set out what this uplift in our housing need means in real terms for the Borough and our local community. It is crucial that we continue to positively prepare and progress the Borough's future Plan and we now have the opportunity to re-assess our position and to consider if we can sustainably accommodate the new housing need figure.

Local plans have to look at least fifteen years into the future. The Council estimates that by the time the Local Plan has gone through its consultation phases and been examined by the Planning Inspectorate, then it will be 2027 by the time the plan is adopted. Fifteen years on from then (2027) is 2042.

At a national level, the Government is giving high priority to increasing housing delivery and like every local authority area, we are expected to take our share of new development. As mentioned above, we have a new mandatory housing need of 389 homes per year, which equates to 6,613 homes over the 17-year Plan period from 2025 to 2042.

Everyone deserves a decent home they can call their own, but many people are locked out of that opportunity, being affected by higher house prices. We recognise the need to plan for more, high quality affordable homes and create accessible places that promote walking, cycling and public transport, as well as providing attractive job prospects for our residents. It's also important to ensure that new development is fully supported by infrastructure improvements, for example to roads, wastewater and flood measures.

Therefore, we are doing considerable work this Summer to consider if this many homes can be accommodated in the Borough, and if so, establish if the infrastructure and local housing market in the Borough can absorb such growth by considering the recommendations of key emerging evidence. If the work we are doing identifies that this uplift to the Borough's housing targets are not achievable, we also need to understand what level of growth can be accommodated and when any 'unmet need' would be triggered?

Ultimately, this is a vital period for the Council and for our community. This document and consultation period forms a key part of our journey towards progressing the Borough's Local Plan and your views are a crucial part of that journey – so please do get involved and help us plan the Borough's future together.

Councillor Samia Haq
Leader of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

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What is the impact of the new Local Housing Need?

In December 2024 the Government announced that the Local Housing Need (LHN) for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston had been increased to 389 new homes per year. Government also sets out that LHN must be delivered unless evidence robustly illustrates that it cannot. In comparison, the current local plan (adopted in 2019) was planning for 148 new homes a year and in the last version of the review plan (January 2025) we put out for public consultation the figure was 240 new homes per year.

The Government sets out in the new NPPF that in order *'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 practice guidance'*.

If the Plan-period is taken to begin in 2025 to 2042 (fifteen years after when we anticipate the Plan being adopted), this equates to a housing requirement of 6,613 homes over the next 17 years. We must use this figure as the starting point and test this level of growth as part of the evidence-based work we are conducting to inform the emerging new Local Plan for the Borough.

The average household size in the Borough is 2.55 persons per household and therefore 6,613 new homes equates to an estimated 16,863 additional people moving into the Borough once all of the additional homes have been completed and occupied. Not all of these people will arrive at once, but rather, as and when these homes are built throughout the plan-period. Alongside new homes, required infrastructure must be provided also. New school places, GP surgery places, roads, footpaths, cycleways, parks, to name a few, will be delivered to ensure that new development is sustainable.

Question A - Is a Plan-period of 2025-2042 the correct one to use? If not, what should the period be and why?

Queston B – To enable the delivery of 6,613 new homes by 2042, what would you consider to be the main issues in accommodating that level of growth in the Borough and how would you expect the Council to overcome those issues?

What does this mean for the Borough?

The comments people submitted in response to the consultation we undertook in January-February 2025 are still valid as it is envisaged that the majority of the Council's new Local Plan will remain similar if not the same. These comments are being considered by the Council and will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate at the appropriate time (see timetable below) for their consideration.

The higher figure requires us to look at finding more sites and then assessing them for their suitability for housing. In the main, sites come forward through the Call for Sites process where the Council asks landowners/promoters to put forward sites they would like to see developed. Part of the assessment process is whether a landowner is willing to let their land be developed, if they are not we cannot really consider a site as available for development.

Call for Sites – current position

The Council has undertaken four formal public Call for Sites consultations to inform this emerging Plan to date, most recently in March and April 2025. These exercises have been carried out to understand what land interests there are in the Borough and to encourage landowners / developers to alert the Council to sites that can be assessed for their development potential. In total, the Council has received 47 individual site submissions.

