

2006 - 2029

Leicester Forest East Neighbourhood Plan



**Submission version
January 2020**

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Foreword

On 27 May 2016, Leicester Forest East Parish Council was successful with its application to Blaby District Council to become a Qualifying Body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Designated area is the existing Parish Council boundary.

The Parish Council has produced the Leicester Forest East Neighbourhood Plan with assistance from an Advisory Committee including Parish Council members, community volunteers, and interested individuals in the community and with help from the District Council and other agencies.

The Neighbourhood Plan will form the basis for planning decisions applicable to Leicester Forest East Parish, up to 2029, together with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which embrace the whole of the country and the Local Plan for Blaby District which covers the area controlled by the District Council. It is the District Council as the Local Planning Authority who will continue to determine planning applications, but they will have to consider the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan when reaching their decision. The Plan period matches that of the Local Plan, 2006 – 2029.

The Leicester Forest East Neighbourhood Plan reflects community-wide comments, observations and concerns about its future, bringing them together with Census information, strategic and statistical evidence into a document that mirrors the community's desire to make Leicester Forest East an even better place to live, both now and for future generations. The Plan sets out a Vision with aspirations and planning policy aims to help shape future development in Leicester Forest East. The policies aim to address key concerns raised by local people including protecting the character of the village and surrounding area. Some of the issues raised cannot be directly addressed by planning policies within the Neighbourhood Plan but are included as 'Community Actions' to support the Neighbourhood Plan policies. These 'Community Action' will not be subject to Examination but help the Parish Council to deliver its broader objectives.

Community consultation events including Open Events and a Community Questionnaire have taken place alongside membership of the Advisory Committee and several 'Theme Groups' which have enabled local people to be involved at a level to reflect their circumstances and to contribute to identifying the changes that the local community wishes to see in Leicester Forest East.

We are grateful to Officers at Blaby District Council and the wider community for their involvement in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Leicester Forest East is an attractive and popular place in which to live and the

contribution from people who care about their community and want to make it better for generations to come is greatly appreciated.

Paul Fox

Chair

**Leicester Forest East
Neighbourhood Plan Advisory
Committee.**

Paul Linnett

Chair

**Leicester Forest East Parish
Council.**

January 2020

1 Background and context

1.1 Introduction

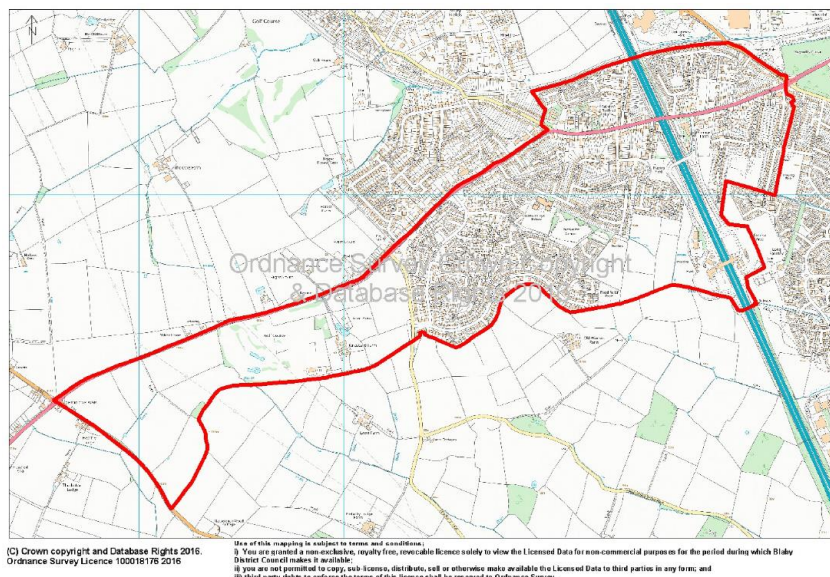
This Plan has been prepared by the Leicester Forest East Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee, which brings together members of the local community and Parish Councillors and has been led by the Parish Council.

A key part of the Government's Localism agenda, a Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document that gives local people greater control and say over how their community develops, now and in the future. This includes, for example, where new homes and businesses etc. should be built; what new buildings and extensions should look like and which areas of land should be protected from development.

As the *Plain English Guide to the Localism Act 2011* states, "Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live".

The Plan covers the whole of the Parish of Leicester Forest East. It sets out a long-term approach for the development of Leicester Forest East, and sets out clear development related policies to realise this.

Fig. 1 Designated area



In preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, a community is not working from 'a blank piece of paper'. Legislation requires that the Plan, and the policies it contains, must be prepared in a prescribed manner. In particular, the

policies must be in general conformity with relevant national and district wide (i.e. Blaby) approved strategic planning policies.

The Plan is now at the submission consultation stage and is being sent to Blaby District Council for Regulation 16 consultation after which it will be subject to an independent examination and ultimately a Referendum of residents of Leicester Forest East.

Once approved, the draft Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Blaby. This means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting Leicester Forest East Parish.

1.2 How the Plan was prepared

The Plan has been prepared by the Leicester Forest East Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee.

This Advisory Committee comprises members of the local community and local Parish Councillors, with the support of Blaby District Council and consultants *Yourlocale*, and under the direction of Leicester Forest East Parish Council (the Accountable Body for the Plan).

It is based on robust evidence. This includes statistical information gathered through sources such as the Census as well as from community consultation and engagement.

Extensive consultation has been at the heart of the preparation of the Plan. This is key to ensure that the Plan fully reflects local needs and priorities. There have been a variety of consultation exercises over the last 18 months, at which a number of local people have taken part. These include drop-in sessions, questionnaires and focussed meetings on specific topics with residents and stakeholders.

1.3 How the Plan fits into the planning system

The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established through the Localism Act 2011, which set out the general rules governing their preparation.

A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area in which it is prepared. This statutory status means that it must be taken into account when considering planning decisions affecting that area.

One of the main rules governing the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it must be in line with EU regulations on strategic environmental

assessment and habitat regulations. It must also be in general conformity with national, county and Blaby district-wide planning policies. This means that it cannot be prepared in isolation. It will need to take into account, and generally work with, the grain of the district-wide and national policies.

At the local level, the key planning document which a Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to is the District Wide Local Plan. In the case of Leicester Forest East, this is the Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) adopted in February 2013. However, the saved policies from the previous Blaby District Local Plan (1999) and associated Proposals Map (1999) are still relevant. The emerging Delivery DPD and associated Policies Map is now at submission version stage and once through examination and adoption, this will supersede all remaining saved policies from the Blaby District Local Plan 1999. The Delivery DPD is the second part of the current Local Plan, with the Core Strategy comprising the first part.

Also important is the NPPF This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF requires the planning system (including Neighbourhood Plans) to encourage sustainable development and details three dimensions to that development:

- An economic dimension – they should contribute to economic development;
- A social dimension – they should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the right supply of housing and creating a high quality-built environment with accessible local services; and
- An environmental dimension – they should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Whilst planning applications will still be determined by Blaby District Council, and in special circumstances Leicestershire County Council, the production of a Neighbourhood Plan will mean that they must have regard to the provisions of the Plan and the relevant locally formulated criteria when reaching planning decisions that affect Leicester Forest East Parish. This means that the residents of the Parish will have a far greater control over development, and what it looks like.

It should be noted; however, it is not at the 'Made' stage when the provisions of the Plan need to be taken into account when considering planning decisions by Blaby DC and others. It is at the draft stage, whereby whilst decision makers need to bear in mind that it is still draft, legislation requires that the more advanced the preparation of the Plan the greater the

‘weight’ that may be given to its contents.

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan and what we want it to achieve

The Plan area encompasses the whole of the Parish of Leicester Forest East and covers the period up to 2029, a timescale which deliberately mirrors that for the Adopted Blaby Local Plan.

The main purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not to duplicate national or district-wide (i.e. Blaby) planning policies, but to sit alongside these, to add additional or more detailed policies specific to Leicester Forest East Parish. Where there are national and district- wide planning policies that meet the needs and requirements of the Parish they are not repeated here.

Instead, the Plan focuses on those planning issues which consultation shows matter most to the community, and to which the Plan can add the greatest additional value. These include policies that:

- Ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations;
- Encourage the right types of development that meet local needs;
- Protect important buildings and structures of historic and architectural interest;
- Ensure that business development is appropriate for the Parish;
- Protect important community facilities and shops;
- Promote high quality design in new development;
- Protect the countryside and special landscape;
- Protect open spaces that are important to the community and/or wildlife; and
- Seek ways of addressing the problems of traffic congestion.

Furthermore, these locally formulated policies will be specific to Leicester Forest East Parish and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

It is important to note that when using the Plan to form a view on a development proposal or a policy issue the whole document and the policies contained in it must be considered together along with the policies within the wider development plan, including the Blaby District Local Plan policies.

While every effort has been made to make the main parts of this Plan easy to read and understand, the wording of the actual policies is necessarily

more formal, so that it complies with statutory requirements.

The Plan will be kept under review and may change over time in response to new and changing needs and requirements.

1.5 How the Neighbourhood Plan supports sustainable development

According to the key national planning document, the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development.

The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and to enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own social, economic and environmental needs.

The NPPF carries a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, environmental and economic, all of which are important and interrelated. In accordance with this, the Plan's aims and policies are centred on the achievement of sustainable development, including by, for example:

a) Social

- To safeguard existing open space for the enjoyment of residents;
- To protect existing community facilities; and
- To deliver a mix of housing types, so that it can meet the needs of present and future generations.
- To ensure that the most significant impact of development is mitigated effectively, most notably on the traffic situation which causes concern in the Parish.

b) Environmental

- To ensure that housing development is of the right quantity and type in the right location, so that it does not harm but instead positively reflects the existing and historic character of the area;
- To protect important open spaces from development,
- To ensure that the design of development enhances the Parish's character and identity;

- To protect and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important habitats; and
- To make provision for improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.

c) Economic

- To protect existing employment uses;
- To support appropriate small-scale business development and expansion; and
- To encourage appropriate start-up businesses and home working.

2 Leicester Forest East Village

2.1 A brief history of the Parish

The 2005 Parish Plan describes Leicester Forest East in the following terms.

Leicester Forest East is about 5km (3m) west of the City of Leicester. It is not your archetypal English village and is far from the picture postcard image of old houses grouped around a village green with duck-pond, and with a medieval parish church. It is in fact quite a recent conurbation. At the turn of the 20th century, it consisted of only 18 houses (mainly fronting on to Hinckley Road) and 3 farms. As late as 1925 it is recorded that Francis Hobill delivered milk to all the 19 houses that existed on the Hinckley Road between Western Park and Desford Crossroads!

One of the oldest houses is probably Boyer's Lodge, which dates from the Elizabethan period, and in modernised form is now surrounded by the houses of the Wilson Estate.

On a map of the late 1800s what few houses existed were called East Leicester Forest, being in that location of the old Leicester Forest. This was owned by Henry VIII, who would visit the area on some of his hunting forays. Just to the west of Beggar's Lane there is Kingstand Farm which is the location where he would stand and shoot the deer as they came out of the forest.

The area began to grow about the First World War, with houses being built in Holmfield Avenue and also along Hinckley Road. Larger scale development took place in the 1950s, culminating in the Wilson Estate which was established in the 1980s, almost doubling the size of Leicester Forest East.

