

Wing Neighbourhood Plan Comments Requested – 16th June 2023

Leicestershire County Council is supportive of the Neighbourhood plan process and welcome being included in this consultation.

Highways

General Comments

The County Council recognises that residents may have concerns about traffic conditions in their local area, which they feel may be exacerbated by increased traffic due to population, economic and development growth.

Like very many local authorities, the County Council's budgets are under severe pressure. It must therefore prioritise where it focuses its reducing resources and increasingly limited funds. In practice, this means that the County Highway Authority (CHA), in general, prioritises its resources on measures that deliver the greatest benefit to Leicestershire's residents, businesses and road users in terms of road safety, network management and maintenance. Given this, it is likely that highway measures associated with any new development would need to be fully funded from third party funding, such as via Section 278 or 106 (S106) developer contributions. I should emphasise that the CHA is generally no longer in a position to accept any financial risk relating to/make good any possible shortfall in developer funding.

To be eligible for S106 contributions proposals must fulfil various legal criteria. Measures must also directly mitigate the impact of the development e.g. they should ensure that the development does not make the existing highway conditions any worse if considered to have a severe residual impact. They cannot unfortunately be sought to address existing problems.

Where potential S106 measures would require future maintenance, which would be paid for from the County Council's funds, the measures would also need to be assessed against the County Council's other priorities and as such may not be maintained by the County Council or will require maintenance funding to be provided as a commuted sum.

In regard to public transport, securing S106 contributions for public transport services will normally focus on larger developments, where there is a more realistic prospect of services being commercially viable once the contributions have stopped ie they would be able to operate without being supported from public funding.

The current financial climate means that the CHA has extremely limited funding available to undertake minor highway improvements. Where there may be the prospect of third-party funding to deliver a scheme, the County Council will still normally expect the scheme to comply with prevailing relevant national and local policies and guidance, both in terms of its justification and its design; the Council will also expect future maintenance costs to be covered by the third-party funding. Where any measures are proposed that would affect speed limits, on-street parking restrictions or other Traffic Regulation Orders (be that to address existing problems or in connection with a development proposal), their implementation would be subject to available resources, the availability of full funding and the satisfactory completion of all necessary Statutory Procedures.

Flood Risk Management

The County Council are fully aware of flooding that has occurred within Leicestershire and its impact on residential properties resulting in concerns relating to new developments. LCC in our role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) undertake investigations into flooding, review consent applications to undertake works on ordinary watercourses and carry out enforcement where lack of maintenance or unconsented works has resulted in a flood risk. In April 2015 the LLFA also became a statutory consultee on major planning applications in relation to surface water drainage and have a duty to review planning applications to ensure that the onsite drainage systems are designed in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The LLFA also ensures that flood risk to the site is accounted for when designing a drainage solution.

The LLFA is not able to:

- Prevent development where development sites are at low risk of flooding or can demonstrate appropriate flood risk mitigation.
- Use existing flood risk to adjacent land to prevent development.
- Require development to resolve existing flood risk.

When considering flood risk within the development of a neighbourhood plan, the LLFA would recommend consideration of the following points:

- Locating development outside of river (fluvial) flood risk (Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea)).
- Locating development outside of surface water (pluvial) flood risk (Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map).
- Locating development outside of any groundwater flood risk by considering any local knowledge of groundwater flooding.
- How potential SuDS features may be incorporated into the development to enhance the local amenity, water quality and biodiversity of the site as well as manage surface water runoff.
- Watercourses and land drainage should be protected within new developments to prevent an increase in flood risk.

All development will be required to restrict the discharge and retain surface water on site in line with current government policies. This should be undertaken through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Appropriate space allocation for SuDS features should be included within development sites when considering the housing density to ensure that the potential site will not limit the ability for good SuDS design to be carried out. Consideration should also be given to blue green corridors and how they could be used to improve the bio-diversity and amenity of new developments, including benefits to surrounding areas.

Often ordinary watercourses and land drainage features (including streams, culverts and ditches) form part of development sites. The LLFA recommend that existing watercourses and land drainage (including watercourses that form the site boundary) are retained as open features along their original flow path and are retained in public open space to ensure that access for maintenance can be achieved. This should also be considered when looking at housing densities within the plan to ensure that these features can be retained.