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Question C – *Are you aware of any other potential additional available sites in the Borough that the Council hasn't yet been made aware of? If so, where are they?*

Map of all sites received to date

To view all parcels of land and a summary of their proposed use (as submitted by the relevant landowner / developer) please see the latest **Call for Sites: Sites Collation and Initial Assessment (Summer 2025)**. The map below shows all Site Options received by the Council to date (Summer 2025).
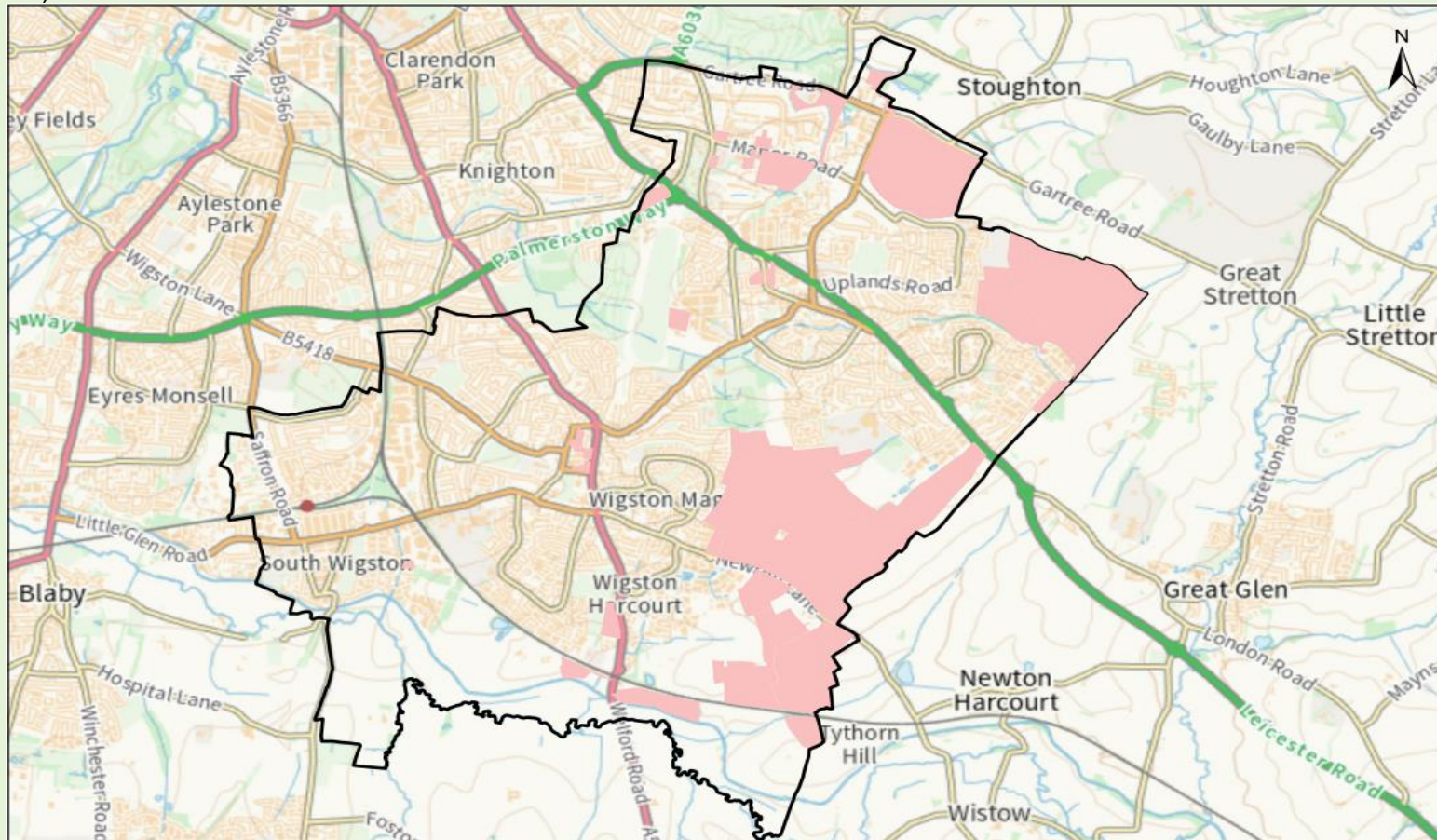
Emerging Evidence Base