The original Anglican Church building was a wooden hut (Kirk's Hut) on Holmfield Avenue, established because the local congregation at that time found the journey on rough roads to Kirby Muxloe too arduous. They moved twice to other temporary accommodation before St Andrew's Church was built and consecrated in 1966. In the 1970s, a joint ministry was formed with the Methodist Church, and the redundant Methodist chapel (next to the M1) was sold to the Jehovah's Witnesses, who completely re-built the building.

Perhaps Leicester Forest East's current main 'claim to fame' is the M1 service area. Unfortunately, the motorway has done the village no favours, having created a division almost through the middle of the parish. Attempts to create a community feeling are not helped by this divide!

Until April 1986 Leicester Forest East was part of Kirby Muxloe Parish, after which it became a parish in its own right - the newest parish in Blaby District. Since then it has had an enthusiastic and dedicated Parish Council, which works tirelessly in

trying to foster an integrated community, and to improve the facilities and environment for all residents to enjoy.

Perhaps more noticeable successes in recent years has been the Gala, first introduced to celebrate the Millennium at the instigation of the late Mr John Pickard, along with the lighting of the Christmas Tree at St. Andrew's Church.

We have two schools in our Parish – Stafford Leys and Fossebrook – both primary schools, and both have 4+ units. They are feeder schools for South Charnwood High School and Winstanley Community College respectively, though some pupils go to Desford Community College. Stafford Leys saw the completion in 2004 of a large extension, as part of upgrading of school accommodation in the County.

Attached to Stafford Leys school is the Community Centre, the creation of which was made possible by local residents through continuous fund-raising efforts. It is here that many community activities take place.

With a busy Post Office, grocery outlets and paper shop, hairdressers and garage, most practical needs are catered for. Two doctor's surgeries, two chemists, two dentists and an optician provide National Health care facilities for the community. Transport links are very good (nearly 75% found them satisfactory), particularly the Park-and-Ride (nearly 60% of respondents use the service regularly).

The fact that nearly 50% of the respondents have lived in Leicester Forest East for over 20 years, and over 60% reported they liked the area, must mean that it really is a good place to live!

2.2 Leicester Forest East Parish Profile (2011)

The Census data from which the following statistics have been drawn has been taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website.

The Parish has 2,566 houses and a population of 6,719.

Levels of deprivation are well below the district, regional and national averages. 54.8% of households are classified as not deprived compared to 49.8% across Blaby and 42.8% in the East Midlands, and 42.5% across England. The levels of health are better than Blaby District generally, with the proportion of residents who consider that their health is very good being 49.6% in Leicester Forest East compared to 47.5% across Blaby, 45.3% regionally and 47.2% in England.

Levels of unemployment are low at 2.2% (2.9% in Blaby District and over 4% in the East Midlands and England) and levels of self-employment at 10.4% are below Blaby District (11.6%) but above regional and national levels. Levels of economic activity, at 76.5%, are above District (74%); region (69%) and England (70%) levels.

A high proportion of residents (59.6%) travel to work by car – above Blaby District (55.2%) and considerably above the norm in the East Midlands (46.1%) or across England (40.2%). Car ownership is high. The proportion of households with no car is 9.7%, compared to 13% (District); 22.1% (region) and 25.8% (national). The proportion of working age residents (3.3%) who state they work from home is in line with the local average (3.4%) and regional and national averages (3.3% and 3.5% respectively).

People living in the parish are more likely to be living in dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms. Results from the 2011 Census show that around 30.2% of households live in housing with more than 4 bedrooms which is above the district (23.4%), regional (19.8%) and England (19%) averages. There is also an under representation of housing for single people with around 1.6% of dwellings having one bedroom against 4.8% for the district, 8.1% for the region and 11.8% for England as a whole.

Number of bedrooms

Bedrooms	Leicester Forest East	Blaby District
1	40	1.6%
2	293	11.5%
3	1,451	56.8%
4	597	23.4%
5+	173	6.8%

Data from the 2011 Census shows that 37.4% of residential dwellings are detached which is marginally higher than the district (36.1%), but well above regional (32%) and national (22%) share. Semi-detached housing accounts for over half (56.3%) of residential housing stock compared with 47.2% for the district, 35.1% for the region and 30.7% for England as a whole. Detached and semi-detached dwellings account for 93.7% of the total housing stock in the Leicester Forest East Parish whereas terraced housing and flats provide 6.4% of accommodation spaces. Levels of affordable housing are very low at 1.2% compared to 8.3% across Blaby District.

16.1% of the population is aged 65+, in line with District (18%), region (17.1%) and national (16.3%) averages. There is evidence of widespread under occupancy in the parish (having more bedrooms than the notional number recommended by the bedroom standard). Over half (53%) of all households in the Parish have two or more spare bedrooms and over a third (34%) have one spare bedroom. Under occupancy is higher than both regional and national rates.

3. Community Engagement process

After the Parish Council took the decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan a process was set in motion to establish an Advisory Committee to drive the process forward.

3.1 Open Event

A consultation event on 10 September 2016 set out the context and stages of the project and asked questions about people’s thoughts about Leicester Forest East. An analysis of the event is included in the evidence base.



The views expressed by the residents were used to shape the strategy in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan for Leicester Forest East.

3.2 Community Questionnaire

The questionnaires were delivered to all 2,566 houses as well as being available online. The questionnaire contains 33 questions which are based on important themes established following initial consultation work by the Leicester Forest East



Parish Council. These themes include: our parish; housing; parish facilities; education; transport; business; community events and general comments. The questionnaire survey took place in May 2017. There are 158 responses in total.

3.3 Theme Groups

A number of 'Theme Groups' were established to explore the detail of the Neighbourhood Plan; to build the evidence base and to lay the foundation for the draft Neighbourhood Plan. An environmental Theme Group was established, along with a theme group on housing and the built environment, and a further group exploring community facilities, transport and employment.



4 Vision

4.1 A vision for Leicester Forest East

The Plan area encompasses the whole of the Parish of Leicester Forest East and covers the period up to 2029, a timescale which deliberately mirrors that for the Blaby Local Plan

The Plan comprises a number of key elements:

A simple and clear vision for the future development of the Parish based on local consultation. This is:

“Leicester Forest East will provide a thriving and prosperous community which delivers a high quality of life for residents and businesses alike. Whilst maintaining excellent links to the city and wider country we will create a sustainable and desirable place to live, protecting our limited natural environment and supporting appropriate development that meets local needs.”

This will be realised by a small number of planning policies specific to Leicester Forest East grouped around the key policy issues identified by the community as being of special importance to them. These include policies that:

- Ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations;
- Encourage the right types of development that meets local needs;
- Protect and wherever possible enhance important buildings and structures;
- Protect important community facilities that are special to the local community;
- Promote good design;
- Ensure that the community continues to have good access to the surrounding countryside and green spaces;
- Protect open spaces that are important to the community and/or wildlife;
- Improve pedestrian and cycle connections within the Plan area and into the surrounding areas.

The Plan will be kept under review.

5 Policies

5.1 Housing

5.1.1 Introduction

A core aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to retain the physical integrity of Leicester Forest East as a contained outer suburb of Leicester City. The consultation activities to date have shown that local people are concerned about a number of issues. A key concern is that housing development in and around Leicester Forest East has expanded rapidly over a relatively short time period but that the facilities and amenities available locally have not increased accordingly.

Key issues for the community are therefore;

- New housing should be supported by adequate physical and social infrastructure. Concerns that additional housing development will put pressure on already stretched amenities such as the local Doctors' Surgery and the Primary Schools.
- There is a need to provide a wider range of housing types in Leicester Forest East, particularly smaller family homes, starter homes, affordable homes and homes designed for older people (including bungalows) where appropriate;
- Affordable housing, preferably of social rent and shared ownership tenure is needed particularly for young families and older people;
- There is a need to mitigate the potential of flood risk to new and existing properties that new development might bring;
- There is a need to mitigate the potential of deteriorating air quality, particularly in and around the existing Air Quality Management Area's (AQMA) within the parish that vehicles as a result of new development will bring.

5.1.2 Housing provision

The Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted February 2013) and Delivery Development Plan Document (Delivery DPD) Submission Version of November 2017 identifies further significant increases in population for the District. The population of the District was 93,915 in 2011 (Census information) and is forecast to grow to approximately 109,000 by 2029. The District-wide target is for at least 8,740 new homes between 2006 and 2029.

In order to help accommodate this expected growth, the District Council has undertaken an options appraisal and concluded that growth is best located within a limited number of sustainable locations rather than dispersing development more widely across the District.

The adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy) established a hierarchy of settlements to help determine the most appropriate locations for development.

Leicester Forest East is classified as being part of Blaby's 'Principal Urban Area' (PUA) along with five other settlements. These are settlements which adjoin and have a strong functional relationship with the PUA and administrative area of Leicester City. The Core Strategy requires the PUA to accommodate a minimum of 5,750 dwellings in Policies CS1 and CS5 between 2006 and 2029. Determining precisely how much of this requirement for new dwellings the Parish should plan for is set out in the Delivery DPD.

There is no specific housing target for Leicester Forest East or the other 5 PUA parishes individually. Existing completions, current planning permissions and the proposed allocations in this Plan and the emerging Delivery DPD fulfil the minimum housing requirement in the PUA as a whole. Blaby District Council's Delivery DPD allocates land to accommodate a minimum of 76 homes within Leicester Forest East, up to 2029.

5.1.3 Housing allocations

In order to contribute positively to the housing requirements of the District over the Plan period, two sites highlighted in the Local Plan are allocated for residential development.

The Parish Council has identified a need for affordable housing that is in excess of the District-wide average in view of the current under provision within the Parish. This, along with the need for a local connection policy is described in more detail in the section on affordable housing.

The proposed Local Plan (Delivery) DPD allocation of 55 units (including 13 affordable units) at Grange Farm is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan as it scored highly in the site assessment undertaken as part of the process of preparing this Neighbourhood Plan. Medium sized infill sites such as this are far more in line with environmental sustainability best practice. We note that drainage could be a major feature with this location as well as the need for adequate noise attenuation from the M1 motorway and will continue to press as a Parish Council for these measures to be attended to as the development progresses.

The Local Plan (Delivery) DPD Submission Version identifies access to this site from both Warden's Walk and Hinckley Road. The Local Plan also identifies the tree and hedge fronting Baines Lane as species rich and needing to be retained in the interests of ecology and character of the urban form.

The Local Plan also allocates a site adjacent to Webb Close which could accommodate some 21 houses. The site is identified in the Local Plan as having the capacity to deliver 5 affordable houses.