LCC, in its role as LLFA will not support proposals contrary to LCC policies.

For further information it is suggested reference is made to the [National Planning Policy Framework \(March 2012\)](#), [Sustainable drainage systems: Written statement - HCWS161 \(December 2014\)](#) and the [Planning Practice Guidance webpage](#).

Flood risk mapping is readily available for public use at the links below. The LLFA also holds information relating to historic flooding within Leicestershire that can be used to inform development proposals.

Risk of flooding from surface water map:

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk>

Flood map for planning (rivers and sea):

<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Planning

Minerals & Waste Planning

The County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority; this means the council prepares the planning policy for minerals and waste development and also makes decisions on mineral and waste development.

Although neighbourhood plans cannot include policies that cover minerals and waste development, it may be the case that your neighbourhood contains an existing or planned minerals or waste site. The County Council can provide information on these operations or any future development planned for your neighbourhood.

You should also be aware of Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Areas, contained within the adopted [Minerals and Waste Local Plan \(Leicestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/minerals-and-waste-local-plan). These safeguarding areas are there to ensure that non-waste and non-minerals development takes place in a way that does not negatively affect minerals resources or waste operations. The County Council can provide guidance on this if your neighbourhood plan is allocating development in these areas or if any proposed neighbourhood plan policies may impact on minerals and waste provision.

Property Education

Whereby housing allocations or preferred housing developments form part of a Neighbourhood Plan the Local Authority will look to the availability of school places within a two-mile (primary) and three-mile (secondary) distance from the development. If there are not sufficient places then a claim for Section 106 funding will be requested to provide those places.

It is recognised that it may not always be possible or appropriate to extend a local school to meet the needs of a development, or the size of a development would yield a new school.

However, in the changing educational landscape, the Council retains a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient places are available in good schools within its area, for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one.

Strategic Property Services

No comment at this time.

Adult Social Care

It is suggested that reference is made to recognising a significant growth in the older population and that development seeks to include bungalows etc of differing tenures to accommodate the increase. This would be in line with the draft Adult Social Care Accommodation Strategy for older people which promotes that people should plan ahead for their later life, including considering downsizing, but recognising that people's choices are often limited by the lack of suitable local options.

Environment

Specific Comments

Suggest adding reference to ensure new developments have appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable material in locations convenient and accessible for collection and emptying.

General Comments

With regard to the environment and in line with Government advice, Leicestershire County Council (LCC) would like to see Neighbourhood Plans cover all aspects of archaeology and the historic and natural environment including heritage assets, archaeological sites, listed and unlisted historic buildings, historic landscapes, climate change, the landscape, biodiversity, ecosystems, green infrastructure as well as soils, brownfield sites and agricultural land.

Archaeology and the Historic Environment

The planning process provides one of the most effective tools to manage the impact of land use change upon the historic environment. This is achieved both through the shaping of development plans (Local and Neighbourhood Plans) and the delivery of development management advice on individual planning applications. In that context, the inclusion of heritage in your Neighbourhood Plan, and the provision of relevant and effective policies, will significantly strengthen the management of these issues, and will be an effective way of the community identifying its own concerns and priorities.

Ideally, Neighbourhood Plans should seek to work in partnership with other agencies to develop and deliver this strategic objective, based on robust local evidence and priorities. We recommend that each Neighbourhood Plan should consider the impact of potential development or management decisions on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The historic environment is defined as comprising all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving evidence of past human activity, whether upstanding, buried or submerged, as well landscapes and their historic components.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (LRHER) can provide a summary of archaeological and historic environment information for your Neighbourhood Plan area. This will include gazetteers and maps describing the locally identified non-designated heritage assets, typically archaeological sites (both earthworks and buried archaeological remains), unlisted historic buildings and historic landscapes (parks and gardens). We will also provide information on medieval ridge and furrow earthworks to help you evaluate the surviving earthworks in your area.

