

LEICESTER &
LEICESTERSHIRE
2050:
OUR VISION
FOR GROWTH

FOREWORD

The Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared by the ten partner organisations in Leicester & Leicestershire to provide a long term vision that will address the challenges we face and the opportunities presented to us. It is a non-statutory plan but it sets out our agreed strategy for the period to 2050. We will deliver the strategy through our Local Plans.

We have listened to the comments submitted in response to our consultation and this document is the final version of the Plan. It explains the approach that we have taken in preparing the Plan, identifies broad locations where we think that development should take place and the infrastructure needed to deliver it. We will now work with local people, businesses, developers, landowners, government and statutory organisations to deliver the strategy and secure the infrastructure which is so critical to its success.

Cllr Trevor Pendleton
Chair, Members' Advisory Group for the Strategic Growth Plan

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Our Partners:



This document has been prepared on behalf of: Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

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LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE TODAY

OUR STRENGTHS:

Great location and connectivity - at the heart of the UK, with nationally significant road, rail and air services, and businesses that have the potential to export more goods and services

Growing and diverse economy - with employment opportunities ranging from traditional manufacturing, logistics and distribution to cutting edge, research and enterprise, innovation and technology sectors

Distinctive environmental, historic and other assets - beautiful countryside, valuable flora and fauna, thriving market towns and popular villages, country parks, waterways and canals

A diverse and multi-cultural city - with a young population, unique history, global tourism appeal, and attractive city centre with great shops, leisure, arts and entertainment

Three outstanding universities - globally significant in space, engineering and sports science, and high quality FE colleges.

IN SHORT, A COMBINATION THAT OFFERS EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Outside the City, an **ageing population**, not economically active but relatively wealthy. A strong influence on the number and type of dwellings

Pressures on existing communities from new development, lack of infrastructure and services such as education and health

OUR WEAKNESSES:

Congestion on our roads and railways - we are tackling this but further investment is needed to continue improvements and support our long term growth

Gaps in the road and rail network - travelling north-south is relatively easy (albeit congested) but east-west links are slow and unreliable

Poor economic productivity per head of population - lower than the national and regional averages

Low pay structure - many highly skilled employees and graduates move away, travel costs are high for those on a low wage making it difficult to access jobs

High levels of commuting - some of the most important employment areas are remote from places where people live

RECOGNISING THE CHALLENGE

Leicester & Leicestershire has huge potential for growth. Located at the very heart of the UK, with a population of over 1 million, a thriving and vibrant city, distinctive and colourful market towns, three universities and an international airport, our economy contributes some £23bn to the UK economy. We have much to offer in terms of quality of life.

We want to play our part in developing the UK economy, improve productivity and create the conditions for growth. We want to increase the speed of housing delivery, remove the barriers that have slowed progress to date, and ensure that there is a good supply of new housing for people who need it. We also want to protect the places and features that make Leicester & Leicestershire special.

If we are to be successful, we need to plan for the future at a 'larger than local' level and for the longer term. This allows us to consider a wider range of possibilities.

The Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared by the ten partner organisations - the City Council, the County Council, the seven boroughs and districts, and the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership - to provide a plan which will shape the future of Leicester and Leicestershire in the period to 2050. It is a 'non-statutory' plan but it provides an agreed framework which we will use when preparing our individual Local Plans and other strategies.

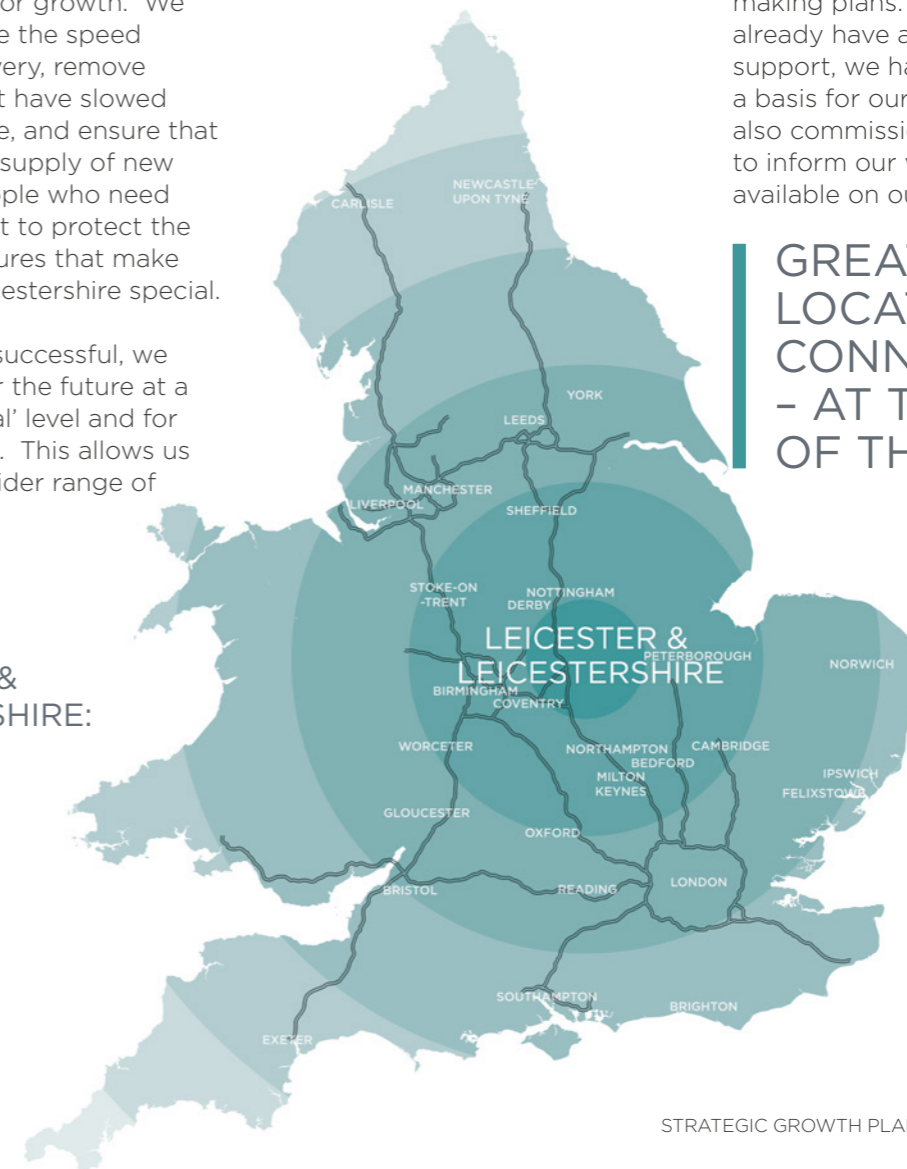
The Strategic Growth Plan focuses on four key matters:

- delivering new housing
- supporting the economy
- identifying essential infrastructure, and
- protecting our environment and built heritage.

We have not started with a blank sheet. Government, local and regional agencies are also making plans. Where these already have a measure of support, we have used them as a basis for our work. We have also commissioned evidence to inform our work and this is available on our website.*

GREAT LOCATION AND CONNECTIVITY - AT THE HEART OF THE UK

FIGURE 1: LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE: A CENTRAL LOCATION



*strategicgrowthplan.org.uk

PLANNING FOR OUR GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

WHETHER DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE BEFORE OR AFTER 2031, IT IS CLEAR THAT MORE HOMES AND JOBS WILL BE NEEDED. WE NEED TO PLAN FOR THIS NOW.

CALCULATING OUR HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

2011-31 (AND 2036)

The Strategic Growth Plan covers the whole of the period from 2011-50. It is not possible to produce accurate estimates of the scale of growth that is likely to be required for the whole of the period up to 2050 but we can divide it into stages.

Up to 2036, we can use government statistics and economic forecasts to plan with some confidence. The results are set out in our study of housing and economic development needs which calculates the need for both new homes and jobs.¹ Because our Local Plans are being prepared to end dates of either 2031 or 2036, the study sets out our need for new homes and jobs to the same end dates.

The detail is set out in Appendix A but, in summary, across Leicester & Leicestershire we need some 96,580 homes and 367-423ha of land for employment use in the period 2011-31 (See Table A).

2031-50

For the period 2031-50, we can use government statistics and economic forecasts only for the period 2031-36. Beyond that, there are no reliable estimates of population growth or household change, nor economic forecasts, but we need to have some understanding of how much growth we might be expected to accommodate. Having this information allows us to consider a wider range of options than if we were to focus only on shorter term needs.

For the purposes of the Strategic Growth Plan, we have chosen to work with an estimate of our housing needs for whole of the period 2031-50.

These are referred to as our 'notional' needs and have been produced by projecting forward the annual figures given in our study of housing and economic development needs. This indicates that, across Leicester & Leicestershire, we will need an additional 90,500 dwellings in this period.

The results will need to be monitored and reviewed as Government statistics become available but they are considered to be a reasonable basis on which to proceed. If we do not look to this longer timescale we will not be able to plan for, and secure funding for, the essential infrastructure that we need.