POLICY H1: - RESIDENTIAL SITE ALLOCATIONS - Land is allocated for two residential development sites at the following locations as shown in figure2:

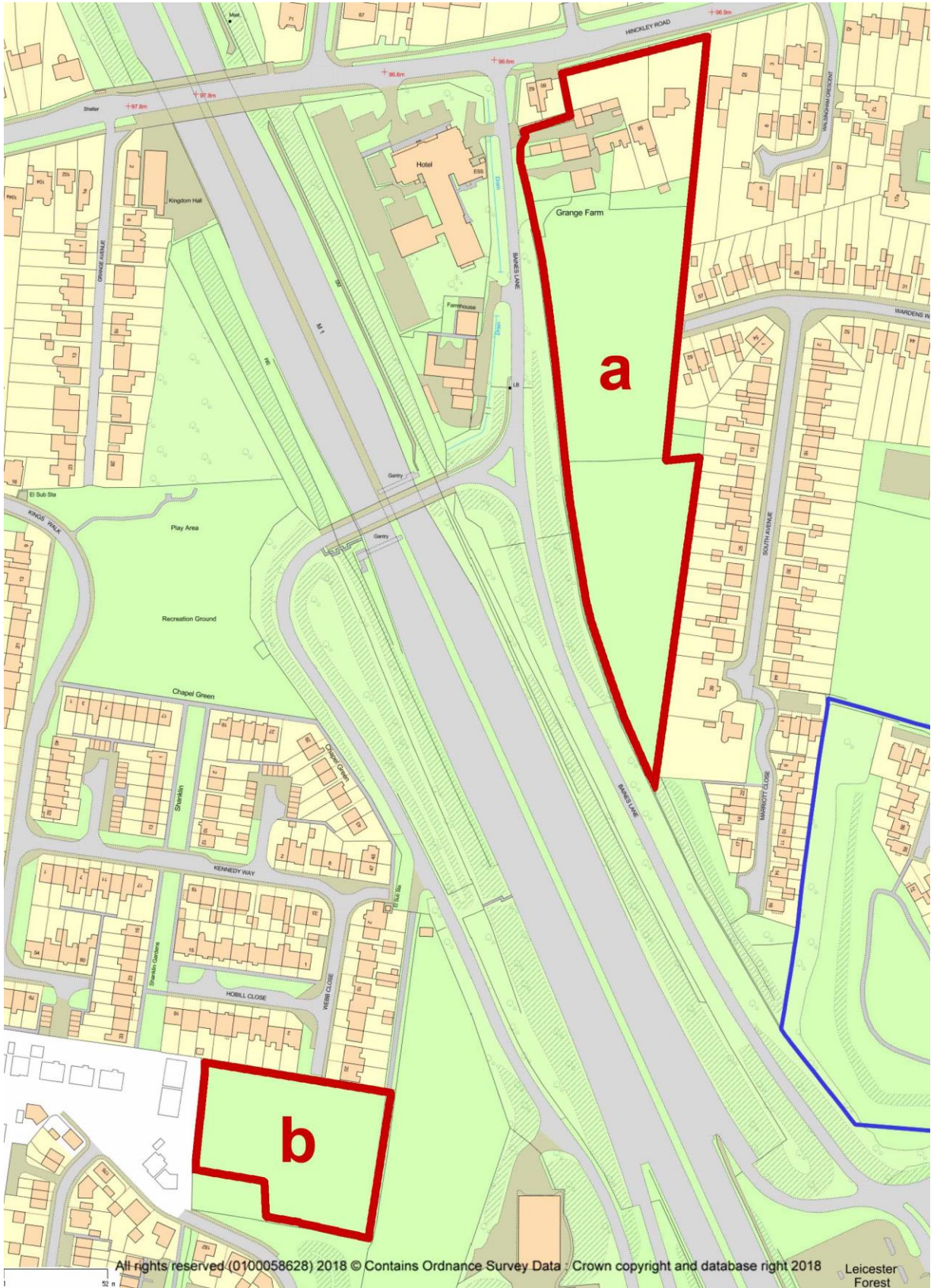
Site a) land at Grange Farm. Development for around 55 units will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- 1) Adequate pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the A47 is provided;**
- 2) A sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) is provided if required by supporting evidence and the LLFA, in line with the NPPF para 165;**
- 3) A professional noise study is undertaken, and adequate remediation measures are installed to all residential units;**
- 4) Approximately 19 of the units will be affordable, the precise mix to be in accordance with latest evidence of housing need in the Parish. Priority is to be given to people with a local connection in the allocation of affordable housing before opening it up to elsewhere in the District.**

Site b) land off Webb Close. Development for around 21 units will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- 1) A professional noise study is undertaken, and adequate remediation measures are installed to all residential units;**
- 2) Approximately 7 of the units will be affordable, the precise mix to be in accordance with latest evidence of housing need in the Parish. Priority is to be given to people with a local connection in the allocation of affordable housing;**
- 3) Environmental impacts of development are identified and mitigated.**

Figure 2 Grange Farm site and Webb Close Site



5.1.4 Limits to Development

The purpose of Limits to Development is to ensure that sufficient sites for new homes and economic activity are available in appropriate sustainable locations that will avoid impinging too far into the open countryside.

Settlement Boundaries have been drawn by Blaby DC in the emerging Delivery DPD and associated Policies Map showing suitable settlements for development. The emerging Local Plan makes it clear that such a measure is important to clarify where new development activity is best located. The emerging Local Plan and DPD will define the extent of a built-up part of a settlement and distinguish between areas where, in planning terms, additional development is acceptable in principle and where it would not be acceptable.

The original intention was for the Neighbourhood Plan to update the existing Limits to Development for Leicester Forest East. The main aim being to bring it up to date by incorporating new or proposed developments. This is also in accordance with the draft Local Plan which also proposes that Limits to Development be prepared for the District.

However, following discussions it is proposed that the Limits to Development is not revised through the Neighbourhood Plan. Instead, it is considered more effective and efficient that this is undertaken as part of the District-wide review of Limits of Development which is being undertaken as part of the emerging Blaby Local Plan Delivery DPD. There are good reasons for this, not least to avoid duplication of effort and to avoid any risk of confusion or conflict on the final boundary.

Figure 3 shows the proposed Limits to Development for Leicester Forest East as set out in the draft Local Plan Delivery DPD Submission Version. This has been prepared by the District Council in conjunction with the Parish Council and other stakeholders.

Limits to Development are a means of distinguishing between areas more suitable for new development and areas less suitable where development will be restrained. In planning terms, land outside a defined Limits to Development, including any small groups of buildings or small settlements, is treated as countryside. This includes any small groups of buildings or small settlements that may be found there.

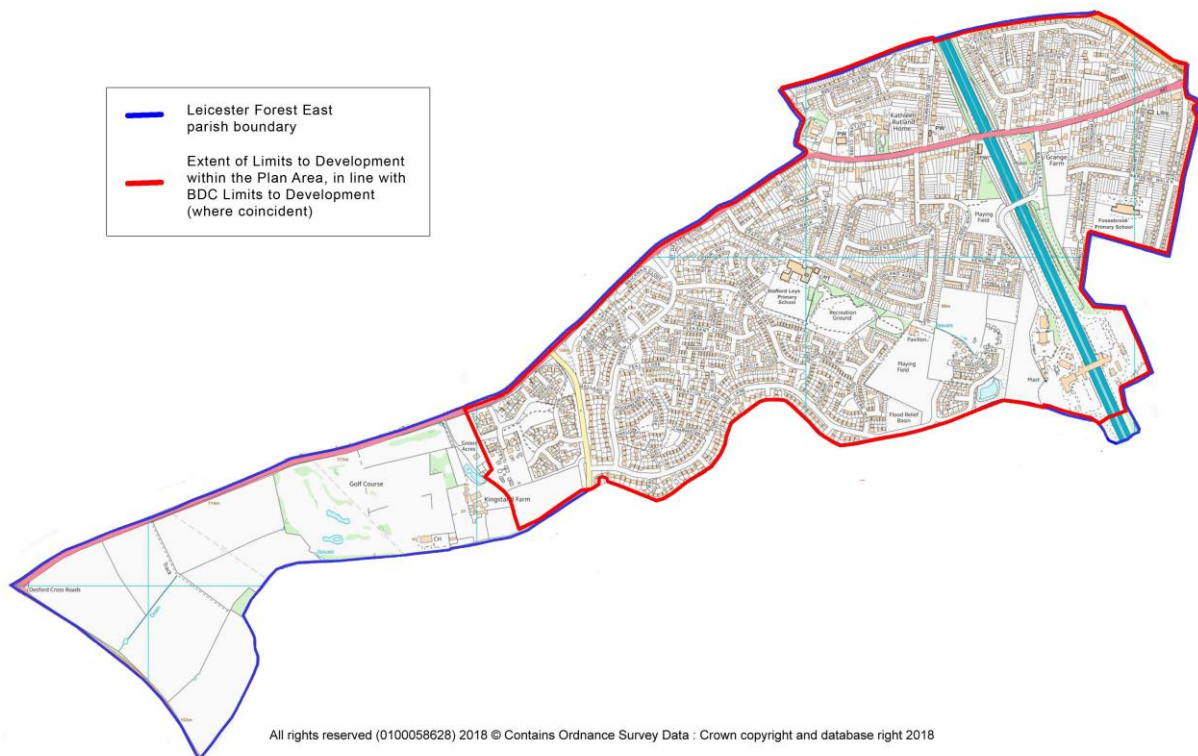
Focusing development activity within the Limits to Development will help to support existing services and facilities, help protect the remaining countryside from inappropriate development and protect the physical and visual separation of neighbouring villages and settlements.

It is national and local planning policy that development in the countryside should be carefully controlled. Supporting *“the intrinsic character and beauty of the*

countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it” is identified as a core planning principle in the National Planning Policy Framework. This approach is also supported by this Plan because it will help ensure that development is focused in more sustainable settlements with a greater range of services and facilities and infrastructure that has capacity for expansion, as well as helping to maintain the character of the Parish and protecting the countryside for its own sake as an attractive, accessible and non-renewable natural resource.

The Limits to Development boundary is as follows:

Figure 3 Limits to Development



POLICY H2: LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT – Development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area on sites within the Limits to Development boundary will be supported where they comply with the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan and the Blaby District Local Plan and subject to meeting design policy and amenity considerations.

Land outside the defined Limits to Development will be treated as open countryside, where development will be carefully controlled in line with local and national strategic planning policies.

5.1.5 Housing Mix

At the time of the 2011 Census, the average household size in the Leicester Forest East Parish was 2.6 people which is higher than the district (2.4), regional

(2.3) and national (2.4) rates. At 6.2 the average number of rooms per household is higher than the district (5.9), regional (5.6) and national (5.4) rates.

People living in the Leicester Forest East Parish are also more likely to live in homes with a high number of bedrooms. The average number of bedrooms per household is 3.2 which is higher than the district (3.0), region (2.8) and national (2.7) rates.

Home ownership levels are relatively high with over 90% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan. This compares with 80.9% for Blaby, 67 for the region and 63% for England as a whole. There is very little social housing provision in the parish (less than 1%) and private rented properties represent 8% of occupied households.

Data from the 2011 Census shows that semi-detached dwellings represent the highest share of properties in the parish representing 56% of the housing stock against 47% for the district, 35% for the region and 31% for England as a whole. There is also a higher than average representation of detached dwellings which account for 37% of household spaces compared with 36% for the district, 32% for the region and 22% England rates. Terraced housing represents 5% of dwellings and flats just 1%, both being lower than district, regional and national rates.

People living in the parish are more likely to be living in dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms. Results from the 2011 Census show that around 30% of households live in housing with more than 4 bedrooms which is above the district (23%), regional (20%) and England (19%) averages. There is also an under representation of smaller type housing units with around 13% of dwellings having 2 or fewer bedrooms against 26% for the district, 35% for the region and 40% for England as a whole.

There is evidence of widespread under occupancy in the parish (having more bedrooms than the notional number recommended by the bedroom standard). Analysis of the 2011 Census shows that over half (53%) of all households in the Leicester Forest East Parish have two or more spare bedrooms and over a third (34%) have one spare bedroom. Under occupancy is higher than both regional and national rates.

Research shows that older person households are more likely to under-occupy their dwellings. Data from the Census allows us to investigate this using the bedroom standard. In total, some 78% of pensioner households have an occupancy rating of +2 or more (meaning there are at least two more bedrooms that are technically required by the household) and is somewhat higher than the 46% non-pensioner household rate.