Information on Designated assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Battlefields) is available from the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Consideration of the historic environment, and its constituent designated and non-designated heritage assets, is a material consideration in the planning process. While the data held by the LRHER is constantly maintained and updated, it is unlikely that the record represents an exhaustive list of all assets with the plan area. We suggest that information provided by the LRHER should be taken into account when preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and contribute to any list of locally identified heritage assets. Based upon a structured assessment process, this will be the basis of any non-designated heritage assets identified within the plan and given force through the preparation of appropriate heritage policy.

Contact: her@leics.gov.uk, or phone 0116 305 8323

For help with including heritage in your Neighbourhood Plan please see the following guidance:

CBA Toolkit No. 10, Neighbourhood Planning (2017)
<https://www.archaeologyuk.org/asset/6FE3A721-B328-4B75-9DEBBD0028A4AEED/>

National Trust Guide to Heritage in Neighbourhood Plans (2019)
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/documents/neighbourhood-planning-and-heritage-guidance.pdf>

Climate Change

The County Council, through its Environment Strategy and Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan, is committed to achieving net zero for its own operations by 2030 and to working with Leicestershire people and organisations to become a net zero county by 2045 or before. Along with most other UK local authorities, the council has declared a climate emergency and wants to do its bit to help meet the Paris Agreement and keep global temperature rise to well below 2°C Leicestershire's Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan is [available here](#).

Planning is one of the key levers for enabling these commitments to be met and to meeting the legally binding target set by the government for the UK to be net zero by 2050. Neighbourhood Plans should, as far as possible, align to Leicestershire County Council's Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan by contributing to and supporting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and by increasing the county's resilience to climate change.

Landscape

The County Council would like to see the inclusion of a local landscape assessment taking into account: Natural England's Landscape character areas; Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy; the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project; the Local District/Borough Council landscape character assessments; the Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire (2017), which examines the sensitivity of the landscape, exploring the extent to which different areas can accommodate development without impacting on their key landscape qualities.

We would recommend that Neighbourhood Plans should also consider the street scene and public realm within their communities, further advice can be found in the latest 'Streets for All East Midlands' document (2018) published by Historic England.

LCC would encourage the development of local listings as per the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and LCC have some data on the social, cultural, archaeological and historic value of local features and buildings (<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/historic-environment-record>)

Contact: her@leics.gov.uk or telephone: 0116 3058323

Examples of policy statements for Landscape:

POLICY X: LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS – Development proposals falling within or affecting the Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs), where possible, enhance the LLCA's particular characteristics, important views and local distinctiveness. Proposals having a harmful effect on a Local Landscape Character Area's character will not be supported.

Biodiversity

The Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their duties, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly outlines the importance of sustainable development alongside the core principle that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, providing net gain for biodiversity, and reducing pollution. Neighbourhood Plans should therefore seek to work in partnership with other agencies to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local evidence and priorities. Each Neighbourhood Plan should consider the impact of potential development or management of open spaces on enhancing biodiversity and habitat connectivity, such as hedgerows and greenways. Habitat permeability for species which addresses encouragement of movement from one location to another such

as the design of street lighting, roads, noise, obstructions in water, exposure of species to predation and arrangement of land-uses should be considered.

The Neighbourhood Plan can be used to plan actions for the parish council on its' own land (community actions) and guide the actions of others (policy actions).

For specific advice on species and habitats of importance in the County and actions that can make a difference to their conservation and ways to increase the quality and quantity of these, please refer to the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/biodiversity-strategy>

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-and-biodiversity>

The Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) can provide a summary of wildlife information for your Neighbourhood Plan area. This will include a map showing nationally important sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest); locally designated Wildlife Sites; locations of badger setts, great crested newt breeding ponds and ponds with high potential to support great crested newts' and bat roosts; and a list of records of protected and priority Biodiversity Action Plan species. These are all a material consideration in the planning process. If there has been a recent Habitat Survey of your plan area, this will also be included. LRERC is unable to carry out habitat surveys on request from a Parish Council, although it may be possible to add it into a future survey programme.

