



Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028

Core Strategy

Adopted 9th November 2015



Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 7.32** Our community enjoys significant areas of ecological interest compared to other parts of Leicestershire and the East Midlands as a whole. Very few places are fortunate enough to have resources like the Charnwood Forest and the river valleys of the Soar and the Wreake.
- 7.33** We have significant numbers of places and features which are important for wildlife. They include our 18 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 221 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), and 5 Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- 7.34** These sites are not only important in their own right, collectively they form part of an ecological network. Some of our sites experience pressure from leisure uses, agricultural practices and development. We must manage our ecological resource to prevent damage and habitat fragmentation and give appropriate support for wider duties, such as the Water Framework Directive. Our Habitat Survey has mapped our local ecological network and, with our partners, we have identified our priorities for habitat restoration and creation through the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 7.35** Geology and geological formations are an important part of our natural environment. They help contribute to our sense of place and are important for aesthetic, education and historic reasons. Our area has significant areas of geological interest, some of which have international importance. We have 6 Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS). The majority of these relate to the Charnwood Forest.
- 7.36** We will continue to monitor biodiversity to check whether priority habitats and species are being lost and to measure progress on those habitats that are being restored or created through development. Our overall aim is to achieve a net gain in the resource for our community.

Policy CS 13

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

We will conserve and enhance our natural environment for its own value and the contribution it makes to our community and economy. We will do this by:

Supporting developments that protect biodiversity and geodiversity and those that enhance, restore or re-create biodiversity. We will expect development proposals to consider and take account of the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, particularly with regard to:

- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**
- **Local Wildlife Sites**
- **Regionally Important Geological Sites**
- **UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans priority habitats and species**
- **protected species, and**
- **ecological networks**

We will only support development that results in the loss of ecological or geological features in exceptional circumstances where the benefit of development clearly outweighs the impact on ecology and geodiversity.

Where there are impacts on biodiversity we will require adequate mitigation; or as a last resort, compensation which results in replacement provision that is of equal or greater value and potential than that which will be lost, and is likely to result in a net gain in biodiversity.

We will consider this by requiring development proposals to be accompanied by ecological surveys and an assessment of the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity.

We will also work with our partners to secure long term management and investment plans for biodiversity and geodiversity.