The high proportion of larger, detached housing coupled with high level of under occupancy suggests a need for smaller homes to balance the housing stock, which would be suitable for residents needing to downsize, small families and

those entering the housing market. Providing suitable accommodation for elderly residents will enable them to remain in the local community and release under-occupied larger properties onto the market which would be suitable for growing families.

The housing and economic development needs assessment (HEDNA) report, completed in January 2017 and our own assessment of housing need (see supporting information) also provides a useful estimate of the percentage of different sized units required.

POLICY H3: HOUSING MIX - New housing development proposals should provide a mixture of housing types specifically to meet identified local needs of the Parish. Unless the latest evidence indicates otherwise, development proposals should concentrate on providing dwellings of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms and to homes suitable for older people, including 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows and dwellings suitable for those with restricted mobility.

5.1.6 Affordable housing provision

Local people have strong opinions on the affordability of housing in the Parish. Although 90.6% are owner occupiers and most have benefitted from increases in property values there is a strong recognition that more affordable housing is required.

Having considered a range of evidence including consultation findings, socio-economic data, census data and information from land registry sources, it is noted that the proportion (as of 2011) of social rented housing in the Parish is only 0.9% against a Blaby wide proportion of 7.7%. It is therefore very important that a higher than District requirement of social rented housing is sought on any future housing sites. It is proposed that a 35% affordable housing allocation is sought for all future housing planning applications on sites of 11 units or more. This is above the District-wide target of 25% affordable units on sites of 15 or more specified in Local Plan policy CS7. The community consultation reinforced this policy approach by showing a strong demand for smaller and affordable housing, particularly starter homes, to be provided in the Parish.

The housing needs survey completed by YourLocale in 2016 (see supporting information) was based upon the interpretation of the census 2011 results and land registry data from between 1995 and 2015 and found;

- People in the Parish are more likely to live in homes with a higher number of bedrooms.
- Home ownership levels are high, over 90%.
- Social rented levels are very low, 0.9% compared to 7.7% for Blaby.

- More than 30% of households have more than 4 bedrooms, compared to the Blaby figure of 23% and a National figure of 19%.
- Major development occurred in the 1960's and 1970's.
- The local population is getting older as average life expectancy rises.

There is a clear need for smaller homes of up to three bedrooms suitable for residents to downsize and for small families entering the housing market. More affordable supported and retirement properties are required.

The Blaby DC planning guidance on affordable housing, the adopted Supplementary Planning Document, has been considered and this affordable housing policy is in general alignment with the policy position contained in that document. Subject to viability testing, the threshold for requiring affordable housing provision is proposed to be 11 houses rather than 15 as contained in the Local Plan, in order to help address the under provision of affordable housing in the Parish.

POLICY H4: AFFORDABLE HOUSING – To support the provision of mixed, sustainable communities, to meet the identified need within the community and to increase the level of affordable housing within the Parish:

- a) Where possible, 35% of all homes on developments comprising 11 or more dwellings shall be affordable subject to viability considerations;
- b) The mix of affordable housing shall be in line with up to date evidence of local housing need;
- c) Developments should be 'tenure blind', where affordable housing is indistinguishable from market dwellings and is spread throughout the development;
- d) If it is not possible to provide affordable housing on site, in exceptional circumstances it will be acceptable to provide funding in lieu of affordable housing on-site if this leads to the provision of additional affordable housing in the Parish. If this is not possible within the timeframe for spending commuted sums it can be used across the District;
- e) Development proposals that contribute to the provision of affordable homes that are suited to the needs of older people and those with disabilities will be supported;
- f) The provision of affordable housing for those with a 'local connection' to the parish will be prioritised amongst those with similar levels of need. If there are no suitable households with a Leicester Forest East connection, then the properties will be made available to others on the Council's waiting list.

5.1.7 Housing Design

Due to the growth of the Parish taking place over a lengthy period of time it is apparent that the character, appearance and mix of housing, community, commercial and commercial buildings is very mixed and diverse, although in recent years the large “monolithic” developments from major housebuilders extending the built form have not kept to this format and have produced a large “housing estate” style.

In terms of landscaping, the increased planting of new trees, hedges and shrubs would be welcomed with the particular species and siting carefully considered to protect and enhance individual existing properties light, views and reduce the impact of falling leaves and tree root subsidence problems. The Neighbourhood Plan particularly welcomes development and re-use of existing buildings that are environmentally sustainable. The installation of a rain water harvester within the curtilage of each new dwelling would significantly reduce the amount of rain water going into existing water courses, but also on the amount of water available for flushing house toilets or washing cars.

In terms of character, heritage and design, the community through consultation exercises expressed a general desire for housing design to be in keeping with the best elements of the current design.

POLICY H6: HOUSING DESIGN - All new development proposals of one or more houses, replacement dwellings and extensions will be expected, where possible and appropriate, to satisfy the following building design principles:

- a) It is of a density, size, scale, massing and height that reflects the character of the surrounding area to provide space and pleasant street scenes and inclusive road linking with pedestrian short cuts; and
- b) The design and materials are of a high standard and quality, which respect and, where possible, enhance the character and appearance of the local area.
- c) Adequate off-road parking should be provided in line with Leicestershire County Council Highways most up to date design guidance; and
- d) The design reflects best environmental good practice (for example incorporating where appropriate, but not limited to, solar panels, rainwater harvesters, car electrical charging points and photovoltaic glass); and
- e) Suitable landscaping should be provided, where appropriate.

5.2 Environment

5.2.1 Introduction

Leicester Forest East is unusual. It is not on the site of an ancient settlement, and relatively little of its history is visible in the local environment in a way that warrants protection by the Planning system.

No known archaeological finds, earthworks or place-names demonstrate prehistoric, Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon/Viking settlement, except for an Old English name, recorded in Domesday, of *Hereswode* (*here* = army or people; *wode* = wood). It could be inferred that the area (unlike most of Leicestershire) was indeed not settled in the 'Dark Ages', but was, perhaps already mixed woodland and wood pasture reserved for high-status use. After the Norman conquest, it was formally designated as a Royal Forest, reserved for hunting – a large area of heath, grassland, trees and woodland with no villages, only buildings associated with forest management and administration, and isolated cottages. A few names of farms and properties in and near the parish – Boyer's Lodge, Kingstand Old Warren, Forest Edge, Forest Grange – recall aspects of the Forest system.

The Forest was *disafforested* by statute in 1628 and shared among a few landed families. Local peasants' traditional forest rights were withdrawn, causing riots in Leicester, the land was cleared for agriculture and new fields were laid out (*Enclosed*), in the following years.

The parish remained very sparsely populated; even in 1886, the Ordnance Survey map shows that there was only the Red Cow inn and a few other buildings near Kirkby Lane turn, along with Boyer's Lodge, a forest keeper's lodge which from 1628 until 1990 stood in the middle of the fields created after the Forest was disafforested. Of particular local historical interest is the fact that, to a large extent, the pattern of 20th century housing estates and open spaces south of Hinckley Road preserves the layout of the fields, tracks and hedges laid out in the mid-17th century.

Development as Leicester Forest East began in the 1920s along Hinckley Road, with more in the 1930s. Housing estates were built in the 1960s and again in the 1980s, while a new phase of development (both in the parish and to its north and south) is happening now.

The natural environment of the parish has clearly been affected by this level of development (by 2029 only 14% of the Plan Area is expected to be open countryside), although the 17th century Enclosures (replacing mixed natural woodland and pasture habitats with arable fields and hawthorn hedges) were probably more destructive to biodiversity than modern development has been.

The 20th century housing estates incorporated several extensive recreational open spaces (parks, sports facilities, etc.) and some 25 semi-natural open spaces, 'greens', green walkways and wide roadside grass strips, all adding up to about 12ha. With an additional estimated 50ha of private gardens, the parish overall probably has more biodiversity than modern arable farmland or built-up areas elsewhere in the county.

Fig.4 1886 map, showing Enclosure field pattern, overlain on the modern map. Note the correspondence.



5.2.2 Existing environmental designations

As might be expected, relatively few environmental records (historical or natural) exist for Leicester Forest East. This means that what little survives is even more important in the local context (the level at which a Neighbourhood Plan carries weight in Planning).

There is one *Listed Building*, one further building of architectural and historical merit and one small area of deciduous woodland mapped by Natural England as *Priority Habitat*.

5.2.3 Local Green Space

An inventory of all open and undeveloped land in the parish has been carried out during 2017 as part of the Plan's preparation. It comprised:



- Desk study (existing environmental designations, published research and records)
- Fieldwork (all sites visited and assessed)
- Analysis of community consultation and questionnaire responses

The NPPF provides guidelines on the eligibility criteria for Local Green Space. An evidence-based scoring system for evaluating sites in the parish was devised (Table 1, below), and one site emerges from this process as being of exceptional environmental significance in the context of Leicester Forest East, both for its community value and for its intrinsic environmental importance.

Table 1: scoring system used by the Plan for evaluating sites for Local Green Space designation

Criterion (NPPF 2012)	Score range			Notes
ACCESSIBILITY	0	1-3	4	e.g. private, no access (0) – visible from public place – accessed via PRoW – fully open to the public (4)
PROXIMITY / LOCAL	0	1-3	4	Distant (0) --- fairly near to --- adjoins (3) or is within (4) settlement
BOUNDED	0	1-3	4	Individual parcel of land (not an undefined or large area)
SPECIAL TO COMMUNITY	0	1-3	4	Opinion of local people e.g. via questionnaire or at consultation events
RECREATIONAL / EDUCATIONAL USE	0	1-3	4	Actual or potential, informal sports, dog-walking, Forest School use, informal or official open space, etc.
BEAUTY (including views)	0	1	2	Subjective, relative (give justification); use consultation map results
TRANQUILITY	0	1	2	Subjective, relative (give justification)
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	0	1-3	4	Extant, visible evidence. Number of periods/features/records etc. / Relevant existing designations (Historic Environment Records)
WILDLIFE SIGNIFICANCE, GEOLOGY	0	1-3	4	Richness of species and habitats (Priority (BAP) spp. / Priority habitats) / relevant existing designations (Habitat Survey, Local Wildlife Sites / site of geological/industrial history significance)
[Maximum possible score]			32	

Table 2: evidence base for the Local Green Space designation

EVIDENCE	NPPF (2012) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA									
	Access /4	Proximity /4	Bounded /4	Special /4	Rec/Ed /4	Beauty/ Views /2	Tranq. /2	History /4	Wildlife /4	TOTAL
<p>Leicester Forest East Spinney</p> <p>Small oakwood, c.150 yrs old, with understorey of hawthorn, elder, hazel, and grassy open area. Wild flowers. Hedged boundary to motorway fence.</p> <p>Good range of garden/woodland birds (3 Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species), mammals, invertebrates.</p> <p>This is the only surviving part of the grounds of Forest Grange, a large Victorian mansion demolished for construction of the M1</p> <p>This is the only accessible woodland in the parish. Well-used, mainly informally, including by local children/young people</p> <p>Full public access via King's Walk play area/Chapel Green P.O.S., with which it is contiguous.</p>	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	3	25
	<p>Leicester Forest East Spinney from Chapel Green, 2017</p> <p>Location map</p> 									