Contact: LRERC@leics.gov.uk, or phone 0116 305 1087

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/leicestershire-and-rutland-environmental-records-centre-lrerc>,

For informal advice on actions for nature that can be taken forward on parish land please contact EnvironmentTeam@Leics.gov.uk

Many species of plants and animals in England and often their supporting features and habitats are protected. What you can and cannot do by law varies from species to species and may require a preliminary ecological appraisal. For information on protected species and the law please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications>

Examples of policy statements that can be added to the plan to support biodiversity:

POLICY X: BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION IN NEW DEVELOPMENT – Consideration should be made in the design and construction of new development in the Plan Area to protect and enhance biodiversity, where appropriate, including:

- Roof and wall construction should incorporate integral bee bricks, bird nest boxes and bat breeding and roosting boxes. Target species and locations to be based on advice sought from the Local Authority's Biodiversity Officer (or equivalent).
- Hedges (or fences with ground-level gaps) should be used for property boundaries to maintain connectivity of habitat for hedgehogs and other terrestrial animals.
- Work with landowners to ensure good maintenance of existing hedgerows, gap up and plant new hedgerows where appropriate and introduce a programme of replenishing hedgerow trees.
- Avoidance of all unnecessary exterior artificial lighting: there is no legal duty requiring any place to be lit.
- Security lighting, if essential, should be operated by intruder sensors and illuminated for no longer than 1 minute. Sports and commercial facility lighting should be switched

off during agreed 'curfew' hours between March and October, following best practice guidelines in Bats and Lighting Leicestershire Environmental Records Centre, 2014.

- Lighting design, location, type, lux levels and times of use should follow current best-practice, e.g. by applying the guidelines in Guidance note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK: Bat Conservation Trust / Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2018.
- Natural/semi natural grassland margins adjacent to hedges of up to 5m buffer.
- Retain natural features wherever possible.
- In creating habitats, consider the underlying geology and allow natural colonisation near local high-quality habitats.
- Avoid use of topsoil to promote plant diversity, especially in areas of limestone or areas near to heathland - consider exposing sandy soils to encourage acid grassland and heath.
- Allow for structural diversity of habitats – for example long and tall grass, to maintain a suitable grassland habitat for wildlife. A management plan should accompany all planning applications.
- Avoid development and hard landscaping next to watercourses.
- Restore naturalness to existing watercourses for example by retaining some steeper earth banks suitable for Kingfisher and Water Vole breeding.
- Retain areas of deadwood within the site to maintain biodiversity.
- Plant 30% of trees with a selection of larger native species and create lines of trees.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure (GI) is a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities (NPPF definition). GI includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, cemeteries/churchyards, allotments and private gardens as well as streams, rivers, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and living walls.

The NPPF places the duty on local authorities to plan positively for a strategic network of GI which can deliver a range of planning policies including: building a strong, competitive economy; creating a sense of place and promoting good design; promoting healthier communities by providing greater opportunities for recreation and mental and physical health benefits; meeting the challenges of climate change and flood risk; increasing biodiversity and conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Looking at the existing provision of GI networks within a community can influence the plan for creating & enhancing new networks.

Neighbourhood Plan groups have the opportunity to plan GI networks at a local scale to maximise benefits for their community and in doing so they should ensure that their Neighbourhood Plan is reflective of the relevant Local Authority Green Infrastructure strategy. Through the Neighbourhood Plan and discussions with the Local Authority Planning teams and potential Developers communities are well placed to influence the delivery of local scale GI networks.

Sites that are designated as Local Green Spaces can form an important strategic part of local Green Infrastructure and can be conserved and enhanced to make an important contribution to the district green infrastructure. Delivery of the conservation and enhancement can be dealt with in Policy and Community Actions.

Brownfield, Soils and Agricultural Land

The NPPF encourages the effective use of brownfield land for development, provided that it is not of high environmental/ecological/heritage value. Neighbourhood planning groups should check with Defra if their neighbourhood planning area includes brownfield sites. Where

information is lacking as to the ecological or heritage value of these sites then the Neighbourhood Plan could include policies that ensure such survey work should be carried out to assess the ecological and heritage value of a brownfield site before development decisions are taken.

Soils are an essential finite resource on which important ecosystem services such as food production, are dependent on. They should be enhanced in value and protected from adverse effects of unacceptable levels of pollution. Within the governments "Safeguarding our Soils" strategy, Defra have produced a code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites which could be helpful to neighbourhood planning groups in preparing environmental policies.