In terms of economic growth, it is very difficult to predict needs with any accuracy beyond 2036. We have decided, therefore, not to quantify the need for additional employment land for this period, at this stage. Again, in accordance with normal practice, we will monitor and review needs as necessary.

Our total requirements for the period 2011-50 are shown in Table A on page 5.

ACCOMMODATING OUR HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

We have analysed the amount of development that has already been built, has planning permission or is allocated in adopted or emerging local plans that have been published. This demonstrates that much of our housing and employment land is already provided for in the period 2011-31.*

Only Leicester City Council has declared that it will be unable to meet its housing needs. We are confident, however, that any shortfall in the period 2011-31 can be met through Local Plan allocations in other areas.

Beyond, 2031, we have assumed that neither Leicester City Council nor Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will be able to accommodate their needs. An important aspect of the Strategic Growth Plan, therefore, has been to consider how any unmet needs might be shared between the other local authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire.

We have decided that these additional needs will be satisfied, in part, by development in strategic locations in accordance with the strategy set out in this Plan.

The agreed distribution will be set out in an agreed statement. In line with the needs of our Local Plans, this will cover the time periods to 2031 and 2036. The statement will be used with the Strategic Growth Plan as the basis for preparing or reviewing Local Plans.

ALIGNING GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

We are very clear that significant new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester & Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services. We welcome government's recognition of this problem at a national and regional level, and the investment that is already being committed to projects in our area.

We will continue to work with government, landowners, developers and other stakeholders to accelerate development and to align this with essential infrastructure.

TABLE A: TOTAL HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS 2011-50

Housing	Employment Land (B1/B2/B8) ³	
2011-31	96,580 ¹	367-423ha. ¹
2031-50	90,516 ²	Not quantified at this stage
Total (2011-50)	187,096	

Notes:

1. As shown in *Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017)*

2. 'Notional' needs calculated by projecting forward estimates set out in the *Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017)*

3. Small scale B8 only (i.e. less than 9,000 sqm); the amount of land needed for strategic distribution facilities has not been quantified because it is so heavily dependent upon property market considerations.

WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE WE WILL BE UNABLE TO DELIVER LONG TERM GROWTH ON THIS SCALE, OR IN THE TIMESCALE PROPOSED.

To accelerate the speed of development, we will address the lack of essential infrastructure (highway capacity, schools, healthcare facilities, etc.) We will also consider financial viability which can be a problem on some sites. In others, the costs of the necessary infrastructure might need to be shared across several development sites.

We are working with developers, landowners and statutory agencies to remove the barriers to development and will focus on this more intensively as we move forwards. Our highway authorities have already identified key road and rail projects and are progressing these through formal approval and funding regimes. Outside the City, the County Council has summarised the key projects in its 'Prospectus for Growth'.*

Together the City and the County Councils, as highway authorities, are collaborating on a Strategic Transport Plan which will identify additional projects and set out short and long term aspirations for sustainable transport initiatives including public transport improvements, ways of reducing the use of the private car and green transport initiatives.

Other statutory undertakers will be able to use the Strategic Growth Plan and Local Plans as a clear statement of the proposed growth in Leicester & Leicestershire. This will allow them to identify their own investment priorities. We will support them in their requests for funding, lobbying government and supporting applications for funding through the normal processes.

MAXIMISING THE RETURNS ON INVESTMENT

Where infrastructure has already been committed, we now have the opportunity to maximise the returns on this investment and use it to the advantage of our local communities. We have taken as one of the building blocks for our Plan, proposals for infrastructure investment that already have a degree of support from government, executive agencies and other organisations. All of the strategic infrastructure in our Plan is acknowledged as being required to resolve national and regional problems.

Through the Strategic Growth Plan we can maximise the benefits of this investment by focusing growth in areas close to new infrastructure proposals. This does not mean to say that these are the only road and rail projects that are needed to support the growth that we will have. Existing schemes are already in the pipeline (e.g. improvements to the A5, the A511 and Melton Mowbray Relief Road) and we are working to deliver these. Additional schemes will be needed to provide better connections to the strategic network. We will also look for ways to improve public transport, cycling and walking.

In undertaking this work, we recognise that, on our own, we cannot deliver growth on this scale. Government, statutory agencies, landowners, developers and local authorities all have an important role to play in this process. The partnership approach that we have achieved to date provides a secure foundation on which to move forward with other organisations. Without additional infrastructure we will be unable to deliver long term growth on this scale, or in the timescale proposed.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR OUR PLAN

Other agencies are preparing plans and strategies which will influence what we do. In many cases, we have contributed to these documents so their contents are already aligned with our own aspirations. At the same time, the Strategic Growth Plan must be firmly rooted in the character of Leicester & Leicestershire and must protect our environmental, historic and other assets. This chapter summarises the principal building blocks that we have used to prepare our Plan.

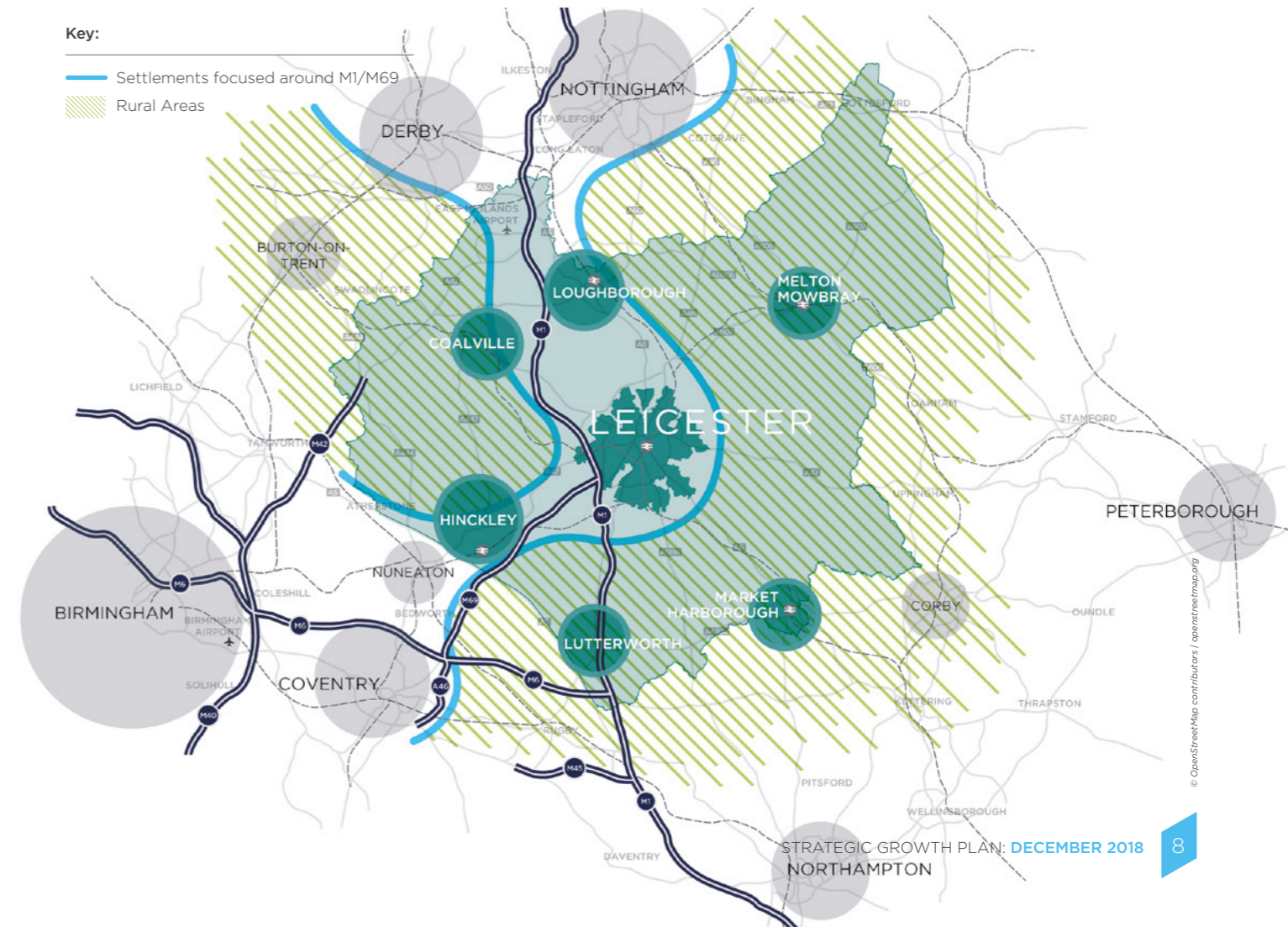
THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The first building block for our Plan is the settlement pattern that we already have. Looking beyond the county boundaries, the settlement pattern can be described as a series of separate towns and cities, extending from Derby and Nottingham in the north to Coventry and Birmingham in the south-west, mostly focused around the M1 and the M69 with intervening rural areas. On either side, extensive rural areas separate Leicester & Leicestershire from the West Midlands and Cambridgeshire.