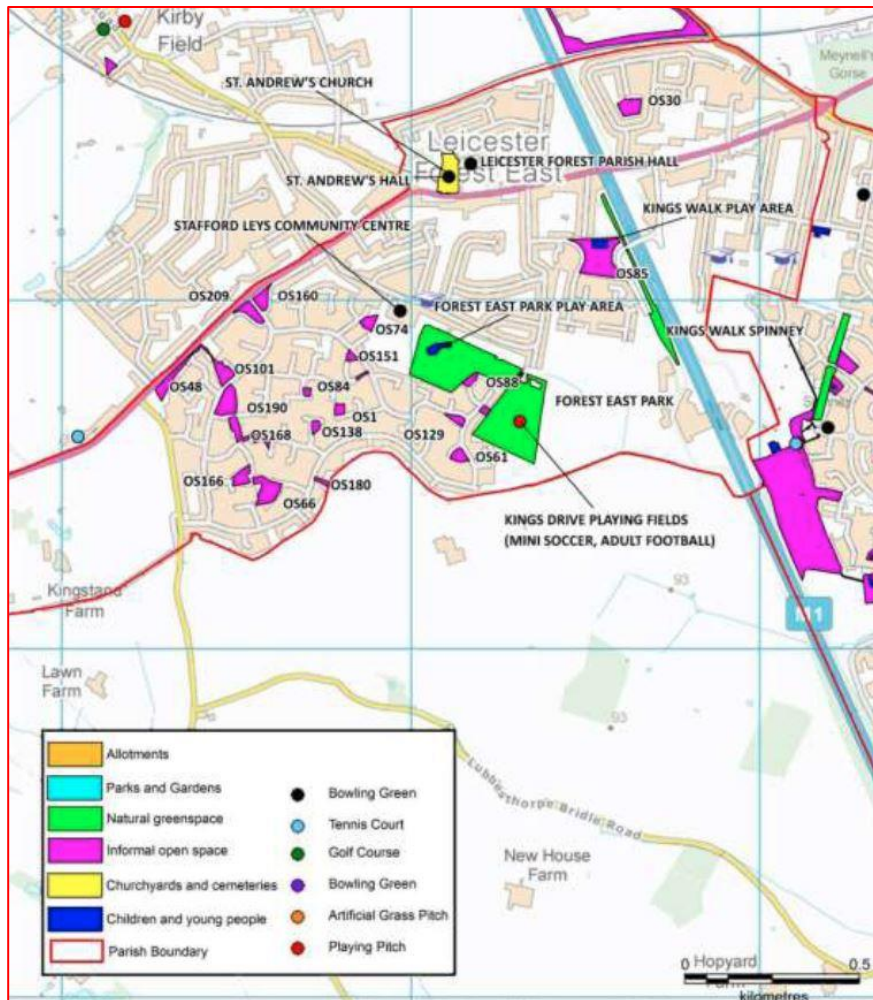
POLICY ENV 1: LOCAL GREEN SPACES - The Leicester Forest East Spinney is proposed for designation as a Local Green Spaces (LGS). Within the area of LGS identified in table 2 above, development is ruled out, other than in very special circumstances.

5.2.4 Open Spaces

As noted in the introduction, the environmental and social impact of the 20th century housing developments in Leicester Forest East have been mitigated by the planned provision of a network of public open spaces of various types. Together they make a large and valuable contribution to the appearance of the settlement, to the community’s health and wellbeing, and to the parish’s biodiversity. Community responses and an independent assessment show that these sites are well-used and appreciated by local people. Of particular interest are the chains of informal open spaces that provide walking routes connecting schools and other infrastructure with otherwise separate areas of the estate; they are an effective way of making it possible for young people to walk to school and socially.

Bearing in mind a possible reduction in resourcing for management, maintenance and improvement during the lifetime of the Plan, this community action aims to support, by whatever means is appropriate in future circumstances, the continued contribution of the open spaces listed here to the life and landscape of Leicester Forest East.

Figure 5 Open Spaces



Blaby District Council Open Space Audit 2015 typologies:

Parks and gardens

Natural greenspace

Informal open space

Children and young people

Allotments

Sports (all typologies)

Cemeteries and churchyards

Village and community halls

COMMUNITY ACTION ENV 1: IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES – Leicester Forest East Parish Council, in partnership with the local community (through volunteer action and appropriate constituted bodies), will work with Blaby District Council to ensure the continued management, maintenance and improvement of the open spaces listed above.

5.2.5 Local heritage

Statutory Listed Building

Boyer’s Lodge, Warren Lane is the only statutorily protected historic environment feature in the parish. A timber-framed, early 17th century house with later additions, it is Listed Grade II, meaning that the Plan does not need a protecting policy for its fabric and appearance.



Thomas Boyer, one of the keepers of the Royal Forest, is recorded in 1628 as one of several purchasers of Forest land. The house is believed to be the only surviving keeper's lodge associated with Leicester Forest. (Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*,

1775- 811, Vol. IV, p.785).

Current Historic England policy for Listed Buildings is to require their *setting* (an area ‘within which the building can be appreciated’) to be protected when new development is proposed. This does not appear to have been enforced when the surrounding estates were built: with its white exterior (similar to that of adjacent modern properties) Boyer’s Lodge might now even be mistaken for a pastiche ‘vernacular’ style, 21st century upmarket estate house. Future redevelopment of the surrounding properties or area, if any, should take more care in this respect.



Non-designated heritage assets

Based on guidance from Historic England, the Plan identifies two further buildings and structures in the built environment of Leicester Forest East that are considered to be of high local significance for architectural, historical or social reasons. Their inclusion here records them as non-designated heritage assets to be taken into account by the Planning system.

The first is Kingstand Farm. Leicestershire County Council’s Historic Buildings Officer has commented that ‘the farmhouse by virtue of its age, materials and surviving architectural details meets the definition of a non-designated heritage asset as set out in the Glossary to the NPPF. In addition to the external brick details already noted there is a historic staircase and internal beams of potential interest. There is also the possible historic importance of the site; Paragraph



135 of the NPPF should therefore apply. The photographs confirm numerous unfortunate alterations to the house and outbuildings, typical of a working farm, but many of these could be undone as part of a sympathetic restoration scheme,

funded by a potentially profitable residential development. Such an approach could arguably lead to a public heritage benefit in the overall planning balance’.

Blaby District Council’s Heritage Asset Survey (2018) describes Kingstand Farm ‘as being a 19th century farm, with buildings marked on the 1814 OS surveyor’s drawings, consequently the farmhouse and associated historic farm buildings should be considered as non-designated heritage assets’.

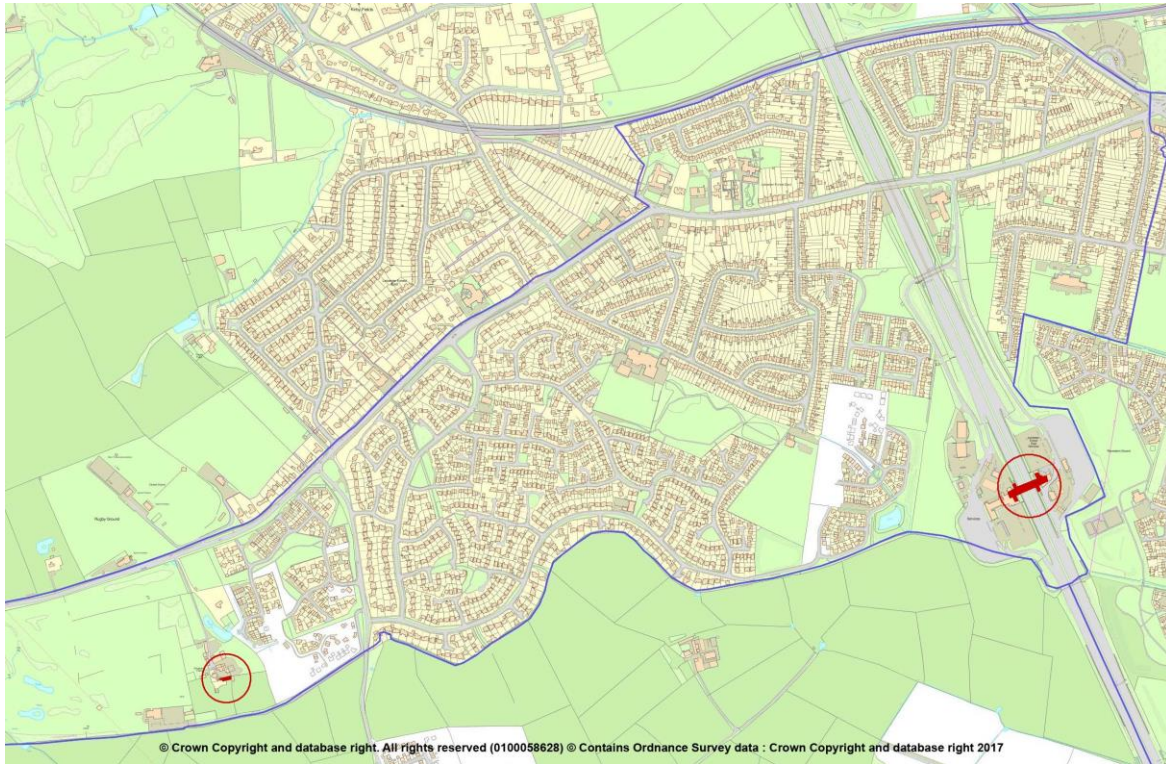
The second is the Motorway Service Station on the M1. Described in the local press as ‘Leicestershire’s best-known landmark’. The Leicester Forest East Services



were part of the second phase of development of the M1. The services are based on an Italian design which is rare in Britain and features a bridge restaurant between the two bases crossing the motorway – the first of its type. On Christmas Eve 1997, Arthur Smith broadcast his evening Radio 4 show live from the services.

POLICY ENV 2: LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST - Development proposals that affect the buildings and structures of local historic or architectural interest listed below, or their setting, will be expected to conserve the historic and architectural interest in those development proposals. Any benefits arising from a development proposal, or a change of use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against the scale of harm or loss and their significance as heritage assets’

- **Kingstand Farmhouse;**
- **Leicester Forest East Motorway Services.**

FIG. 6 Buildings and structures of local significance

5.2.6 Biodiversity

These policies are about parish-level compliance with the Blaby District Council Local Plan, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (as amended), and the relevant European Habitats and Species Directives – and about how Leicester Forest East can maintain and enhance biodiversity in the Parish.

Connectivity is an essential component of biodiversity. Isolated populations of animals and plants are at risk of destruction or of simply ‘dying out’. Wildlife Corridors aim to re-connect populations and habitats within parishes and more widely. One potential wildlife corridor has been identified during the preparation of this Plan.

A recently approved bus-priority access route through the proposed wildlife corridor does not diminish the need for the area to be recognised for its wildlife credentials – indeed, it strengthens the need for additional protection of this area within the Parish.

Fig. 7 Proposed wildlife corridor



POLICY ENV 3: BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE CORRIDOR – Development proposals will be expected to safeguard locally significant habitats and species, especially those protected by relevant English and European legislation, and, where possible, to create new habitats for wildlife.

Development proposals should not damage or adversely affect the wildlife corridor identified on Figure 7 – proposed wildlife corridor.

In addition, two areas of biodiversity significance have been identified:

Leicester Forest East Spinney: semi-natural wood (natural development of 19th century ornamental planting) with oak standards and understorey of hawthorn, elder, hazel and shrubs. Some open areas with grass and wild flowers. Mapped as Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) by Natural England. The only accessible woodland in the parish and probably the best site for garden and woodland birds with additional value from public access. Also proposed as Local Green Space in this Plan. Three Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species birds, mammals, invertebrates, amphibians, flowering plants.