High quality agricultural soils should, where possible be protected from development and where a large area of agricultural land is identified for development then planning should consider using the poorer quality areas in preference to the higher quality areas. Neighbourhood planning groups should consider mapping agricultural land classification within their plan to enable informed decisions to be made in the future. Natural England can provide further information and Agricultural Land classification and have produced the following guide. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>.

The British Society for Soil Science provide advice on what should be expected of developers in assessing land for development suitability.

<https://soils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Assessing-Agricultural-Land-Jan-2022.pdf>

Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs)

Information for Neighbourhood Planning groups regarding Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) can be found on the Neighbourhood Planning website (<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/understand-plan-requires-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/>) and should be referred to. A Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain basic conditions in order to be 'made'. It must not breach and be otherwise compatible with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations SI 2004/1633 (available online). These regulations deal with the assessment of environmental plans and programmes and implement Retained Reference Directive 2001/42 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.

Not every Neighbourhood Plan needs a SEA; however, it is compulsory to provide when submitting a plan proposal to the local planning authority either:

- A statement of reasons as to why SEA was not required
- An environmental report (a key output of the SEA process).

As a rule of thumb, SEA is more likely to be necessary if both of the following two elements apply:

- a Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development (for housing, employment etc.); and
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive environmental assets (e.g. a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) that may be affected by the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.

In light of these two considerations, it is very unlikely that a Neighbourhood Plan would require SEA if the plan is not allocating land for development. This is because allocating land for development is more likely to generate physical changes which lead to significant effects.

As the UK has now left the EU, Neighbourhood Planning groups should remain mindful of any future changes which may occur to the above guidance. Changes are also likely to be forthcoming as a result of the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB). This proposes 'Environmental Outcome Reports' to replace the current system of Strategic Environmental Assessment (including Sustainability Appraisals) and Environmental Impact Assessment and introduce a clearer and simpler process where relevant plans and projects (including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) are assessed against tangible environmental outcomes.

Impact of Development on Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)

Neighbourhood planning groups should remain mindful of the interaction between new development applications in a district and borough area and the existing HWRC services delivered by Leicestershire County Council. The County's Waste Management team considers proposed developments on a case by case basis and when it is identified that a proposed development will have a detrimental effect on the local HWRC infrastructure then appropriate projects to increase the capacity of the HWRC most likely impacted have to be initiated. Contributions to fund these projects are requested in accordance with the Leicestershire's Planning Obligations Policy and the relevant Legislation Regulations.

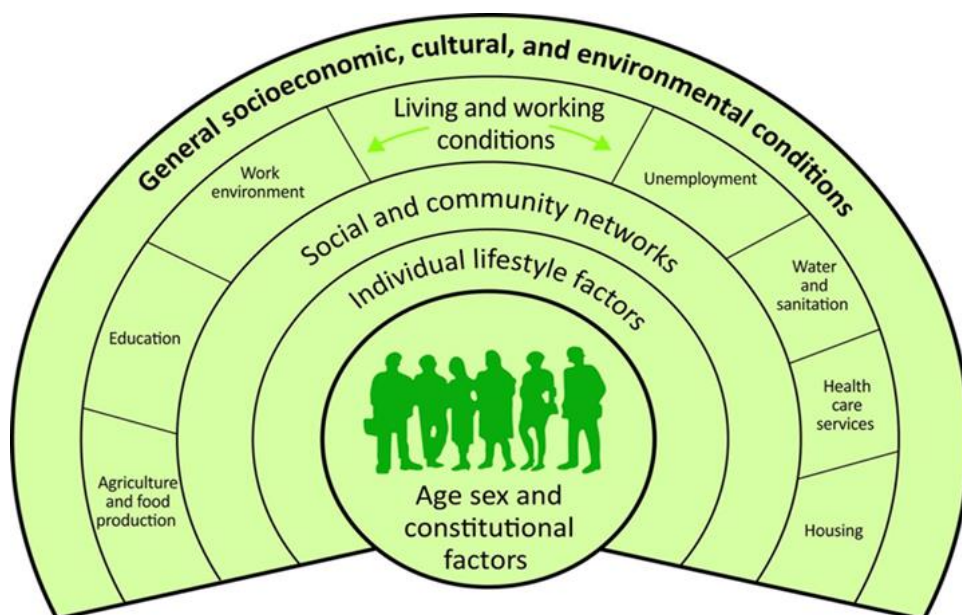
Public Health

Health is shaped by many different factors throughout our lives. Health is affected by the settings in which we live, work, learn and play. These influences start to determine health and opportunities for better health from birth and throughout the whole life course, for example the environment, community, transport, education and income.