In addition to the Call for Sites exercise, where site promoters actively put forward their sites, the Council is also undertaking a Site Capacity Study. This is considering all possible sites in the Borough and is determining whether each site is acceptable for development and if so, sets out a possible number of dwellings a site could deliver. This Study is an important piece of evidence for the Plan and acts as the Council's first stage of detailed site assessment by looking at each site on its own merits. This Study will be published on our website when it has been completed.

Sites deemed to be suitable for new development from this Study and the Call for Sites exercise will then be subject to further assessment via relevant evidence also being undertaken by the Council. This work includes:

- **Whole Plan Viability Assessment** – a study that evaluates the financial feasibility of the Local Plan, ensuring policies are realistic and won't undermine the plan's delivery.
- **Local Transport Assessment** - a comprehensive evaluation of the potential impact of proposed growth and new developments on the local transport network.
- **Housing Market Absorption Study** – a study to consider whether the local housing market can absorb such a significant increase to the Borough's Local Housing Need to 389 homes per year up to 2042. The study will recommend the variety of house types and tenures needed to achieve these higher build out rates.
- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** - an analysis of the risk posed by flooding from all sources in the Borough and assessing each Site Option received via the Council's Call for Sites process to date.
- **Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment** - a baseline ecological assessment that identifies habitats, plant species, and potential presence of protected species on all Site Options received via the Council's Call for Sites process to date.
- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assesses the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the Plan, ensuring it promotes sustainable development. Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) determines if the Plan could negatively impact protected European sites and their biodiversity.
- **Other relevant evidence to inform the emerging Local Plan, including Infrastructure Delivery and other relevant matters.**

It is important to bear in mind that once the sites have been assessed and the evidence has been applied to consider the impact on, for example, social infrastructure, flood risk or transport impact, the potential number of homes that could be delivered from a Site may change.

In addition, the capacity of sites may be subject to change as a result of the Examination in Public by the Planning Inspectorate; sites may be removed by the Planning Inspectorate if deemed unacceptable; or, more land on a site may need to be set aside, for example, to account for flood mitigation, meaning a site may end up providing fewer dwellings than originally assumed.

Therefore, the total number of dwellings that can be delivered from a Site will depend on a number of factors that may be subject to change until the Plan has been examined in public and then subsequently found sound by the Planning Inspectorate before being adopted (published) by the Council.

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Duty to Cooperate

All councils have a Duty to Cooperate, as set out in para 24 of the new National Planning Policy Framework. This means that the Council has a legal obligation to engage constructively with other authorities and organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire, as well as other bodies in England, on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.

Discussions have taken place throughout the preparation of this Plan and will continue to do so throughout the remainder of this preparation process. For example, we regularly discuss matters of cross-boundary significance, in particular in relation to any development proposals in neighbouring districts that could have a direct impact upon services and infrastructure capacity here in the Borough. The Council is working particularly closely with Harborough District Council, Leicestershire County Council and relevant infrastructure delivery partners relating to the cross-boundary jointly proposed Site Allocation for Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area, where approximately 4,000 new homes are proposed to be built, of which at least 850 homes will be in Oadby.

For a comprehensive list of the Duty to Cooperate bodies that we are required to engage with, please visit Appendix 2 of the Council's **Statement of Community Involvement (2024)**.

If the evidence based work we do this summer concludes that 389 homes per year cannot be sustainably delivered for the duration of the plan-period, then the Council will proactively engage with districts and boroughs in Leicester and Leicestershire to enter into discussions with them about how to deal with any 'unmet need' (those homes the Council can't accommodate in the Borough).