Within Leicester & Leicestershire the settlement pattern is quite distinctive:

- A strong 'central' city (Leicester), located at the heart of the County, with suburbs extending into adjoining boroughs and districts. With strong office, shopping, arts, culture, heritage and visitor profiles, the City is a focus for the market towns, rural areas and major employment areas that are linked to it.

FIGURE 2: SETTLEMENT PATTERN



- **A ring of strong, independent and characterful market towns** each connected to Leicester by radial routes and with strong physical, functional, social and economic ties to the City. The market towns contribute much to the character of Leicestershire, are economically buoyant in their own right and are an important focus for local communities.
- **Extensive rural areas** encircling the City and the market towns, villages and hamlets. The landscape is beautiful and varied, and has an economy of its own, from nationally significant agriculture and food production to a growing professional services sector.

Together, this mix of urban and rural areas underpins our quality of life. The long-standing relationship between Leicester, the market towns and the rural areas is a feature that we wish to enhance. It is not lost on us that our settlement pattern resembles that of the 'social city', a phrase coined by the garden cities movement of the early 20th Century to describe a cluster of new garden cities in the countryside. The garden cities movement sought to deliver the perfect partnership between town and country.

NATIONAL POLICIES

The second building block of our Plan is an understanding of national policies. These influence what we can do, particularly in relation to our priority areas: housing, the economy, infrastructure and the environment. They also set the government's agenda for funding so it is important that we reflect these priorities. We want to be ready to take advantage of opportunities that will bring benefits to our area, yet able to control excessive development pressures.

THE INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Government's Industrial Strategy sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It provides a framework for our own Local Industrial Strategy* and investment by the LLEP. The Strategic Growth Plan considers how existing employment areas can be supported and where new growth should be directed.

THE HOUSING STRATEGY

Government has also published its strategy for tackling problems in the housing market. This recognises that if more new housing is to be built, at a faster rate, it will have to be accompanied by investment in new infrastructure. The housing strategy also recognises the importance of strategic planning for long term growth.

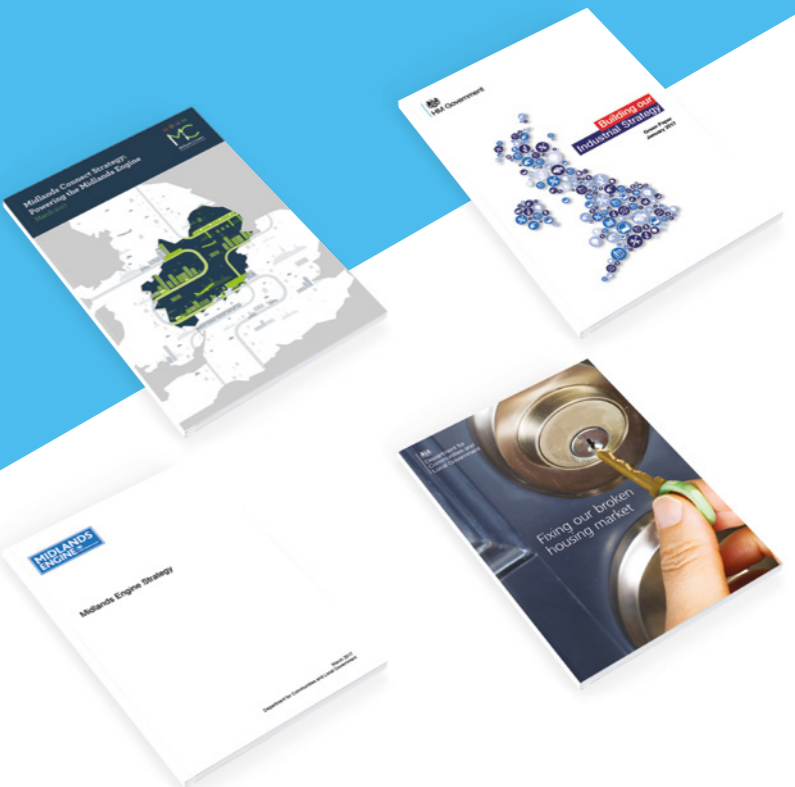
Government has already committed to new investment in housing, industry and infrastructure in Leicester & Leicestershire through various funding programmes, and more is promised. We want to maximise the benefits of this investment, nationally, regionally and locally.

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework has recently been revised. The emphasis of the new document is very much on strategic priorities, housing delivery and joint working. It includes a number of significant changes:

- the re-introduction of strategic planning
- the use of a 'standard methodology' for calculating housing need, and
- the requirement to prepare a 'Statement of Common Ground'.

In terms of strategic planning, authorities must now, as a minimum, ensure that there is a plan which addresses the priorities for an appropriate geographical area. It is acknowledged that in many cases, this will highlight the need for collaborative working on a joint plan.



WE CONSIDER THAT OUR STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN RESPONDS VERY POSITIVELY TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT AND NEW PLANNING POLICY

We have used the standard methodology to calculate housing needs so that we can compare the results with our own study. We have found that, across Leicester & Leicestershire as a whole, the scale of need is very similar, although there are variations at the local level.

In terms of a Statement of Common Ground, our Strategic Growth Plan already fulfils much of what is required: it is a clear statement of acknowledged issues, it identifies our priorities and it sets out an agreed strategy for our Local Plans. It provides a good foundation for future work on our Statement of Common Ground.

Although the National Planning Policy Framework states the government's preference for statutory plans, this has come at a late stage in the preparation of our Plan. We consider that the current Plan fulfils many of the government's requirements. We also have a need for an agreed strategy to set a framework for our Local Plans and investment priorities. For these reasons, we have decided to complete our work on the Plan but we will, of course, consider the need for a statutory plan in line with the requirements of national planning policy as we move forwards.

* Local Industrial Strategies are prepared by economic partnerships when invited by government. The Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Partnership has already been invited to do so.

OUR ECONOMY AND THE MIDLANDS ENGINE STRATEGY

The third building block of our Plan is an understanding of the local economy and how it is supported by the Midlands Engine Strategy. The economy in Leicester & Leicestershire is recovering strongly from the last recession but there is still much to be done. Productivity and wages remain below the national average but we have many important growth sectors and key employment locations.

The Midlands Engine Strategy has been prepared by Government and sets out a collective ambition for economic growth and prosperity. It aligns with the national industrial strategy and highlights how the region can build upon existing business sectors and areas of opportunity. It highlights many of our key industries, universities and employment areas as places of national, and even global, significance.

The Midlands Engine Strategy also recognises the growth potential of major employment areas such as East Midlands Airport, East Midlands Gateway, the two enterprise zones - MIRA Technology Park near Hinckley and the Loughborough & Leicester Enterprise Zone - the logistics and distribution industry and the potential of Leicester City Centre. Since the strategy was published government funding has been put in place for key projects.

THE MIDLANDS ENGINE STRATEGY HAS BEEN PREPARED BY GOVERNMENT AND SETS OUT A COLLECTIVE AMBITION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

