



Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028

Core Strategy

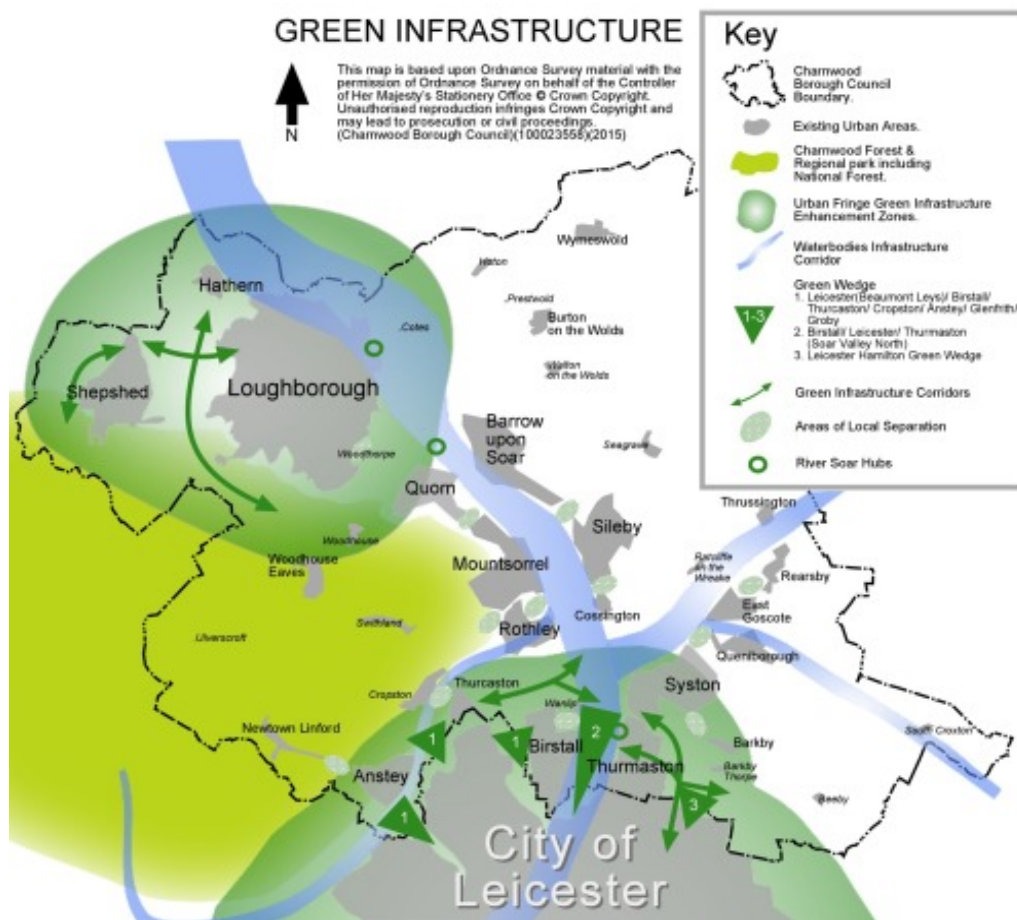
Adopted 9th November 2015



Strategic Green Infrastructure

7.17 Working with our partners, we have prepared a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the 6C's area (The Counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and the Cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham). The Strategy identifies those parts of the green infrastructure network which are important, not just to our community, but also as connections to surrounding communities in Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. This includes green corridors and Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones⁽ⁱⁱ⁾. Our strategically important areas in the green infrastructure network include:

- Charnwood Forest/ National Forest;
- River Soar Corridor;
- the edge of Leicester Urban Fringe; and
- the Loughborough Shepshed Urban Fringe.