In this situation, the Council will need to have rigorously examined all of the available land options in the Borough and evidence (e.g. flood risk, transport modelling, market absorption etc) will need to have clearly illustrated that the delivery of 389 homes per year over the plan-period would result in unsustainable impacts on the Borough area. National legislation requires the production of Local Plans to be evidence led, which means Council's cannot 'pick and choose' their housing need figure and / or target.

We are particularly keen to hear from all stakeholders, including statutory consultees, neighbouring local authorities, infrastructure delivery partners, key organisations and of course, members of the public, to help inform the work we are carrying out this Summer to inform this position.

> *Question D - Do you consider that the local transport network and social infrastructure (e.g. Schools, Health Facilities and Open Spaces), plus the local housing market, can absorb 389 homes per year for the period 2025 to 2042? Please give reasons, and examples, to support your answer.*

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So, what happens next?

- The Council will be updating the evidence base to assess if 389 new homes per year can be accommodated and the impact of delivering such a number.

- The Council will be analysing the comments received in response to this consultation to look at the capacity available from all sites deemed suitable by the emerging evidence.

- The Council will be talking to all infrastructure providers / statutory consultees about the implications of a revised dwelling figure.

- The Council will be talking to neighbouring councils about how to deal with any unmet need (if evidence concludes that we have one).

The Council is also committed to the following delivery timescales:

Local Plan Preparation Stage	Current Local Development Scheme (February 2025)
Local Housing Need and NPPF Conformity Consultation Document	6 weeks consultation between June and July 2025
Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation	6 week consultation during February and March 2026
Regulation 22 Submission to the Planning Inspectorate	Proceed to Examination by 12 June 2026
Regulation 24 Estimated Examination Hearing Sessions	Dependent on the Planning Inspectorate, however likely within 6 months of submission date.
Regulation 26 Adoption	Likely Spring / Summer 2027 (date dependant on the Planning Inspectorate)

How to participate

The Council has made the decision to undertake this additional public consultation as it considers that the views of local residents and businesses are vitally important in shaping our future. We want to ensure that the local community has as much input as possible.

The Council is providing opportunities to consult and feedback on the direction of the Local Plan from midday on Friday 20 June until midday on Friday 1 August 2025 (6 weeks).

Exhibitions will be held throughout the Borough and provide an opportunity to meet and engage with the Council's Planning Officers on the following dates:

- **Saturday 21 June 2025** - Wigston Town Centre, Bell Street / Leicester Road (Next to the digital sign, outside Age UK), 11am-2pm

- **Monday 23 June 2025** - Wigston Leisure Centre, Wigston (in Reception), 11am-1pm

- **Wednesday 25 June 2025** - Brocks Hill Council Offices, Oadby, 11am-1pm

- **Friday 27 June 2025** - Oadby Town Centre, The Parade (Next to the digital sign and Oadby Village Pharmacy), 11am-2pm

- **Monday 30 June 2025** - Blaby Road Park main entrance, South Wigston, 11am-1pm

- **Monday 30 June 2025** - Parklands Leisure Centre, Oadby (in Reception), 5pm-7pm

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- **Tuesday 1 July 2025** - Brocks Hill Council Offices, Oadby, 4pm-6pm

Alternatively, a member of the Planning Policy Team will be available in-person (**by pre-arranged appointment only – please book via email to** planningpolicy@oadby-wigston.gov.uk) at the Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, LE2 5JJ between 10am and 4pm on Wednesday 9 July, Wednesday 16 July, Wednesday 23 July, and Wednesday 30 July, 2025. **This free service is available to members of the public only and not site promoters.**

To pre-arrange an appointment, please contact the Planning Policy Team via email prior to coming to the Offices to agree a suitable date and time to visit us.

Responding to the Consultation

All stakeholders are invited to download the Representations Submission Form(s) and attach any relevant supporting evidence as part of their comments.

Representations Submission Form (Word Doc)

Each form and any relevant supporting evidence must be sent to us via:

- Email: planningpolicy@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

- Post: Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, FAO. Planning Policy Team, Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, LE2 5JJ

    All representations must be received by midday on Friday 1 August 2025.