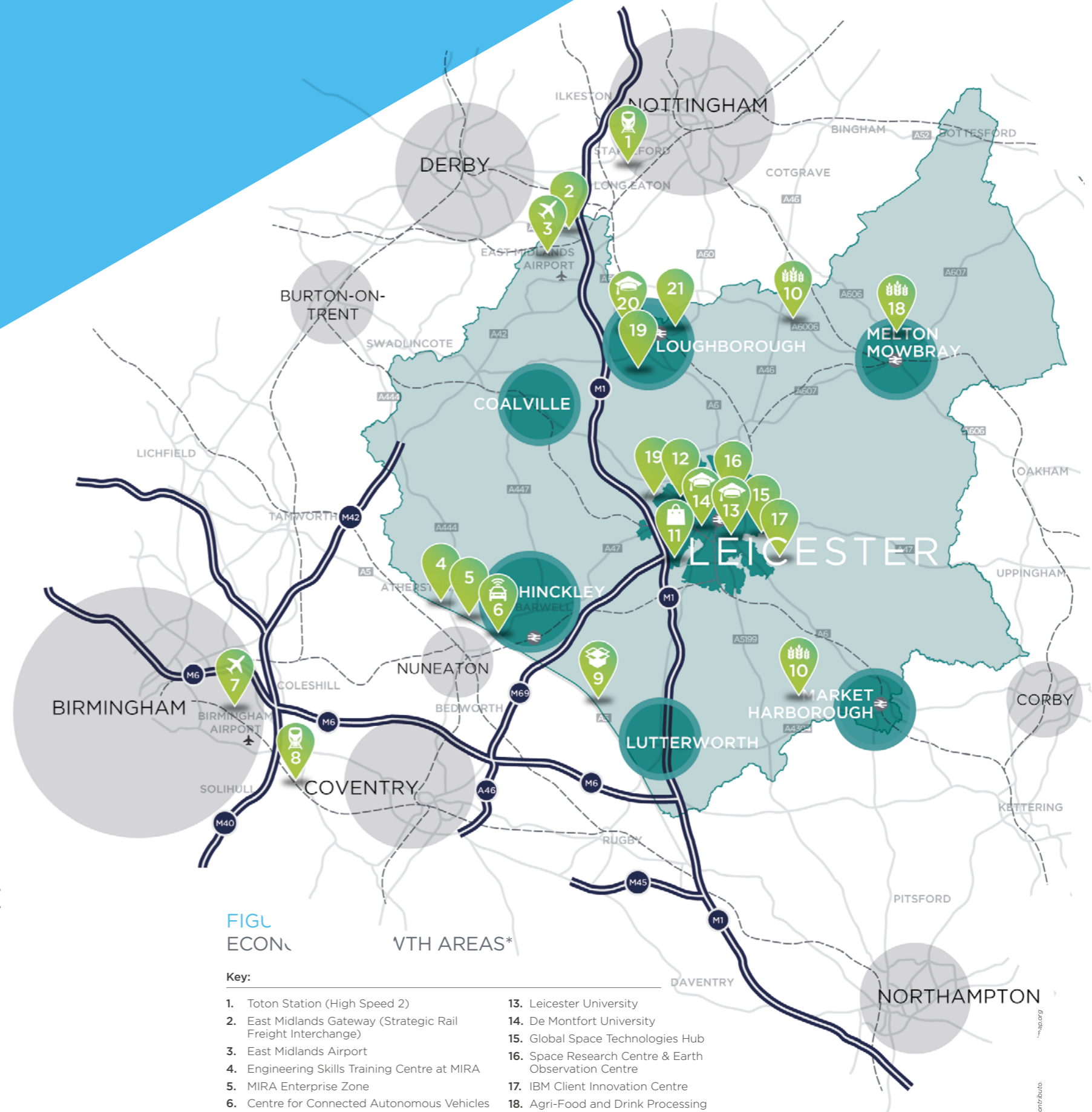


FIGURE 1
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY
VTH AREAS*

Key:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Toton Station (High Speed 2) | 13. Leicester University |
| 2. East Midlands Gateway (Strategic Rail Freight Interchange) | 14. De Montfort University |
| 3. East Midlands Airport | 15. Global Space Technologies Hub |
| 4. Engineering Skills Training Centre at MIRA | 16. Space Research Centre & Earth Observation Centre |
| 5. MIRA Enterprise Zone | 17. IBM Client Innovation Centre |
| 6. Centre for Connected Autonomous Vehicles | 18. Agri-Food and Drink Processing |
| 7. Birmingham International Airport | 19. Loughborough & Leicester Enterprise Zone |
| 8. Arden Cross Station (High Speed 2) | 20. Loughborough University |
| 9. Magna Park Distribution Centre | 21. Life Sciences Opportunity Zone |
| 10. Agri-Food and Drink Processing | |
| 11. Fosse Park Retail Centre | |
| 12. City Centre and Strategic Regeneration Area in Leicester | |

*Places and activities highlighted in the Midlands Engine Strategy (2017)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE MIDLANDS CONNECT STRATEGY

The fourth building block of our Plan is an understanding of the local road and rail networks and how they are supported by proposals in the Midlands Connect Strategy. A particular feature of the road and rail network in Leicester & Leicestershire is its emphasis on north-south movement and the difficulty of east-west movement. All routes, however, are heavily congested and few have the capacity to support growth beyond 2031.

The Midlands Connect Strategy has been prepared jointly by the Midlands Connect Partnership and government agencies. It supports the Midlands Engine Strategy and sets out a series of long term transport investment priorities to help unlock jobs and growth. It proposes a rolling 25-year programme of strategic road and rail improvements around a series of economic hubs and intensive growth corridors.

The Strategy endorses a number of key rail projects in Leicester & Leicestershire including improved rail services between Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham. Key road projects include improving the A5, M42/A42 and A46 to expressway standard, including a new road to the south and east of Leicester linking into strategic highways to the west.

Whilst the electrification of the Midland Main Line north of Kettering will not now proceed as originally planned, we will continue to press for improvements to the track, stations and services to support our local economy and housing growth.

The improvement of the Leicester-Burton Railway Line does not form part of the Midlands Connect Strategy. Currently, the cost of improving the track for passenger use, re-instating stations and operating services on this line far exceeds available funding and the likely income. If viable funding solutions were to emerge, however, supported by new development in the vicinity of the line such that it could be re-opened for passenger use, the matter could be reviewed in future.

Similarly, the railway lines from Leicester to Melton Mowbray and from Melton Mowbray to Nottingham/Newark do not feature in the Midlands Connect Strategy. Improvement of these lines would also improve connectivity and provide additional public transport options to support growth. At present, however, the cost of improved lines and services requires further investigation to establish the economic case and availability of funding solutions.

THE MIDLANDS CONNECT STRATEGY HAS BEEN PREPARED JOINTLY BY THE MIDLANDS CONNECT PARTNERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

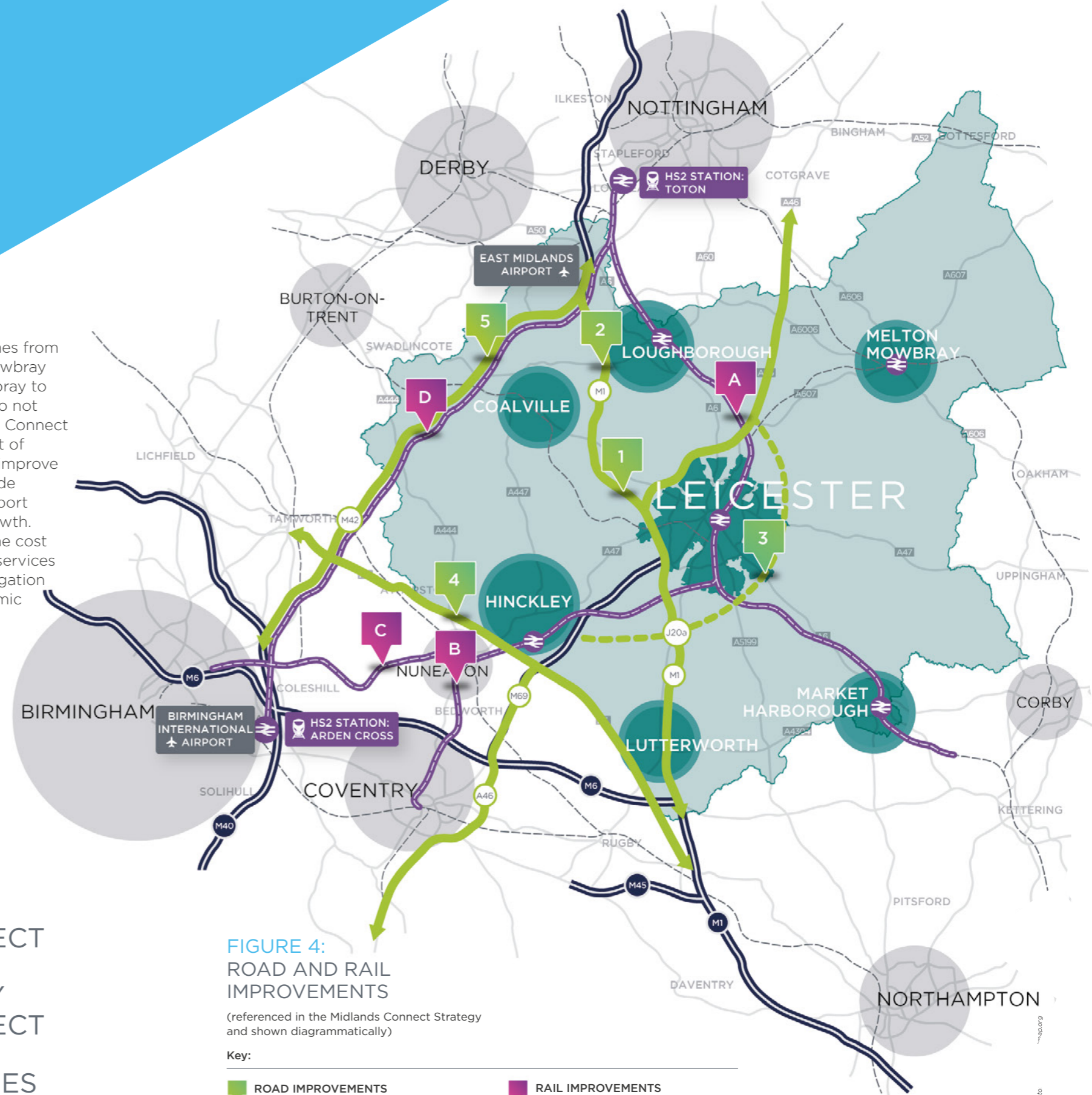


FIGURE 4:
ROAD AND RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

(referenced in the Midlands Connect Strategy and shown diagrammatically)