This complex range of interacting social, economic and environmental factors are known as the wider determinants of health or the social determinants of health.

When there is a difference in these conditions it contributes to health inequalities- "Health inequalities are the preventable, unfair and unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental and economic conditions within societies" (NHS England)

The diagram below illustrates types of wider factors that influence an individual's mental and physical health.



The diagram shows:

- personal characteristics at the core of the model and this includes sex, age, ethnic group, and hereditary factors
- The layer around the core contains individual 'lifestyle' factor behaviours such as smoking, alcohol use, and physical activity
- The next layer contains social and community networks including family and wider social circles
- The next layer covers living and working conditions include access and opportunities in relation to jobs, housing, education and welfare services
- The final outer layer is general socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions and includes factors such as disposable income, taxation, and availability of work

Research by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, looked into the major contributors to health and wellbeing and found that:

Health Behaviours contribute to 30% of health outcomes made up of:

- Smoking 10%
- Diet/Exercise 10%
- Alcohol use 5%
- Poor sexual health 5%

Socioeconomic Factors contribute to 40% of health outcomes:

- Education 10%
- Employment 10%
- Income 10%
- Family/Social Support 5%
- Community Safety 5%

Clinical Care contributes to 20% of health outcomes:

- Access to care 10%
- Quality of care 10%

Built Environment contributes to 10% of health outcomes:

- Environmental Quality 5%
- Built Environment 5%

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Used in US to rank Counties by health Status

Therefore, due to the complex way in which the built environment and communities we live in impact on our health any opportunity to mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive outcomes should be taken. Completing a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a good practice to ensure neighbourhood concerns and recommendations are considered.

Undertaking a HIA as part of your neighbourhood plans has the potential to influence all these areas, alongside influencing decisions made about access to care through transport and infrastructure.

To aid you in undertaking a HIA please visit:

<https://www.healthyplacemaking.co.uk/health-impact-assessment/>

At the bottom of this page there are also links to a number of local data sheets at a district level. You can also familiarise yourself with the health profile for your area by visiting: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles>

Dahlgren G, Whitehead M. (1991). Policies and Strategies to Promote Social Equity in Health. Stockholm, Sweden: Institute for Futures Studies.

NHS England, "Reducing health inequalities resources," [Online]. Available: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/resources/> [Accessed February 2021].

Communities

Consideration of community facilities is a positive facet of Neighbourhood Plans that reflects the importance of these facilities within communities and can proactively protect and develop facilities to meet the needs of people in local communities. Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to;

1. Carry out and report on a review of community facilities, groups and allotments and their importance with your community.
2. Set out policies that seek to;
 - protect and retain these existing facilities,
 - support the independent development of new facilities, and,
 - identify and protect Assets of Community Value and provide support for any existing or future designations.
3. Identify and support potential community projects that could be progressed.

You are encouraged to consider and respond to all aspects of community resources as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process. Further information, guidance and examples of policies and supporting information is available at:

www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/np/useful-information

Economic Development

We would recommend including economic development aspirations with your Plan, outlining what the community currently values and whether they are open to new development of small businesses etc.

Fibre Broadband

Our ambition is for a Digital Leicestershire. This includes the ambition for everyone to have access to fast, accessible, inclusive, reliable digital infrastructure and we are working to support government targets to achieve gigabit capable, lightning-fast broadband connections to 85% of Leicestershire by December 2025, increasing to 100% by 2030.

A fast and reliable digital infrastructure will open new opportunities for residents, communities and businesses. It will underpin innovation, improve community and social networks and support learning and development for all. It will help to deliver a range of societal benefits including the more effective provision of public services, information and connect people to the support at the point of need.