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Appendix 2

Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

PART 1 - INITIAL SCREENING

Name of Policy/Function:	✓	This is **new**
Local Plan - Local Housing Need Consultation Leaflet		This is a **change** to an existing policy
		This is an **existing** policy, Function, not previously assessed
		This is an existing policy/function for **review**

Date of screening	Thursday 15 May 2025

1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

The Council is committed to building a strong, empowered and healthy community to achieve high quality planning and development.

The Borough of Oadby and Wigston emerging draft Local Plan is the overarching policy document for the authority area and sets out the vision and framework for future development for the Plan period 2025 to 2042.

Once adopted, this new Local Plan will supersede the Council's currently adopted Local Plan (2019).

This Local Plan - Local Housing Need Consultation Leaflet provides a snapshot of the current position the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is in, as a result of the Government increasing the Borough's Local Housing Need this year.

2. Are there external considerations?

e.g. Legislation/government directive etc

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024; National Planning Practice Guidance 2016; Localism Act 2011; Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Members and Staff; landowners and / or developers who may wish to promote the development of their land; statutory and non-statutory consultees, including all of the Borough's community.

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

This Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) consultation seeks to set out what this uplift in our housing need means in real terms for the Borough and our local community, as well as to explain what work the Council is doing this summer to evidence its position moving forwards.

5. Has any consultation/research been carried out?

The Council has undertaken all of the required public consultations to date, including public consultations during, September and October 2021, April and May 2024, and most recently between January and February 2025.

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of Inequalities/negative impacts?

Consider and identify any evidence you have -equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so please provide details.

No

7. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

Positive – *It could benefit*
Negative – *It could disadvantage*
Neutral – *Neither positive nor negative impact or not sure.*

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Age	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Gender Reassignment	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Sex	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Sexual Orientation	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.

Religion/Belief	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive – The Local Plan does not favour one particular group. It seeks that all development is accessible equally by everyone within the community.

8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected?

e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes, homeless?

The Local Plan seeks to deliver a range of infrastructure to mitigate the impact of new development, including but not limited to, affordable housing for the Borough's community.

9. Are there any human rights implications?

Yes/No (If yes, please explain)

No.

10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?

Yes/No (If yes, how will this be done?)

Yes. New infrastructure and facilities such as sports pitches, community buildings, schools and health infrastructure improvements will be provided as part of new developments coming forward. This will be to the benefit of the whole community within the Borough. New development will also provide construction job opportunities to the Borough. New local employment opportunities will also be created.

11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal?

i.e. not discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation

No.

12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

The Local Plan - Local Housing Need (LHN) consultation leaflet is prepared by the Council's Officers, however, some of the supporting evidence base supporting the emerging draft Local Plan has or will be contracted out. Any contractors commissioned to produce evidence base documents are directly appointed and project managed by Officer's in the Planning Policy team who have a good knowledge of the Council, as well as the Borough itself.

13. Is a Part 2 full Equality Assessment required?

No.

14. Date by which a Part 2 full Equality Assessment is to be completed with actions.

Not applicable.

Please note that you should proceed to a Part 2, the full Equality Impact Assessment if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community.

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full equality assessment **is not required*** (please delete as appropriate).

Completed by: Ed Morgan   Date: 15 May 2025
(Policy/Function/Report written)

Completed by: Adrian Thorpe   Date: 15 May 2025
(Policy/Function/Report written)

Equality Assessments shall be published on the Council website with the relevant and appropriate document upon which the equality assessment has been undertaken.

Agenda Item 13

	Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 17 June 2025	Matter for Information

Report Title: Standards & Ethical Indicators (Q4 2024/25)

Report Author(s):   Samuel Ball (Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Monitoring Officer)

Purpose of Report:	To receive the figures for local determination of complaints and ethical indicators for Q4 2024-25.
Report Summary:	The report provides information in relation to Member Complaints, Corporate and Ombudsman Complaints, Freedom of Information Requests and Anti-Social Behaviour Reports and Resolutions.
Recommendation(s):	**That the content of the report and appendix be noted.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Offier) (0116) 257 2642 colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Samuel Ball (Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2643 samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Communities (SO2) Our Council (SO1)
Vision and Values:	Customer & Community Focused (V1)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.

Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Standards & Ethical Indicators (Q4 2024/25)

1. Information

1.1.   Regular reporting about the Council's activities under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 is a statutory requirement under the oversight regime of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner. This report to Members covers Q4 of 2024/25.

1.2.   The report also contains other matters which Officers considered would be of interest to Members, including the number and disposal of Member Complaints, the number of Corporate and Ombudsman complaints, the number of Freedom of Information requests and the number of anti-social behaviour reports and resolutions.

1.3.   The Q4 report for 2024/25 is attached at **Appendix 1** for Members' information.

OADBY AND WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS AND ETHICAL INDICATORS

QUARTER 4 REPORT

2024/2025

1. Introduction

This is the quarterly report to the Policy Finance and Development Committee detailing both the figures for the Ethical Indicators and the figures for the Local Determination of Complaints process for 2024/2025.

For clarification purposes the months covered by the quarters are as follows:

Quarter 1 – 1 April to 30 June
Quarter 2 – 1 July to 30 September
Quarter 3 – 1 October to 31 December
Quarter 4 – 1 January to 31 March

The report is split into two parts for ease of reference; Part 1 refers to the local determination of complaints, part 2 is the table showing the ethical indicators figures.

The report will enable the Policy Finance and Development Committee to build up a picture over time of how many complaints are received and where these are coming from. The parts of the Code of Conduct which have been breached will also be recorded to enable training to be targeted effectively.

2. Part 1 – Local Determination of Complaints

The Monitoring Officer received 0 complaints in Quarter 3 of 2024/2025.

2.1 Source of Complaint

Not applicable

2.2 Assessment Sub-committee Decisions

There have been No Assessment Sub-committee meetings in this quarter.

2.3 Timeliness of Decision

The Standards for England Guidance stated that the Assessment Sub-committee should complete its initial assessment of an allegation "within an average of 20 working days" to reach a decision on what should happen with the complaint. The Council has taken this standard and adapted it under the new rules to aim to hold an Assessment Sub-committee within 20 working days of notifying the parties that informal resolution is not possible.

2.4 Review Requests

There have been no review requests in this quarter. Review requests can only be made following a decision of 'No further Action' by the Assessment Sub-committee where there is submission of new evidence or information by the complainant.

2.5 Subsequent Referrals

None

2.6 Outcome of Investigations

No formal investigations were concluded in this period.

2.7 Parts of the Code Breached

This section is intended to show where there are patterns forming to enable the Policy Finance and Development Committee to determine where there needs to be further training for Councillors. Targeting training in this way makes it more sustainable and, hopefully, more effective.

So far this year, the following areas of the code were found to have been breached:

Not applicable

Ref	Performance Indicator Description	Officer responsible for providing information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
LG1	Objections to the Council's Accounts	Head of Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG2	Follow up Action relating to reaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (Members)	Head of Law & Democracy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG3	Disciplinary Action relating to breaches of the Member / Officer Protocol (Staff)	HR Manager	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG4	Number of Whistle Blowing Incidents Reported	Head of Law & Democracy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG5	No. of Recommendations made to improve Governance Procedures/Policies		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG6	No. of Recommendations Implemented		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Corporate Complaints