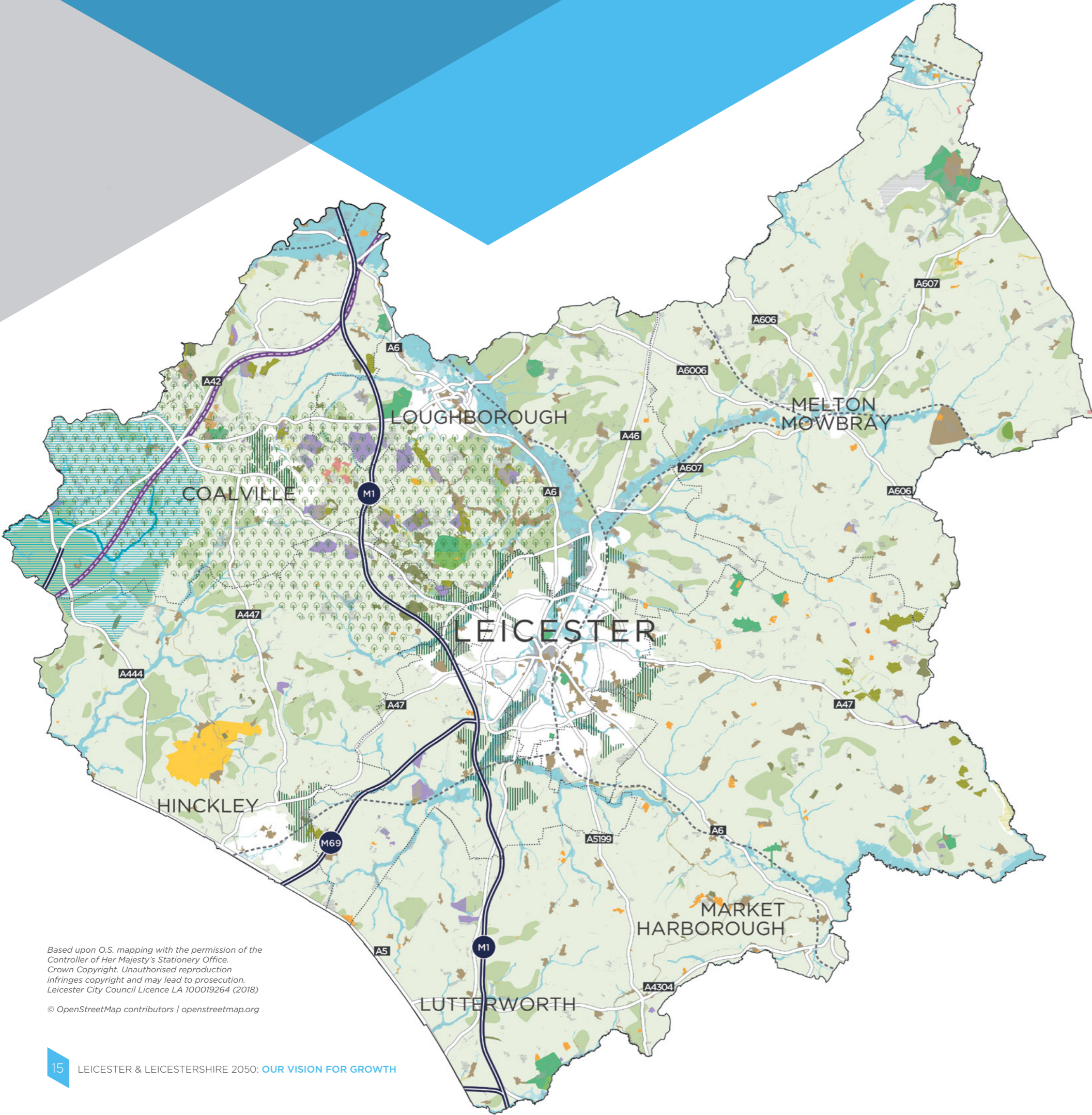
Key:

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

1. Smart Motorway M1 J19-23a
2. M1 J23/A512 improvements
3. A46 Expressway (route to be defined)
4. A5 Expressway
5. M42/A42 Expressway

RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

- A. Midland Main Line Upgrade and Electrification
- B. Leicester-Coventry Upgrade
- C. Leicester-Birmingham Upgrade
- D. High Speed 2



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL, HISTORIC AND OTHER ASSETS

The fifth building block in the Plan is a recognition of the assets that are most important to us. We have identified key features and designations to help us make decisions about areas that need to be protected (See Fig 5). We have few national or international constraints but there are key features that are important to Leicester & Leicestershire, not least the National Forest, Charnwood Forest, Bosworth Battlefield, areas separating urban areas (our 'green wedges'), valuable landscape and townscape, local nature conservation designations, civic heritage, conservation areas, etc. Many other places are important locally and these too need to be protected.

In a strategic document such as this, it is impossible to convey the range of assets that we have. This information has been assembled, however, and is available on our website. Further detailed information is held by each of the local authorities and will be used to make decisions about potential development sites. Balancing the need for growth with protection of our assets has been a critical consideration.

Difficult decisions have had to be made but we know, from previous experience, that unplanned growth can bring even more unacceptable consequences. We will continue to gather evidence about our assets and how they can be protected as we continue our work on Local Plans.

FIGURE 5: ASSETS

Key:

AGRICULTURAL LAND GRADES:			
	Grade 1		Scheduled Monument
	Grade 2		River Mease Catchment Area
	Grade 3		River Mease SAC
NATIONAL FLOOD ZONES:			Conservation Areas
	Level 3		National Nature Reserve
	Level 2		Geology
	National / Charnwood Forest		LNRs and Wildlife Sites
	Battlefield		Sites of Special Scientific Interest
	Parks and Gardens		Archaeological Alert
	Ancient Woodland		HS2
	Green Wedge		

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OUR OVERALL APPROACH

We acknowledge that Leicester & Leicestershire will grow. Our population is increasing and we need more homes. We have clusters of businesses, universities and research institutions that operate on a world stage. There is a national and regional imperative to provide more homes and jobs.

But we also know that too much growth in particular locations, and insensitive development, is having an adverse impact on our local communities and on our environment. The lack of essential infrastructure is also slowing the pace of delivery.

The Strategic Growth Plan is our proposal for balancing these competing interests. By providing a long term strategy and a framework for our Local Plans, the Strategic Growth Plan gives us the opportunity to identify strategic development locations and the infrastructure that is essential to their delivery.

THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

OUR PRIORITIES

During the course of our work we have identified four priorities. They are:

- **creating conditions for investment and growth** - balancing the need for new housing and jobs with protection of our environment and built heritage.
- **achieving a step change in the way that growth is delivered** - focusing more development in strategic locations and less on non-strategic sites.
- **securing essential infrastructure that is needed to make this happen** - taking advantage of proposals to improve national and regional networks (as set out in the Midlands Connect Strategy) and maximising the benefits from them.
- **maintaining the essential qualities of Leicester & Leicestershire and delivering high quality development.**

This sets an agenda for growth which is based on achieving a better relationship between homes, jobs and infrastructure, increasing the speed of delivery and ensuring that development does not damage the special places that we cherish.

INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

Analysis of population and household statistics tells us that Leicester & Leicestershire will continue to grow whether we plan for this or not. New jobs continue to be created particularly in Leicester city centre, in the northern part of the county and around the market towns.

More new jobs are expected in the LLEP's priority sectors of life sciences (medical technologies); advanced manufacturing and engineering; advanced logistics; space and digital technologies; and textiles. These reflect the priorities of the Midlands Engine Strategy and the growth of the national economy.

More locally, individual authorities are focusing on tourism, leisure, health and wellbeing and supporting the rural economy. The Strategic Growth Plan provides a spatial framework within which this investment and growth can occur.

OUR VISION*

Our vision is that:

“By 2050, Leicester & Leicestershire will have established itself as a driver of the UK economy, exploiting opportunities for linkages across its diverse economic base, supporting its urban and rural centres, and taking advantage of its exceptional location. Growth will contribute to people's health, happiness and well-being through the timely delivery of well-designed and high quality development, raising the bar in terms of environmental standards, quality of life and local distinctiveness.”

* Reference: Strategic Growth Statement (2016)

SHIFTING THE FOCUS OF DEVELOPMENT

To date, the majority of new housing in Leicester & Leicestershire has been built on small and medium-sized sites in the City, market towns, villages and rural areas. Some of this development has been unplanned. Often these developments make little or no contribution to infrastructure or services and, instead, rely on existing facilities. This has created significant problems. Some communities feel overwhelmed by the speed and scale of change. Others are disadvantaged by pressures on local schools, health centres and recreation facilities. Congestion on local roads and public transport is a frequent cause of complaint.

Sometimes those who want to live in good quality homes close to their place of work find that there is little available within their price range. Several major employers and clusters of economic opportunities are located towards the edge of the County. Not all are close to housing so a great deal of commuting takes place. This is a problem not least for those who do not have a car - public transport is often limited.