Flood relief basin south of recreation ground: developing area of scrub, rough grass and occasional trees in steep-sided hollow. Hedged boundaries to three sides. Created by excavation of previous arable field in [1999] as part of development of the 'Arthurian' area of housing development. Garden and farmland birds (three BAP species), mammals (small and medium), butterflies and other invertebrates. Potential for community-led habitat creation and management to further enhance biodiversity.

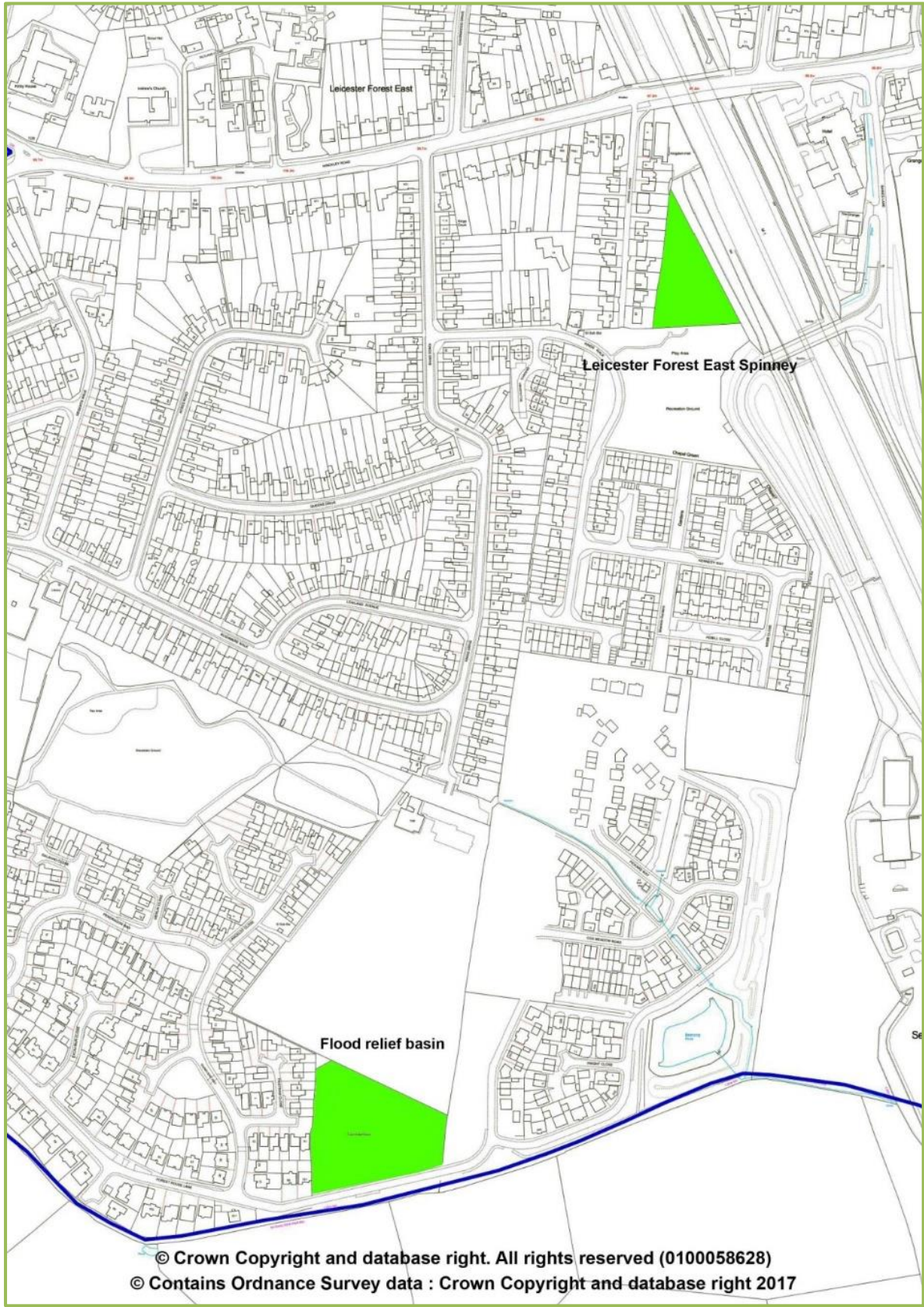
The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that any development in these locally important areas take account of their biodiversity interest.

POLICY ENV 4: SITES OF HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE – the following sites (Fig. 8 Sites of high environmental significance) have been identified as being of local importance for biodiversity (species and habitats). They are important in their own right and are locally valued. Development proposals that affect them should take note of the identified features and will be expected to protect them.

Leicester Forest East Spinney

Flood Relief Basin

Fig. 8 Sites of high environmental significance



5.3 Community Facilities and Amenities

5.3.1 History, background and current overview

Leicester Forest East as a parish community began life in the 1920's but over the course of 100 years has become subsumed into a series of housing developments stretching west from the border with Leicester City, at Braunstone Cross Roads out to Desford Cross Roads, just before the hamlet of Leicester Forest West. Always synonymous with the M1 Services of the same name.

The community has grown up on both sides of the A47 trunk road until the junction with Kirby Lane whereupon the parish boundary runs along the main road with Leicester Forest East existing only on the southern side. The A47 connects the east coast to Birmingham via Leicester, Hinckley and Nuneaton and is the primary traffic route east/west serving communities along its length.

In the mid-1960's the M1 motorway bisected the village from north to south and as such the community is made up of 4 quadrants. The 2 quadrants to the east of the motorway increasingly feel cut off from the rest of the village and a new vision is required to bring the 2 halves of Leicester Forest East together. This situation is set to develop as new housing, currently in build and planned will create many more houses along the A47 corridor bringing further pressures on roads, schools, doctors and dentists. Conversely this could also open up opportunities for new businesses.

It is against this backdrop that the community strives to retain an identity and a positive future. The presence of community facilities and amenities make a significant contribution to the vitality and viability of Leicester Forest East, enhancing the quality of life and regularly providing an important focal point for social interaction. However, the challenge is to sustain and build community in a parish that is so divided geographically.



According to the results of the parish questionnaire, 90% of those residents who responded said that the green spaces and access to the countryside were highly important. A similar percentage also appreciates the easy access to the city and the ease of road connections. Leicester Forest East is therefore well placed to provide a positive and desirable living environment for current and future residents if it is able to retain this balance of being at the edge of rural green space whilst close

to, but separate from, the city of Leicester the communities of Kirby Muxloe and the developing town of New Lubbethorpe.

Residents are certainly keen to keep Leicester Forest East as a distinct village in



its own right. One possibility is the creation a separate postcode for Leicester Forest East rather than being a part of the city. This continues to be explored with the Post Office. Residents are also penalised by having a city post code in terms of insurance premiums, etc.

The availability of amenities and facilities in a community is what gives it a focus and makes it a community. Without local shops, pub or cafes Leicester Forest East becomes heartless, just a collection of houses and roads leading in and out of Leicester.

Leicester Forest East facilities and amenities (in addition to the benefits for residents) can also provide local employment, reduce the need to travel and offer important services, particularly for those who do not have access to a car. Around 50% of the community are over 50 years old, (many having lived here for over 20 years), additionally there is a home and facilities for the visually impaired in Leicester Forest East, Kathleen Rutland Home for the Blind, as well as Kirby House, an assisted living facility for those in need of other care, so local services and amenities are of high priority.

The loss and threatened closure of facilities and services is not uncommon in Leicester Forest East and is likely to be tested further in the future as increases in car ownership and frequent commuting to work and to access shopping and leisure activities call into question the viability of many local services.

To promote the on-going prosperity of the Parish it is essential that Leicester Forest East retains its remaining community facilities and amenities and continues to provide local services that will sustain the vitality of the community and encourage local spending. The importance of the existing facilities and amenities were highlighted in the consultation events that have taken place across the Parish through the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan.



The Open Event held in September 2017 identified the value in retaining the existing Parish facilities such as doctors, dentists, library, post office and schools. The parish questionnaire, produced in June 2017, also listed, public footpaths, parks, play equipment as some of the most important amenities in Leicester Forest East.

Both the NPPF and the Blaby District Local Plan indicate that valued community facilities should be retained.

Leicester Forest East Parish Council has a close working relationship with the police, enhanced by the parish office moving into the parish hall complex. Both the council and the police make use of the Reg Neal Committee Room.

A detailed list of community facilities and amenities in the Parish is available as an appendix to this Neighbourhood Plan

Policy CF1: THE RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility and amenity, listed below, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; or
- b) The existing community facility is, demonstrably, no longer economically viable; or
- c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish which complies with the other general policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

St Andrews Church	Kirby House Residential Care Home
Beacon Life Church	
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness Assembly	Holmfield Avenue Post Office
Community Library	Forest House Medical Centre
Children's play area Kings Drive	Forest House Dental Surgery
Parish Hall	Forest Park Inn
Fossebrook Primary School	M1 Service Station
Stafford Leys Primary School	Forest East Park
Vista Kathleen Rutland Home	Chemists next to medical centres
	Warren Lane Medical Centre

5.3.2 New or improved facilities

As stated above, the availability of amenities and facilities in a community is what gives it a focus and makes it a community. Without local shops, pub or cafes Leicester Forest East becomes heartless, just a collection of houses and roads leading in and out of Leicester.

Some additional facilities and amenities that the people of Leicester Forest East wish to see in their community include:

- Facilities for young people to pursue their interests without having to always go further afield. This could include sports facilities such as BMX and multi-use games areas;
- Youth and children provision;
- Local shops help to make a neighbourhood worth staying in rather than travel to the nearest superstore. We aim to encourage the provision of small shops such as bakers, butchers and delicatessens.
- Similarly, a coffee shop, café or micro pub would help to make Leicester Forest East a more attractive destination;
- Availability of allotments to foster community spirit, self-sufficiency, a facility not currently available in the area;
- A parish cemetery;
- To link amenities together it is also important that a network of footpaths and cycle ways are put in place to make these facilities more local and accessible.
- More local activities.

POLICY CF2: NEW OR IMPROVED COMMUNITY FACILITIES - Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities, will be supported provided that the development:

- a) Will not result in unacceptable traffic movements or other disturbance to residential properties; and
- b) Will not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for; and
- c) Is of a scale appropriate to the needs of the locality and conveniently accessible for residents of the village wishing to walk or cycle; and
- d) Takes into full account the needs of people with disabilities.

In support of these policies and in order to improve the availability of community facilities and amenities in the Parish, the Parish Council is also committed to progress a range of Community Actions as follows:

COMMUNITY ACTION CFA 1: BURIAL FACILITIES - The Parish Council will continue to work with other organisations to improve access to burial facilities for Leicester Forest East residents.

COMMUNITY ACTION CFA 2: ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - The Parish Council will continue to work with the police and other agencies to review anti-social behaviour and the impact of reduce street lighting during the night on businesses and public safety.

COMMUNITY ACTION CFA 3: EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES - The Parish Council will continue to look at and provide (where practicable and reasonable) local community events and provision for youth and young people's work.

COMMUNITY ACTION CFA 4: TREES LINING A47 – The Parish Council will work tirelessly to preserve the horse Chestnut trees lining the A47.

5.4 EMPLOYMENT

5.4.1 Support for existing employment opportunities

The strength of the local economy and of the community goes hand in hand. Supporting the growth of a stronger local economy is recognised as an important theme of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, Leicester Forest East is a largely urban parish with some significant employment opportunities within and adjacent to the parish. Employment opportunities within the Parish are key to its vibrancy and there is a desire to see this retained and increased in appropriate locations. 17% of those responding to the community questionnaire felt that there is a demand for more business units in the Parish. There was also mention of people struggling to find local business premises.