The Digital Leicestershire team manages programmes aimed at improving digital infrastructure in the county. This includes superfast, ultrafast and full fibre broadband. This work combines three approaches; engaging with commercial operators to encourage private investment in Leicestershire, working with all tiers of government to reduce barriers to

commercial investment, and operating intervention schemes with public funds to support deployment of digital infrastructure in hard-to-reach areas that are not included in broadband suppliers' plans, reaching parts of the county that might otherwise miss out on getting the digital connectivity they need. We are currently providing support throughout the county with our Gigabit and Gigahub programmes.

How does this role relate to neighbourhood plans?

The UK government has brought into force new laws that require new homes in England to be built with gigabit broadband connections and enables telecoms firms to be able to get faster broadband to nine million people living in blocks of flats across the UK.

Ministers have amended the Building Regulations 2010 to ensure that new homes constructed in England will be fitted with infrastructure and connections capable of delivering gigabit broadband - the fastest internet speeds on the market.

The updated regulations mean that more people moving into new homes will have a gigabit-capable broadband connection ready when construction is completed, avoiding the need for costly and disruptive installation work after the home is built and enabling residents to arrange the best possible internet service at the point they move in.

In a further boost to people's access to better broadband, another new law has made it easier to install faster internet connections in blocks of flats when landlords repeatedly ignore requests for access from broadband firms.

Both of these new laws came into effect on 26 December 2022.

The updated building rules mean home developers will be legally required to future-proof new homes in England for next-generation gigabit broadband as standard practice during construction.

Connection costs will be capped at £2,000 per home for developers and they will work together with network operators to connect developments to the gigabit network. It is estimated over 98 per cent of premises fall within this cap, meaning moving into a new build property without lightning-fast internet speeds will become a thing of the past for the vast majority of people across England.

Where a developer is unable to secure a gigabit-capable connection within the cost cap, developers must install the next fastest connection available.

And even where a gigabit-capable connection is not available within the cost cap, gigabit-ready infrastructure, such as ducts, chambers and termination points, still needs to be installed. This will ensure that homes are fit for the digital age but may not be connected straight away.

The Council supports a 'dig once' approach for the deployment of communications infrastructure and a build which is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The Council encourages telecommunications build which does not significantly impact on the appearance of any building or space on which equipment is located and which minimises street clutter.

Groups working on emerging neighbourhood plans are encouraged to visit the Digital Leicestershire web site to learn more about current and forthcoming full fibre broadband provision for their local area <https://www.thinkbroadband.com/> and also BDUK (Building Digital UK)

Further Information

<https://digital-leicestershire.org.uk/>

Email: broadband@leics.gov.uk

Building Regulations: [Infrastructure for Electronic Communications \(R\)](#)

Equalities

While we cannot comment in detail on plans, you may wish to ask stakeholders to bear the Council's Equality Strategy 2020-2024 in mind when taking your Neighbourhood Plan forward through the relevant procedures, particularly for engagement and consultation work. A copy of the strategy can be view at:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/7/10/Equality-strategy-2020-2024.pdf>

The Neighbourhood plan should comply with the main requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires public bodies to have due regard of the need to:

Eliminate discrimination
Advance equality of opportunity
Foster good relations between different people

Accessible Documents

In today's working environment more and more information is being produced digitally. When producing information which is aimed at or to be viewed by the public, it is important to make that information as accessible as possible. At least 1 in 5 people in the UK have a long-term illness, impairment or disability. Many more have a temporary disability.

Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

For example, someone with impaired vision might use a screen reader (software that lets a user navigate a website and 'read out' the content), braille display or screen magnifier. Or someone with motor difficulties might use a special mouse, speech recognition software or on-screen keyboard emulator.

Public sector organisations have a legal requirement to make sure that all information which appears on their websites is accessible. As Neighbourhood Plans have to be published on Local Planning Authority websites, they too have to comply with [government regulations for accessibility](#). Guidance for creating accessible Word and PDF documents can be found on the Leicestershire Communities website:

[Creating Accessible Word Documents](#)
[Creating Accessible PDFs](#)

To enable Development Officers to implement your policies, it is important to make sure that they are clear, concise and worded in such a way that they are not open to interpretation. This Policy Writing Guide has been designed to provide you with a few key points to look out for: <https://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/uploads/policy-writing-guide-17.pdf?v=1667547963>

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For further information visit:

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning.htm>