Our strategy proposes to build more development in major strategic locations and to reduce the amount that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas. This will allow us to plan for new housing and employment together with new and improved roads, public transport, schools, health services, local shops and open space.

We are working with developers and Homes England to increase the speed at which development sites come forward and are built out. We will continue to seek funding for essential infrastructure to support development.

Our analysis has demonstrated that, through our existing and emerging Local Plans, and planning permissions, we can make provision for the amount of new homes and jobs we need in the period up to 2031. This will be achieved through a mixture of major strategic sites already identified in Local Plans (about 40%) and smaller scale growth on non-strategic sites (about 60%).

SECURING ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Delivering sustainable growth, before and after 2031, needs new infrastructure, not only road and rail improvements but also schools, healthcare facilities, venues for sports and leisure, open space, community halls, etc. Through our work on Local Plans we have already identified the road and rail improvements that are needed to support growth in housing and jobs up to 2031. Statutory agencies also have the information that they need to organise their investment priorities. The problem has been aligning this provision across a number of delivery agencies. Solving this problem will lie at the heart of delivering growth in the early stages of our plan.

Beyond 2031, the scale of infrastructure and service provision is such that significant investment by government will be needed. Our strategy makes provision for more of our growth to be provided in strategic locations. To do this, we need to:

- deliver the infrastructure and services that have already been identified in Local Plans and planning applications; and
- secure public sector funding for new strategic infrastructure which will open up sites for development.

In terms of road and rail improvements, the Midlands Connect Strategy lays the foundations for longer term, strategic investment. Analysis has shown that by investing in road and rail schemes in Leicester & Leicestershire, congestion can be reduced on other parts of the regional and national network. The strategy, therefore, proposes major improvements to road and rail facilities throughout the area.

We have considered how these road and rail improvements could support strategic development in Leicester & Leicestershire. We have concluded that there are major opportunities for strategic development in locations that relate well to areas of housing need and economic opportunity. It makes great practical and financial sense to maximise the benefits that are offered by these schemes.

We recognise that, if high quality sustainable development is to be achieved, these schemes will need to be supported by public sector investment in local road and rail improvements, and in public transport. The City and County Councils, as highway authorities, are already starting to identify what will be needed but decisions cannot be finalised until specific development sites have been identified in Local Plans. The Strategic Transport Plan will provide more information on what these improvements are and how they will be delivered.

In terms of private sector projects, we recognise that the lack of funding, or the ability to secure finance, and a range of other factors have caused delay. We need to resolve these problems if we are to create high quality developments with a sense of place and everything that they need to create real communities. Growth after 2031 is also very much dependent upon earlier infrastructure being put in place.

We will work collaboratively with the private sector and others to remove any barriers which exist. The Strategic Growth Plan, together with Local Plans, the Local Industrial Strategy and the Strategic Transport Plan will demonstrate that we are speaking with one voice and are committed to an agreed strategy.

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

We have decided that our common agenda will be delivering 21st century garden towns, villages and suburbs within our strategic growth areas. This reflects the settlement pattern of the City and County, and establishes a framework for protecting the valuable assets that we have. It also allows us to develop a strong agenda around social, economic and environmental priorities.

The scale of opportunity in Leicester & Leicestershire assists these choices. Our strategy focuses development along transportation corridors and close to important employment centres. At a local level, we could expand existing settlements or create new ones. We could plan for some new development in existing urban areas. Indeed, given the scale of opportunity, several of these options could be delivered in combination. The decisions will be made in our Local Plans but the intention is that individual decisions will be made in line with this strategy.

We also propose to seek high quality environments, with a strong community focus and economic justification, and we consider that new strategic development should be delivered to a common agenda.

For this we have looked to our distinctive settlement pattern - Leicester as a thriving central city surrounded by strong, independent and characterful market towns, and extensive rural areas. We are keen to reflect our heritage of garden suburbs and government support for new garden towns, villages and suburbs.

The Garden City concept allows us to plan for new development which captures the very best of town and country. It would ensure that new development is planned with strong social, economic and environmental foundations, and that communities are placed at the heart of planning. This is the common agenda to which we will work as we bring forward, through our Local Plans, the major development opportunities in the Plan.

FIGURE 6: THE SOCIAL CITY CONCEPT OF THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT



Credit: Town And Country Planning Association

OUR SPATIAL STRATEGY

Our spatial strategy acknowledges the scale of growth that is already in the pipeline as a result of Local Plans and planning permissions. It also builds upon known road and rail infrastructure opportunities or commitments. In delivering the strategy we will enhance the role of Leicester at the heart of the county and maintain the close relationships between the City, the market towns and rural areas. In doing so, we will prepare Local Plans in line with this spatial strategy to ensure that growth is delivered in a way which responds positively to our aspirations.

LEICESTER: OUR 'CENTRAL CITY'

Leicester has a pivotal role to play in the strategy. We propose that it should develop its role as the 'central city' supporting the market towns and rural areas around it. More jobs, leisure, arts, culture and entertainment facilities would be provided within the City Centre. The strategic regeneration area along the Waterside will develop as a mixed use area, extending the economic opportunities available within the centre of the City, but balancing new jobs with the need for new homes.

The population of the urban area, in and around Leicester City, is about 650,000 and increasing rapidly. We are working collaboratively to accommodate all of the homes that the City needs in places that are well-connected to it.

Given the scale of housing need and the potential for new jobs, the City needs to grow. This needs to be done in such a way that we can make full use of existing services and infrastructure within the City. Also, by providing more homes close to jobs in the City Centre and other employment centres, we will be able to relieve development pressures in other parts of the surrounding authorities.

Given the scale of development on the fringes of Leicester, any growth would need to be accompanied by measures to increase capacity on the radial roads and improve public transport, cycling and walking.

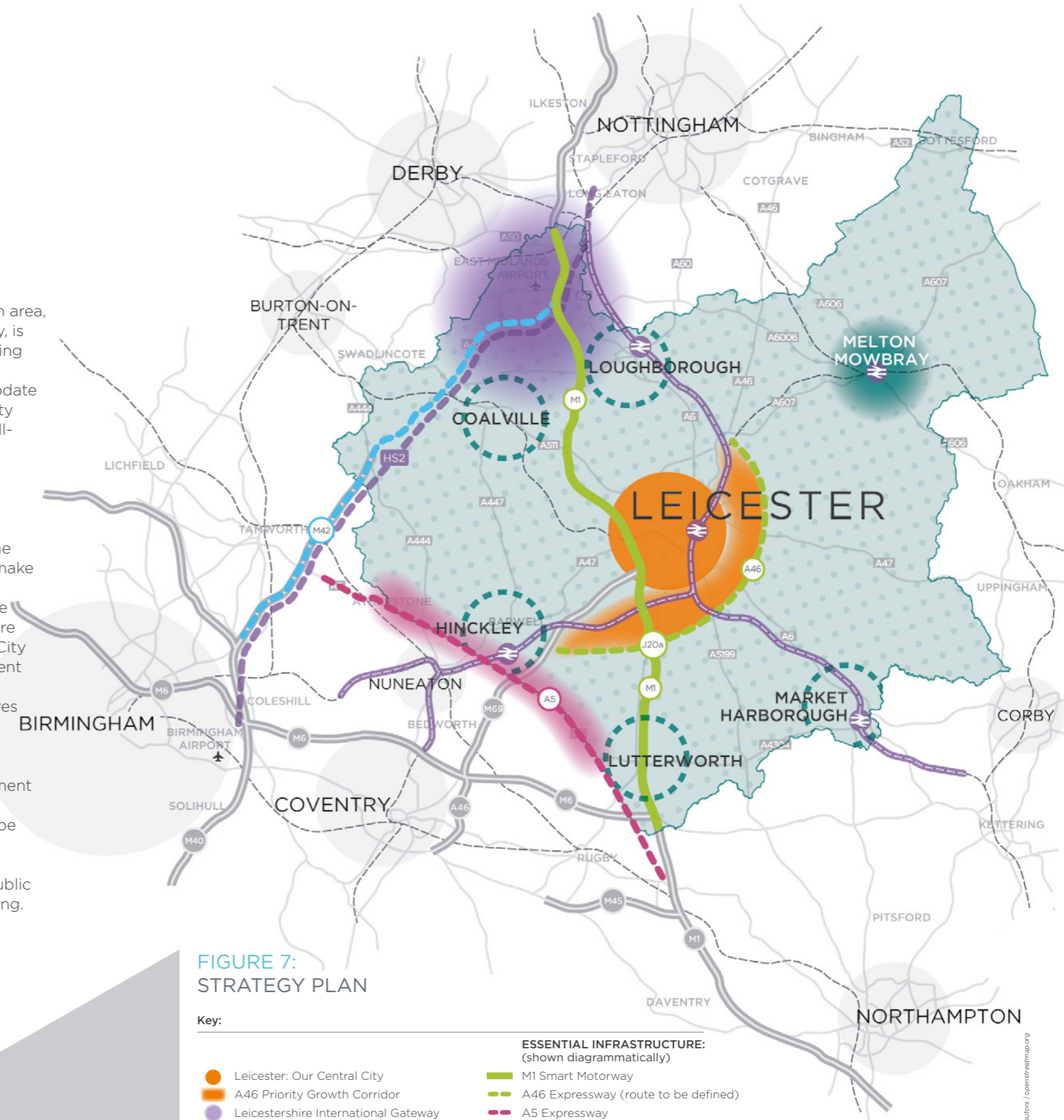


FIGURE 7:
STRATEGY PLAN

Key:

