



Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028

Core Strategy

Adopted 9th November 2015



The Rural Economy

- 6.87 Our rural area has changed with the mechanisation of farming and consolidation of holdings into larger units. Jobs in agriculture will continue to decline but we want to sustain the economic viability of rural enterprises and communities. Our rural areas generally have less access to public transport and it is important that local services and facilities are supported. We will support the regeneration and diversification of the rural economy while protecting the character and appearance of the countryside and rural communities.

Small-scale Business Development in Villages

- 6.88 Whilst most new business will be located on the edge of Leicester or at Loughborough and Shepshed, we still want to see jobs in our Service Centres. We will make approximately 7 hectares of land available for employment between the Service Centres. We will do this through our Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document. However, there is an opportunity for local communities to take the lead in deciding how to balance the employment needs of their communities through Neighbourhood Plans.

Re-use of Rural Buildings

- 6.89 We will support the reuse of rural buildings for small scale business activities compatible with countryside locations.

Farm Diversification

- 6.90 Farm diversification can provide farmers with sources of income which allow them to continue to farm and manage the land. Successful farm diversification activities include small farm shops, processing and selling produce from the farm, craft workshops, small businesses, bed and breakfast and holiday accommodation. We will support activities which are compatible with a countryside location as long as farming remains the dominant business activity.

Rural Broadband

- 6.91 Super fast broadband connections are essential if we are to see rural based businesses succeed. We will work with our partners and service providers to deliver 30 megabit per second across the Borough by 2017.

Tourism and Leisure

- 6.92 Tourism contributed over £220 million to our economy in 2009 (17% of the total income for Leicester and Leicestershire). Around 17% of our jobs are in businesses which support tourism.

- 6.93** The Great Central Railway plays a significant role for our tourism offer. As well as the ambitious plans to connect the two sections of the former main line at Loughborough there is also the prospect of developing new attractions along the rail corridor.
- 6.94** The strategy for the River Soar and Grand Union Canal promotes the development of hubs at Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar and Watermead (Thurmaston) as focal points for canal related tourism development.
- 6.95** There is also potential for rural tourism based on enjoyment of the countryside, a rich built heritage, festivals and events supported by restaurants, cafés, bars and public houses.
- 6.96** The National Forest Company has plans to identify a 75 mile National Forest Way, one end of which is likely to be at Beacon Hill in the Charnwood Forest, with the other end in the Needwood Forest to the west in Staffordshire. We are supportive of these plans, in principle, although the impact on the sensitive landscape and character of the area will need to be carefully considered.

Small-Scale Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside

- 6.97** There are a number of existing businesses including offices, warehousing and manufacturing operations across the rural area. Some, such as those at Wymeswold and Rearsby, are associated with redundant military and civil airfields. Whilst these sites are not in good locations for developments that generate travel, they contribute to the local economy and provide jobs for our village communities. We will support small scale expansion or intensification provided it is sensitive to the character and appearance of the countryside.

Policy CS 10

Rural Economic Development

We will maximise the potential of our rural economy by 2028. We will do this by:

- Allowing approximately 7 ha of employment land to be distributed between the designated Service Centres;
- supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- Supporting farm diversification where farming remains the dominant element of the business;
- Supporting the provision of excellent electronic communications networks for all homes and businesses; and
- Supporting tourism and leisure facilities, particularly developments that benefit the Great Central Railway, the River Soar and Grand Union Canal and the National Forest Strategy.

Provided that in all cases the scale and character of the development is designed and operated so as to cause no detriment to the character and appearance of the countryside.