There is an increasing trend for residents to work from home. There is evidence of this throughout the Parish both as individual business people and employees of other businesses. The Neighbourhood Plan reflects support for this economic group in its proposals to provide a wider range of housing and to support the provision of local business premises where appropriate.

Where there are buildings dedicated to business use in the Parish we recommend that they be protected against being lost to other uses.

Policy BE1: SUPPORT FOR EXISTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - There will be a strong presumption against the loss of employment opportunities. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months; and
- b) The premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.

5.4.2 Support for new employment opportunities

New employment initiatives in the right location can help to boost and diversify the local economy and to provide more local employment opportunities.

Consultation suggested there would be support for small-scale business development, appropriate to the nature of Leicester Forest East.

Any new employment initiatives should be sensitive to the character of the Parish. Employment proposals should only be seen as acceptable if they avoid harmful impacts on other matters agreed to be locally important such as increased traffic flows, parking, residential amenity, the preservation of historic/heritage assets and the local environment.

Policy BE2: SUPPORT FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - In supporting additional employment opportunities, new development will be required to:

- a) Where possible, represent the extension of existing employment premises or on areas of previously developed land; and
- b) Not increase noise levels or light pollution or introduce any pollution to an extent that they would unacceptably disturb occupants of nearby residential property; and
- c) Not generate unacceptable levels of traffic movement; and
- d) Positively contribute to the character and vitality of the local area; and
- e) Be well integrated into and complement existing businesses.

The following types of employment development will be supported:

- a) The small-scale expansion of existing employment premises across the Parish;
- b) Small-scale new build development within the neighbourhood plan area.

5.4.3 Home working

In support of an increasing socio-economic trend, a benefit of home working is that it helps to promote employment activities whilst reducing the dependency of the car for journeys to employment sites outside the Parish.

The national figure of 14% and rising is a trend indicated by both the TUC and the Office for National Statistics.

A list of known homeworkers and businesses run in the Parish is available in the supporting information. The intention of Policy BE3 is to recognise that people may not have a suitable space within their home from which to run a business, or they may wish to distinctly and deliberately separate their work and living space.

Policy BE3 supports the construction of extensions, the conversion of outbuildings, and the development of new freestanding buildings in gardens from which businesses can operate. This is intended to maximise the opportunity for home run enterprises to be created and supported in the long term in Leicester Forest East.

Policy BE3 would apply where a material change of use occurs, such that planning permission is required. This reflects positive support for entrepreneurial activity in line with the NPPF and Blaby District Council's Local Plan.

Whilst it is acknowledged that it may not always be possible, there is a strong desire for new housing to contain a small office space to accommodate home working.

POLICY BE3: WORKING FROM HOME - Proposals for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for free standing buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or conversion of outbuildings for those uses, will be supported where the development is small-scale (subservient to the residential dwelling) and where:

- a) Such development will not result in unacceptable traffic movements and that appropriate parking provision is made; and
- b) No significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or other sensitive land uses from noise, fumes, light pollution, or other nuisance associated with the work activity; and
- c) Any extension or free-standing building shall be designed having regard to policies in this Plan (including housing design) and should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction; and
- d) The employment use of any such extension, outbuilding etc is to remain clearly ancillary to the main use of the property as residential, which shall remain the primary use.

5.4.4 Broadband infrastructure

The modern economy is changing and increasingly requires a good communications infrastructure as a basic requirement to maximise technological advances. High-speed Internet connectivity is driving business innovation and growth, helping people access services, and opening up new opportunities for learning.

Leicester Forest East (and the new developments) are dependent on the Kirby Muxloe Exchange for their broadband services. There is limited fibre broadband to existing housing with the exchange being full and the super fibre providers slowly cabling existing streets. Most use the BT backbone with Virgin cable providing their own "Fibre to House" connection which provides higher speeds. Sky uses BT cabling in the street but has a separate area in the exchange. An alternative is to take a satellite provider which has Television packages included.

Broadband	Speed	Availability
Twisted pair	2-3Mbps	Available
Fibre	Up to 77Mbps (only 40Mbps)	Limited
Fibre to house	80Mbps +	Limited
Satellite	80Mbps+	Available

73% of those responding to the questionnaire felt that their broadband and their mobile phone reception required improvement. Just as few would have predicted the technological transformation of the past few years, there will undoubtedly be further advances in the future. Such new technologies will bring new opportunities for communication, employment, education and recreation. As a parish, we wish to have the infrastructure to be able to access and utilise them to the full.

It is, therefore, crucial that Leicester Forest East is able to accommodate and deliver new technology as it arises. The need for further development of high-speed broadband infrastructure to serve Leicester Forest East as technology develops is very important.

POLICY BE4: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE - Proposals to provide improved access to super-fast broadband and improved mobile telecommunications networks that will serve businesses and other properties within the Parish will be supported.

The plan supports mobile telecommunication improvements provided any new structures are sympathetic to the local environment.

5.5 Transport

Life in the parish is dominated by vehicular traffic the main A47 Hinckley Road (Birmingham to Norfolk) runs through the centre on an east to west axis and the M1 Motorway (Leeds to London) bisects the parish in the middle crossing under the A47 close to the Forest Park Public House.

5.5.1 The effect of traffic increasing

At the peak morning and evening rush hour periods, the volume of traffic using the A47 and Ratby Lane to travel into and out of Leicester, results in long tail backs in either direction, as the stationary traffic queues at the traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and other intersecting junctions along the length of the Hinckley Road. Traffic using the M1 Motorway also experiences rush hour build up southbound from north of Junction 21A for the Junction 21 exit onto the Leicester Outer Ring Road A5640 and the M69 Motorway to Coventry and the M6. Progress heading northbound is little better.

The layout and alignment of the A47 Hinckley Road limits its capacity, and the housing development that has occurred over the last fifty years has never addressed the underlying limits of the road capacity.

Over the last the forty years the population of the parish has more than doubled and this trend is likely to continue over the coming years as the Blaby District Council Local Plan (Core Strategy) identifies the need for a significant development programme within the principle urban area.

There is no train service from Leicester Forest East despite plans to have a Nottingham to Leicester line (running on the existing tracks). Traffic volumes are making the bus service increasingly unreliable with services supposed to be running at every 20 minutes, but delays mean two buses can often arrive at the same time giving longer waiting times and uncertainty for passengers.

Different companies provide the bus services and in order to get to the train station a Leicester Forest East resident would have to pay two different fares to 2 different companies, (costing about the same as a taxi).

In recent times, local taxi companies estimates of times to the train station have risen from 20 minutes to 40 minutes at peak times for a travel distance of little over 5 miles.

Air quality levels in some sections of the district continue to exceed the annual air quality objective set by the Government, the area surrounding the M1 Motorway \ A47 Hinckley Road in Leicester Forest East was designated as AQMA 3. Readings at the monitoring stations around this area have at times exceeded

the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide of 40ug/m³. At monitoring station, CM4 on the eastern boundary of the area near the Hinckley Road Post Office the annual mean concentration recorded in 2015-reached 47.9ug/m³

Blaby District Council in their 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report for 2016 noted that 'consideration be given to revising the boundary of the AQMA' and 'surveying the traffic flows at the easternmost extent'. A subsequent 2019 report however suggests emissions are rising in the area.

It is acknowledged that the drive to improve the efficiency of vehicles through the use of hybrid and clean technology may reduce the emissions of nitrogen dioxide and particulates in the longer term. This reduction may be offset by the increased vehicle movements arising from proposed new homes. The eastern section of the Hinckley Road from the Forest Park Public House to the Braunstone crossroads, suffers from the highest concentrations of nitrogen dioxide may be modified to incorporate a dedicated 'city bound' bus lane from the New Lubbesthorpe development. Buses will join the A47 Hinckley Road at a new traffic signalled junction and will cause further congestion and increased nitrogen dioxide emissions.

The Plan focuses on those areas where it can have an influence on the need to travel by car, highway safety and parking provision. In particular, it includes measures to promote new areas for parking and ensure that, where necessary, traffic management measures are provided in connection with new development.

5.5.2 Traffic management

Leicester Forest East Parish Council and local residents are aware of increasing traffic issues within our community. Additional housing, already constructed, under construction and planned, both within Leicester Forest East and in surrounding communities will contribute to making traffic issues worse.

A number of Community Actions are proposed which are described on page 53:

5.5.3 Parking and traffic congestion

Parking at the local shops is an issue, as is getting out onto the A47, whether from houses along the main road or from the side streets.

The lack of off-street car parking continues to be a problem within the Parish; this issue is not just confined to the older housing developments. Parked cars regularly obstruct the pavements on the new Grangewood Manor estate, as some new houses have not been designed to accommodate two-car households, pedestrians have to regularly walk on the highway to pass by these obstructions.

The width of the roads and the shared driveways are also very narrow, access for emergency vehicles are impeded by parked vehicles.

Increased numbers of cars within households will continue as housing costs mean that children are more likely to remain at their parents' home into adulthood.

Partly because of the lack of adequate/reliable public transport each adult in the house usually has a car. This means that the 2 off-road parking space policy is inadequate and should be increased wherever possible.

5.5.4 Electric charging points

As a community dominated in many ways by the car, we are aware that electric vehicles will become increasingly prevalent during the lifetime of our Neighbourhood Plan. This will lead to the fitting of vehicular charging points at homes in the Parish.

We are aware that the fitting of such charging points isn't the policy of the District Council at present, but we wish to encourage their inclusion in the design specification of all new homes.

We are also conscious that this will be an issue for existing homes, especially those without a garage or any off-street parking. We wish to be proactive in finding solutions to this anticipated issue.

5.5.5 Traffic Calming

A range of traffic calming initiatives (not just speed bumps) should be considered both on new roads and on any existing roads being used as the primary access routes for the new developments, as cars are regularly exceeding the speed limit on a number of roads in the parish.

Highway design on any new large-scale developments should incorporate adequate provision for buses to pull into lay-bys to ensure traffic flows are not impeded by stationary vehicles and provided with passenger shelters and real time bus information signage.

5.5.6 Cycle Routes

Similar provision should be made for designated cycle routes within the design of new housing developments; we would like to see the adoption of an integrated cycle strategy to promote the use of sustainable transport in the parish.

The provision of a cycle routes throughout the parish is a priority. A cycle path over the M1 bridge is a specific priority. There is enough room to have a lane on the footpath.

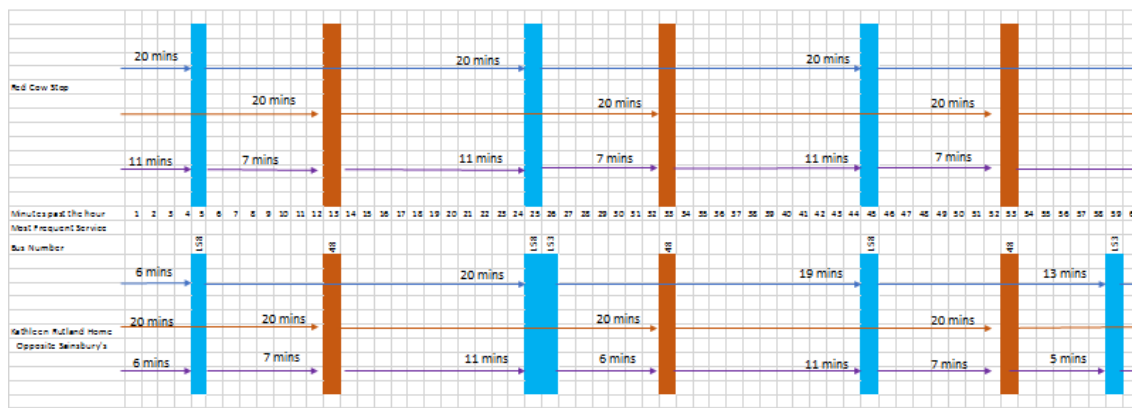
There should be some encouragement of cyclists to use these routes as most still use the pavements.