- Leicester: Our Central City
 - A46 Priority Growth Corridor
 - Leicestershire International Gateway
 - A5 Improvement Corridor
 - Melton Mowbray: Key Centre for Regeneration and Growth
 - Managed Growth in Local Plans
 - Growth to support local needs only
- ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE:**
(shown diagrammatically)
- M1 Smart Motorway
 - A46 Expressway (route to be defined)
 - A5 Expressway
 - M42/A42 Expressway
 - Rail improvements
 - HS2

WE WILL ENHANCE THE ROLE OF LEICESTER AND MAINTAIN THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CITY, THE MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

THE A46 PRIORITY GROWTH CORRIDOR

The 'expressway' proposal for the A46 is critical to our strategy. It not only provides an alternative route to the M1 but also creates the opportunity for significant development to the south and east of the City. The expressway proposal is included in the Midlands Connect Strategy and proposes a new road extending from a new or improved junction on the M69, and continuing to the south and east of Leicester, with a new junction on the M1 (J20a). The new road will re-join the existing A46 to the north-east of the City. The precise route of the new road will have significant implications for encouraging growth in Leicester and Leicestershire and will be the subject of consultation at various stages in its routing and design.

Improvements to the railway lines and services between Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham are also proposed.

The combination of new and improved roads and railways in this area creates the opportunity for major development along a corridor extending around the southern and eastern fringes of Leicester. The proposed new road is of national and regional significance but it also provides the opportunity for strategic development in Leicester & Leicestershire. We estimate that this corridor has the potential to accommodate about 38,000 new homes and additional new jobs.

The Midlands Connect Strategy proposes that the A46 and A5 expressways will be built by the early 2030s. Increased capacity on the railways is proposed within the same timeframe. As planning progresses on these road and rail projects, and Local Plans make provision for future development, the Plan proposes that we should start to shift the balance of new growth, away from small and medium-sized sites, towards major strategic locations within this corridor.

WE ESTIMATE THAT THIS CORRIDOR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ACCOMMODATE ABOUT 38,000 NEW HOMES AND ADDITIONAL NEW JOBS

THE LEICESTERSHIRE INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

The Leicestershire International Gateway is focused around the northern parts of the A42 and the M1, where there are major employment opportunities notably East Midlands Airport, East Midlands Gateway (strategic rail freight terminal) and HS2 station at Toton nearby. The authorities have already made provision for strategic new housing developments in Ashby, Coalville, and Loughborough and these need to be completed as a matter of priority to provide the opportunity for people to live close to their places of work. At the same time, some parts of the area (e.g. the centres of Coalville and Shepshed) are in need of regeneration and the physical fabric needs to be improved. In our Local Plans we intend to explore the theme of 'forest towns' suggested in the National Forest Strategy. This could be a way of enhancing the physical fabric of the towns and villages in this area and making the most of our environmental assets. It would also support investment in tourism and leisure facilities and the health and wellbeing agenda.

Loughborough, with a world class university, has also made provision for a science and enterprise park and this needs to be delivered in conjunction with improved access from J23 on the M1, now funded.

Overall, we estimate that the area has the potential to accommodate about 11,000 new homes. Improvements to the A42, the M1, railway lines and services – all set out in the Midlands Connect Strategy – support this opportunity.

THE A5 IMPROVEMENT CORRIDOR

The A5 provides a long distance strategic route running from the south-east to the north-west. The route acts as an alternative to the M6 motorway between J12 and the M1 but suffers from increasing congestion and lack of capacity to serve as a relief route when there are problems on the M6. Also, it is expected to experience increased traffic growth in the future from advanced manufacturing and logistics developments such as the MIRA Enterprise Zone & Technology Park, phase three of DIRFT near Daventry and Magna Park in Lutterworth.

Improvement of the A5 corridor is essential to reduce congestion in the area, to deliver already planned housing growth and to support delivery of major industrial sites which already have Local Plan allocations and/or planning permission. Managing the delivery of consented/allocated sites in and around Hinckley will be achieved through Local Plans.

There are long-standing proposals, promoted by the A5 Partnership*, to improve the A5 from Dodwells to Longshoot, widening to dual-carriageway a short section of the A5 near Hinckley, which carries the traffic of both the A5 and the A47. The A5 Partnership proposals also call for improvements to upgrade the A5 between the A38 and the M1 to 'expressway' standard. This is supported by the Midlands Connect Strategy and will provide much needed relief to local roads, and provide an efficient alternative route to the M6, between J12 and the M1.

MELTON MOWBRAY: KEY CENTRE FOR REGENERATION AND GROWTH

Melton Mowbray sits at the centre of a largely agricultural area in the north east of the county. Somewhat distant from other centres, strategic road and rail routes, the town functions as a rural hub for the surrounding villages and rural communities, the focus of social and economic activity, enhanced by a characterful and distinctive landscape. Recently economic growth has been constrained by lack of sites and poor connectivity but there is evidence that local firms are looking to expand and new businesses wish to move in.

The town centre is congested and in need of regeneration but has a great deal of potential. Investment in the public realm – the buildings, public spaces, streets – would do much to restore confidence in the town and support its potential as a centre for tourism and leisure in one of the most attractive parts of the county.

The recent approval for the Melton Mowbray Relief Road provides the catalyst for change: it will remove congestion in the town centre and open up land for development to the north and east of the town. Similar investment in highways to the south of the town could increase this further. New growth will support town centre shops and services and provide the opportunity for people to live close to where they work. The new A46 expressway and improved connections to it, will also improve connectivity to Leicester, the M1 and the Leicestershire International Gateway.

* Reference: The Department for Transport's Road Investment Strategy (2015/16-2019/20) includes proposals to upgrade the A5. The A5 Partnership is made up of 18 local councils supported by other public agencies along a 70 mile stretch from Gailey in Staffordshire, to Weedon in Northamptonshire (via Leicestershire and Warwickshire). It is supported by Highways England, four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Midlands Connect, East Midlands Councils and the Homes and Communities Agency.

AREAS OF MANAGED GROWTH IN LOCAL PLANS

Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth and Market Harborough vary in size, location and economic base but all contribute significantly to the local economy. All are already under intense pressure for development and have made substantial provision within and on the edges of the existing towns. Much of this has still to be built and is dependent upon new local infrastructure. Further sustainable development should be consistent with the need to support local growth. In particular, there are aspirations for continued town centre regeneration and better services.

TABLE B: NOTIONAL CAPACITY OF STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS (DWELLINGS)

Growth area	Notional capacity (dwellings)
A46 Priority Growth Corridor	38,000
The Leicestershire International Gateway	11,200
Melton Mowbray: Key Centre for Regeneration and Growth	3,800
Total	53,000

OUR VILLAGES AND RURAL AREAS

In recent years, our villages and rural areas have been under intense pressure for growth. The strategy proposes that, in future, there will be limited growth in these areas, consistent with providing for local needs.

NOTIONAL CAPACITY (DWELLINGS)

We have estimated the notional capacity of our strategic growth areas to accommodate new homes and this is shown in Table B below. In Appendix B we indicate how this growth would be distributed across the eight local authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire.

NOTIONAL CAPACITY (EMPLOYMENT LAND)

Our study of housing and economic development needs* indicates the amounts of employment land that will be required in the periods 2011-31 and 2011-36 (see Appendix A). We are confident that, for these periods, provision will be made in existing and emerging Local Plans.

Longer term requirements are not quantified. The need for employment land is subject to considerably greater market variability than the need for new homes.

It is, therefore, unrealistic to anticipate what these might be so far ahead. In principle, however, it is considered that the spatial distribution of new employment will need to reflect the overall strategy of the Plan, enable homes and jobs to be located in close proximity, and take advantage of opportunities for commuting by public transport. The need for new employment land will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis through the preparation and adoption of Local Plans.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVERY

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Our analysis demonstrates that Leicester & Leicestershire has the potential to deliver development which is of national and regional significance. The fact that the Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared by the ten partner organisations responsible for planning, transport and economic development demonstrates the extent of the collaborative work that is taking place. Three strategic documents are being prepared in parallel: the Strategic Growth Plan, the Strategic Transport Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy. Together with Local Plans, these key documents will demonstrate our commitment to future growth and infrastructure investment.