ii As defined in the glossary

Charnwood Forest Regional Park/National Forest

- 7.18** Charnwood Forest is an important landscape for the region. It is an area of particular beauty, characterised by extensive woodlands set in a hilly and open landscape. Together with our partners we have prepared a Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment which defines a boundary for a Regional Park. This work has been taken forward in partnership to define a Vision for the Regional Park and funding is currently being pursued to take this Vision forward.
- 7.19** Two thirds of Charnwood Forest is in Charnwood. The remainder is in our neighbouring areas of North West Leicestershire and Hinckley and Bosworth. The majority of the Charnwood Forest is within the area designated for the National Forest.
- 7.20** We support the National Forest Strategy 2004-2014. The Strategy seeks to create a National Forest between the ancient forests of Needwood in Staffordshire and Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire to support rural regeneration.
- 7.21** Charnwood Forest is a traditional working landscape, home to farms and quarries, with diverse ecology. It also has international geological significance as it contains some of the oldest rock formations in the world. As well as the aesthetic contribution the forest makes it is also used for walking, cycling and rock climbing by our community and those in surrounding areas, including the Cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham.
- 7.22** The number of visitors and the scale of quarrying need to be managed to prevent harm to habitats and the landscape. Our strategy for homes and jobs must also be carefully planned to prevent the loss of the forest's character. Wherever possible, we will look for opportunities to enhance and improve the forest and its links to the wider green network.
- 7.23** The plans we have with our partners for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park recognise the unique natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest as an essential part of our growing communities, now and in the future.
- 7.24** Our strategy supports the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and the aims of The National Forest Strategy. In particular we want to see new developments meeting the National Forest planting guidelines and supporting the woodland economy throughout the Charnwood Forest area.
- 7.25** We recognise the potential for green tourism of The National Forest Strategy, in particular the National Forest Company's emerging plans for a 75 mile east-west National Forest Way. Our support for the National Forest is set out in Policy CS10: Rural Economy and should be read in conjunction with Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure. Development for tourism in the National Forest can support our economy but must be balanced carefully with the need to protect the character and landscape of the Forest.

River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor

- 7.26** The River Soar Corridor and Grand Union Canal are significant wildlife habitats. The corridor also has links to the wider River Soar and River Wreake network. Many people within our community live close to the corridor and enjoy the opportunities it provides for walking, cycling and other leisure activities. However, there are villages that suffer from a lack of access to natural green spaces.
- 7.27** We have produced the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy with our partners. The strategy aims to improve and promote a 23 mile long corridor which runs from Kilby Bridge in Oadby and Wigston to the south, through the City of Leicester and to Loughborough Meadows in the north.
- 7.28** The River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy identifies hubs at Loughborough, Barrow and Thurmaston for leisure activities. We support this strategy and can improve access to green space for our communities by encouraging improved links between our villages and the River Soar.

Urban Fringe Areas

- 7.29** Our Green Infrastructure Strategy also identifies the fringe around urban areas as particularly important to the wider network of green infrastructure.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ These are the network of existing green spaces on the edge of towns and villages that can connect communities to each other and the countryside. They also provide an opportunity to connect the existing community with people who will live and work in our new strategic developments.
- 7.30** There are a number of Green Wedges which contribute to the setting of our towns, urban areas and surrounding villages and the relationship between them. Green Wedges perform a number of important functions, including acting as green lungs for our urban areas, providing areas for recreation and protecting individual identity for some settlements by safeguarding them from merging together.
- 7.31** We have considered with our partners which of our open areas perform the functions of green wedges and also where new green wedges can be provided in association with our new strategic developments. Our Strategy proposes the following Green Wedges as part of our strategic green infrastructure:
- Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Cropston/Anstey/Glenfrith/Groby
 - Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston (Soar Valley North)
 - Leicester Hamilton Green Wedge

iii "Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones" See glossary for further details

Policy CS 12

Green Infrastructure

We will protect and enhance our green infrastructure assets for their community, economic and environmental values.

We will work with our partners to define, protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and support the aims of the National Forest Strategy by:

- **supporting the woodland economy, rural diversification, including sustainable and green tourism which protects and enhances the distinctive Charnwood Forest landscape;**
- **seeking planting from developments that are within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park that meet National Forest Planting Guidelines; and**
- **securing green links between developments and the Charnwood Forest**

We will support proposals that relate to the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor which:

- **provide high quality walking and cycling links between the corridor and our towns and villages;**
- **deliver hubs and other high quality tourism opportunities linked to the River Soar at Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar and Thurmaston; and**
- **protect and enhance water bodies and resources.**

We will protect and enhance our Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Areas by:

- **enhancing our network of green infrastructure assets through strategic developments in accordance with Policies CS19, CS20, CS21, CS22 and CS23;**
- **addressing the identified needs in open space provision; and**
- **supporting development in Green Wedges that:**
 - **retains the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge;**
 - **retains and creates green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas; and**
 - **retains and enhances public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation.**