Ref	Performance Indicator Description	Officer responsible for providing information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025
LG7	No. Corporate Complaints received	Policy, Compliance, and Data Protection Officer	56	57	48	60 (38 dealt with as early resolution, 22 were stage 1)	50	11	37	67
	No. Corporate Complaints escalated to L2		9	4	10	7	2	6	3	2
	No. Corporate Complaints escalated to Ombudsman		1	0	1	3	3	1	2	1
LG7a	No. Corporate Complaints Resolved at L1		47	53	38	15	48	5	34	65
	No. Corporate Complaints Resolved at L2		9	4	10	7	2	6	3	2
LG7b	No. Corporate Complaints where compensation paid		0	0	1	4	0	1	2	1
	Service Area		-		Council Tax	Corporate assets, Waste, Housing	-	Housing	Housing	Housing
LG8	No. Ombudsman complaints received		1	0	1	3	3	1	2	1
	Service Area		N/A (General OWBC)	N/A	Waste	Housing, Corporate assets	- Housing, Revenues, EH	Housing	Housing	Housing
LG8a	No. Ombudsman complaints resolved		1	N/A	1	0	2	1	1	1
LG8b	No. Ombudsman complaints not yet determined by the Ombudsman		0	0	0	3	1	1	1	3
LG8c	No. Ombudsman complaints where compensation paid		0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

			Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Ref	Performance Indicator Description	Officer responsible for providing information	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
LG9a	No. of FOI Requests Compliant	Policy, Compliance, and Data Protection Officer	178	154	174	143	161	169	212	202
LG9b	No. of Non-compliant FOI Requests		10	41	7	24	2	9	8	7
LG9c	No. of FOI Requests still open and within the 20 working days		0	0	0	0	4	9	4	0
LG9d	No. of FOI Requests withheld due to exemptions/fees applied		7	0	1	3	3	0	3	8

Freedom of Information Act Indicators

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Indicators

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
LG10	No. of Directed Surveillance Authorisations granted during the quarter	Head of Law & Democracy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10a	No. in force at the end of the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10b	No. of CHIS recruited during the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10c	No. ceased to be used during the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10d	No. active at the end of the quarter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10e	No. of breaches (particularly unauthorised surveillance)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10f	No. of applications submitted to obtain communications data which were rejected		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10g	No. of Notices requiring disclosure of communications data		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10h	No. of authorisations for conduct to acquire communications data		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG10i	No. of recordable errors		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Anti-Social Behaviour Indicators

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer responsible for providing information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025
	No. of Complaints Registered	Head of Law and Democracy	1/21	0/13	4/27	13/21	0/10	10/12	0/12	12/12
	No. of Disposals		1/4	0/2	1/6	5/1	0/4	8/3	0/0	2/8
	No. of Complaints still Open		1/0	0/0	4/4	12/1	0/5	7/4	0/1	10/2
	No Further Action (where suspect identified)		0/1	0/1	0/4	3/3	0/1	2/1	0/0	2/1
	No Further Action (no suspect identified)		0/17	0/10	3/17	5/17	0/7	1/10	0/0	8/9

Blue text – Housing
*2024/25 Q3 – x2 disposals given to 1 perpetrator. Therefore 1 case in total with no suspect identified.
Red text – ASB Officer
*2024/25 Q3 – x3 disposals given to 1 perpetrator. Therefore 10 cases in total with no suspect identified.

Food Safety Inspections

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer responsible for providing information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025
	No. of high-risk Inspections due	Head of Law & Democracy	1	2	3	2	3	2	8	0
	No. of medium/low inspections due		8	5	25	16	18	5	28	1
BPE31	No new business registered		37	14	10	17	13	33	12	16
	No. of high-risk Inspections Completed		1	1	3	2	6	1	8	8
	No. of medium/low risk completed		3	5	0	7	6	1	8	20
	No. of new business triaged (Initial contact to see if high or low risk)		26	8	27	7	9	10	8	10
	No of new businesses inspected (High risk only)		0	12	14	10	12	1	8	2
	Formal revisit under the food hygiene rating system		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1

			9	27	0	15	12	15	12	
	New businesses									16
	No. of inspections Outstanding high risk		0	0	0	2	1	2	0	1*
	No. of Inspections Outstanding medium risk		5	0	3	10	14	14	20	24**

- *1 high risk business was outstanding at the end of 31.3.2025 however this has not closed.
- ** 24 medium will be completed by Q1

- High risk are A/B risk rating businesses. Medium/ Low are C/D's.

- New businesses continue to receive a triage call to assess their activities, if High risk then a physical inspection is selected to be carried out. Low risk is not being carried out now but remain under review.