STATUTORY VS NON-STATUTORY PLANS

The changes to the National Planning Policy Framework state a preference for statutory plans, make recommendations on a standard methodology for calculating housing need, and set out the requirements for a 'Statement of Common Ground'. The work on our three strategic documents, however, has reached an advanced stage. To pause and re-work the Strategic Growth Plan in a different format would cause significant delay at a time when there are significant issues to resolve and opportunities to grasp.

We propose, therefore, to proceed on the basis of a non-statutory plan and we will reinforce its provisions as necessary to give confidence that we are committed to delivery. We will implement the Strategic Growth Plan through our statutory Local Plans, supplemented by additional documents as necessary.

Should circumstances change in future, we can update housing need and supply through Statements of Common Ground and/or a review of the Strategic Growth Plan.

ALIGNING INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

It is clear, however, that we will need support from government if we are to achieve the step change in the amount and speed of housing and economic growth that we propose. We started our work with a shared commitment to deliver the homes and jobs that Leicestershire needs over the period 2011-50 and our strategy is set out in this Plan. We wish to take full advantage of the opportunities that are presented by the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect strategies. Our proposals, therefore, maximise the benefits that are delivered by the infrastructure investment proposed in these documents. We value the government's stated commitment to the region.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Digital connectivity is a significant issue in parts of Leicester & Leicestershire, both rural and urban. High quality communications support remote working and provide access to on-line services. They are an essential part of the infrastructure planning process and need to be funded as such.

OUR OFFER TO GOVERNMENT

Our offer to government, in return for investment in infrastructure, is to maximise the benefits that can be achieved from commitments that are already made in the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect strategies. We are confident that we can deliver genuinely high quality new homes and jobs, in successful communities at a faster pace than has been achieved to date. New infrastructure will enable this to happen.

Given that our growth in the period 2011-31 can be provided on existing sites or in Local Plans, we have time to align infrastructure and new growth. We propose to work with government and its executive agencies to put the infrastructure investment that we propose into the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect strategies. Our proposals, therefore, maximise the benefits that are delivered by the infrastructure investment proposed in these documents. We value the government's stated commitment to the region.

* Reference: Leicester & Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017)

APPENDIX A

HOUSING NEEDS 2011-31 AND 2011-36

We have undertaken a study of our housing and employment economic development needs for the periods 2011-31 and 2011-36 to align with the different time periods for which Local Plans are being prepared. The results of this analysis are set out in Tables 1 and 2 and further detail can be found in the study. Leicester City Council has formally declared that it will be unable to meet its 'objectively assessed needs' (OAN) for housing for the period 2011-31. Oadby & Wigston Borough Council has declared that, subject to further investigation of highway matters, it might be unable to meet its needs for the period 2031-36. Planning guidance requires the OAN to be satisfied across the 'housing market area' (HMA) as a whole.

We have undertaken an analysis of completions, planning permissions and allocations in adopted and emerging Local Plans. We have concluded that sufficient provision has been, or will be, made in adopted or emerging Local Plans to accommodate the OAN for housing, across the HMA as a whole, for the period 2011-31. The unmet need arising in the administrative areas of Leicester City Council will, therefore, be accommodated in the remaining borough and district councils and this will be reflected in Local Plans as they progress, supported by an agreed statement or Statement of Common Ground as appropriate.

Beyond 2031, provision will be made in Local Plans in accordance with the framework set out in this Plan.

TABLE 1: HOUSING NEED 2011-31

Authority	Housing Need ¹	
	Number of dwellings per annum	Total number of dwellings
Blaby DC	370	7,400
Charnwood BC	1,031	20,620
Harborough DC	532	10,640
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	471	9,420
Leicester City Council	1,692	33,840
Melton BC	186	3,720
North West Leicestershire DC	481	9,620
Oadby & Wigston BC	148	2,960
Total (Leicester & Leicestershire)	4,829²	96,580²

TABLE 2: HOUSING NEED 2011-36

Authority	Housing Need ¹	
	Number of dwellings per annum	Total number of dwellings
Blaby DC	361	9,025
Charnwood BC	994	24,850
Harborough DC	514	12,850
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	454	11,350
Leicester City Council	1,668	41,700
Melton BC	170	4,250
North West Leicestershire DC	448	11,200
Oadby & Wigston BC	155	3,875
Total (Leicester & Leicestershire)	4,716²	117,900²

Notes:

1. Source: Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, GL Hearn, January 2017

2. The totals do not match the sum of the parts due to the way in which additional provision to support economic growth in Melton BC and North West Leicestershire DC is taken into account.

EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS 2011-31 AND 2011-36

The study of housing and economic development needs also considered employment land needs for the periods 2011-31 and 2011-36. The results of this analysis are set out in Table 3 and further detail can be found in the study. In addition to the needs set out in Table 3, the authorities will seek to meet the need from strategic B8 uses identified in a separate study relating to logistics and distribution.

TABLE 3: EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS (HA) 2011-31 AND 2011-36

	2011-31			2011-36		
	B1a/b	B1c/B2	Small B8	B1a/b	B1c/B2	Small B8
Blaby DC	37-45	15	10	47-48	19	12
Charnwood BC	14-37	21	11	17-40	26	13
Harborough DC	14-21	22	8	17-24	28	9
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	11-32	14	16	13-34	17	20
Leicester City Council	2-6	36	15	3-7	45	19
Melton BC	10-18	21	14	10-23	26	17
North West Leicestershire DC	45-46	3	17	50-56	4	21
Oadby & Wigston BC	1	0	4	2	0	5
Totals	142-198	132	93	177-215	165	117

Notes:

The range for the Total B1a/b does not sum to the cumulative minimum and maximum range for each local authority. This is because the source of the minimum and maximum figures varies according to the outcome of the labour demands scenario and completions trends. The totals reflect the total for each scenario. Numbers may also not add up due to rounding.

Local plans will make provision for these needs in the period 2011-36.

Beyond 2031, provision made in Local Plans, for both housing and economic growth will be made in accordance with the framework established by the Strategic Growth Plan.

APPENDIX B

NOTIONAL HOUSING NEEDS AND SUPPLY 2031-50

For the purposes of the Strategic Growth Plan, we need to estimate the likely scale of growth for the period 2031-50. This needs to be identified across the housing market area as a whole. Currently, only the Melton Local Plan goes beyond 2031, and only to 2036.

The study of housing and economic development needs also gives us an indication of what needs might be for the period 2031-36.

We recognise that projecting forward beyond this date is highly problematical but we need some notional estimates of growth in order to take a longer term view. In the absence any more authoritative data, therefore, we have chosen to extrapolate these figures forwards. The results are set out in Table 4.

It is important to note that, although these numbers cannot be regarded as being authoritative, they will be consistently monitored and reviewed, and can be adjusted as necessary.

In Table 4, we have also estimated the likely sources of housing supply. The Strategic Growth Plan assumes that both Leicester City Council and Oadby

& Wigston Borough Council will be unlikely to be able to meet their objectively assessed needs during this period. Table 4, therefore, assumes that there will be a re-distribution of housing across the housing market area. In line with the strategy set out in the Plan, we propose that there should be a shift in the focus of development from small- and medium-sized sites to strategic locations.

The authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire agree that the distribution in Table 4 will be used as the basis for future Local Plans. This will be reinforced in an agreed statement or Statement of Common Ground and in Local Plans.

TABLE 4: NOTIONAL HOUSING NEED AND SUPPLY 2031-50

Authority	Notional Housing Needs 2031-50 ¹		Delivery on Non-Strategic Sites ⁴		Delivery on Strategic Sites	Total Delivery	
	dpa	Total	dpa	Total	Total	dpa	Total
Blaby DC	361	6,859	110	2,060 ³	15,500	924	17,560
Charnwood BC	994	18,886	470	8,890 ²	10,000	994	18,890
Harborough DC	514	9,766	150	2,930 ³	13,000	838	15,930
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	454	8,626	140	2,590 ³	7,500	531	10,090
Leicester City	1,668	31,692	550	10,450	0	550	10,450
Melton BC	170	3,230	80	1,520	3,800	280	5,320
North West Leicestershire DC	448	8,512	240	4,520 ²	5,200	512	9,720
Oadby & Wigston BC	155	2,945	60	1,140	1,500	139	2,640
Total (Leicester & Leicestershire) (%)	4,764	90,516	1,800	34,100 (38%)	56,500 (62%)	4,768	90,600

Notes:

1. Notional housing needs 2031-50 based on information contained in Housing and Economic Development Needs assessment (January 2017)

2. Charnwood and North West Leicestershire are assumed to meet notional OAN so delivery on non-strategic sites exceeds the Strategic Growth Plan's figure of 40% of notional OAN.

3. Due to the level of provision for development on strategic sites in Blaby DC, Harborough DC and Hinckley & Bosworth BC, development on non-strategic sites is limited to 30% of notional OAN.

4. Delivery on non-strategic sites rounded to the nearest '10'.



For further details on the Strategic Growth Plan please visit our web site:

llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk

or contact any of the partner organisations listed on the inside cover.