5.5.7 Public Transport

Most frequent services (Monday to Friday are listed below). There is a poor service after 9:00pm or at the weekends. The buses only go into the ‘centre’ of Leicester, terminating at Jubilee Square, St Margaret’s Bus Station or Charles Street. The out bound buses go to Market Bosworth, Coventry and Nuneaton. There are no direct connections to Leicester Railway Station, East Midlands or Birmingham Airports, Fosse Park Shopping Centre or any of the hospitals - Leicester Royal Infirmary, The General or Glenfield.

Bus	Highest frequency of services			Stop
Arriva 158	XX:05	XX:25	XX:45	Kings Drive
Stagecoach 48	XX:13	XX:33	XX:53	Kings Drive
Arriva 153	XX:26	XX:59		Kings Drive
Park and Ride 103	XX:15	XX:30	XX:45	XX:00

Bus service frequency into Leicester city centre only from the Red Cow and Kathleen Rutland Home bus stops



The graph shows 2 bus stops. The Red Cow with a lower number of services (2) and the stop outside of Kathleen Rutland Home where the Bosworth bus also stops making (3). The wait time is subject to the buses keeping on schedule which they rarely do!

Key
 ———> Stagecoach service
 ———> Arriva Service
 ———> Those lucky enough who can use any bus

During school terms, buses are used to convey school children to and from the local High Schools and 6th form colleges which are outside of the parish. For most people living in the parish, however, the car has become the principal mode of transport, even for some of the shortest journeys. In the absence of regular public transport, the car necessarily provides the principal mode of transport for residents of the Parish.

The existing park and ride facility at the Braunstone Crossroads junction of the A47 is well used by the local community, for commuting into Leicester city centre.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages a reduction in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions through the introduction of measures to reduce the number of journeys made by car. There are actions that can be taken by individuals and by the public and private sectors to support this objective.

Additional bus stops should be provided close to all new housing developments, encouraging the use of public transport.

Policy T1: TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS - Development proposals, where appropriate, will be required to demonstrate that:

- a) The cumulative residual impact on traffic flows on the strategic and local highway network (taking account of proposed mitigation measures) will not be severe; and
- b) Provision is to be made for accessible and efficient public transport routes within or otherwise serving the development; and
- c) Pedestrian and cycle routes are incorporated or improved to serve the development, connecting to existing cycle routes, where necessary and appropriate, to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to shops, employment, schools and community facilities; and which are integrated into wider networks; and
- d) Existing rights of way are retained, or acceptable modifications are provided; and
- e) Adequate parking and manoeuvring space within the development is provided in accordance with the Highway Authority's standards; and
- f) The development will not be occupied unless necessary measures (such as 'travel packs') are in place to encourage new residents to use bus services as an alternative to the private car.

The Community Actions in support of these policies are as follows:

Community Action T1: MOVEABLE VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS (MVAS) – The Community support the Parish Council plans to introduce (MVAS). Initially to be considered on busy estate roads within the parish. The MVAS signs are designed for self-deployment by the Parish Council in order to improve road safety and encourage safer driving speeds. Leicester Forest East Parish Council has installed one MVAS after negotiating with Leicestershire County Council to identify some mutually agreeable sign locations. Further MVAS's will be actively considered.

The activation devices should be moved to a number of different locations in an attempt to educate motorists but to also provide data to the local

police where it is found that driving speed limits are being regularly exceeded in a particular location

Community Action T2: TRAFFIC CALMING - To consider the introduction of additional traffic calming measures. Although not universally appreciated by vehicle drivers, it is acknowledged that additional traffic calming measures such as speed humps, speed bumps, speed cushions or speed tables may need to be considered in some parts of the parish, particularly if vehicle activation signage does not result in speed limits being observed by motorists.

Community Action T3: REVIEW OF MAJOR JUNCTIONS - Recommend a review of major junctions on the A47 within Leicester Forest East to make it easier to access the main A47 from side roads.

The Parish Council have previously made representation to Leicestershire County Council with a view to several junction's that are already being served by traffic lights, being made 'yellow box' junctions. The aim of this action would be to prohibit queueing cars on the A47 from blocking junctions onto the A47 and thereby allowing the traffic light system to work effectively. This would have the effect of making it possible for vehicles to enter the A47 from the various side roads within the parish and equally leave the A47 and gain access to the side roads.

The parish council would hope that vehicles driving along the A47 would respect the yellow box junctions and that residents accessing the A47 in a vehicle would also respect the yellow box junctions. The introduction of yellow box junctions will continue to be pursued by the parish council and if introduced its success / further actions required will be monitored and discussed with local police and the county council.

Community Action T4: CYCLE ROUTES - The provision of cycle routes to be actively pursued.

Community Action T5: BUS SERVICE CO-ORDINATION - The parish council to lobby Leicestershire and Leicester City councils to get bus tickets accepted by all companies so that the customers can use any bus during the ticket period. This would make the buses easier to use and help with congestion.

6. Monitoring and Review

The Neighbourhood Plan will last until 2029. During this time, it is likely that the circumstances which the Plan seeks to address will change.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be regularly monitored. This will be led by Leicester Forest East Parish Council on at least an annual basis. The policies and measures contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will form the core of the monitoring activity, but other data collected and reported at the Parish level relevant to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be included.

The Parish Council proposes to formally review the Neighbourhood Plan in 2022, or to coincide with the review of the Blaby Local Plan if this cycle is different.

Appendix – Community facilities and amenities in Leicester Forest East

Sports Facilities

Leicester Forest East has limited sports facilities though Forest East Park at Kings Drive is used by Epworth Junior Football Club. Forest East Park and Kings Walk Park have outside gym equipment as well as a children's' play area.

The cricket, rugby, tennis and archery clubs are located on the north side of the A47 corridor, heading west, providing large green spaces and an open vista to the north of the county. The facilities are in the parish of Kirby Muxloe but on the boundary with Leicester Forest East. This setting is under threat as it is identified as a housing allocation through the Blaby District Council Local Plan Delivery DPD.

Churches & Places of Worship

St. Andrews is the main Anglican Parish Church and is in an ecumenical partnership between the Anglican and Methodist churches, being a member church of the Anglican Deanery of Sparkenhoe East and the Leicester West Methodist Circuit. The church building is a large modern construction consisting of a church, and adjoining church hall. The church dates back to the mid-1960's and is surrounded by grass and mature trees, together with extensive off-road car parking. The church has a growing congregation and all the facilities are extensively used by the local community for playgroups, dance groups, parties, local businesses and many other activities.

Within the grounds of the church the local Cub and Scout Group meet in a purpose-built hut, whilst active Rainbows, Brownies and Guide packs meet in the church.

Also, within the community of Leicester Forest East there is Beacon Life Church, Charnwood Drive and the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness Assembly, serving the wider community of West Leicester.

Cemetery

Leicester Forest East is dependent on the Kirby Muxloe cemetery for interment and has no local facilities. A decision by Kirby Muxloe Parish Council was taken to restrict usage of the cemetery to Kirby Muxloe resident only, leaving Leicester Forest East with no facilities. A new Cemetery is planned at Enderby which it is hoped will be accessible to other local parishes including Leicester Forest East.

A Community Action (see page 44) has been introduced to help address this.

Library

After consultation with L.C.C. regarding local library closures, Leicester Forest East Community Library was opened in December 2015. Staffed entirely by volunteers, the library is currently receiving part funding from L.C.C. The target is to be self-financing (possibly with some parish council assistance) from 2022.

In addition to the usual library services, it also runs a small café and many community groups meet at the venue including the local Women's, activities for children. There are also regular social events. The library also maintains close links with Stafford Leys School. There are plans for it to become a community hub, addressing issues of social isolation through its work.

Parish Hall

In 1986 when Leicester Forest East Parish Council was formed. The building now known as 'The Parish Hall' consisted of a couple of changing rooms for those who played football and cricket on the playing fields at the rear of the hall. The Parish Council used to hold their parish council meetings in these changing rooms until the early 1990's when the large hall, kitchen and toilets were added to the facilities. This allowed the parish council to hold their monthly meetings in the large hall and also for local groups/clubs/associations to hire the hall for their meetings too.

In 2000 the Committee Room and store room were added; the Parish Council meetings were then held in the Committee Room which allowed the large hall to be used for other community events on these dates.

In 2014 the hall was extended to what it is today, a modern, up to date venue for all types of functions.

Schools

Leicester Forest East has 2 schools situated either side of the motorway with the motorway historically determining the catchment area.

Fossebrook School – Holmfield Avenue

Fossebrook Primary school opened in Sept 2016, on the site of the old Holmfield Primary school (closed in 2010). It is part of the Discovery Schools Academy Trust. It is a one-form entry 210 pupil place school, providing education from EYFS to Y6. There is a plan to increase capacity to a two-form entry school should the demand for pupil places increase.

Fossebrook is part of the Braunstone catchment. As a school they currently prioritise siblings over catchment when the oversubscription criteria are applied. They are anticipating in the short term there may be some applications from

families from the new Lubbethorpe development. In the long term, however, the Lubbethorpe development will include its own primary school.

The existence of the school has helped parents and children feel part of their local community again and local relationships are developing. They aim to be a strong part of the community and are keen to develop their involvement. The school currently offers holiday clubs for all children in the area, and events run by the Parent and Teacher Association.

Stafford Leys Primary School

Stafford Leys Primary School has just celebrated its 50th Anniversary and is now an Academy providing education for year groups EYFS to Year 6 with a 3-form entry. The school is currently at capacity with over 600 pupils on roll. The classrooms have been improved and expanded in recent years but the communal facilities such as the halls and kitchens are already too small, whole school assemblies are not possible and some children have to eat their lunch in the sports hall. It has a good-sized playground and sports field, which must not be sold off or used for building.

The school is an integral part of the community and a variety of clubs and groups use the facilities out of school hours e.g. judo, bridge, wine circle, gardening and exercise clubs. There is an independently run pre-school group on site in the mornings and also a before and after school group.

There is no scope to increase the catchment area as the school is already at capacity but the new headteacher and governing body are keen to continue the school's involvement with the local community.

This plan notes and supports the school's policy to resist further expansion, and to protect the existing school playing field. The New Lubbethorpe development has plans for 2 primary and a secondary school to take the expected influx of new pupils for that development. Leicester Forest East Parish Council will take action to make sure that these schools are built as per the Lubbethorpe planning conditions.

Care Homes

There are two care homes: Vista's Kathleen Rutland Home supports vision impaired persons and persons with dementia. Kirby House provides care and assisted living for those who are of older years and/or require medical and other assistance.

Post Office

Situated on Holmfield Avenue West, the Post Office serves the local community offering a wide range of services. Also situated inside is small counter offers hot

and cold foods. The Post Office is a very useful service and a focal point for the older people and is used by many people outside of the Parish.

In the recent Neighbourhood Plan survey of local businesses, the current post office management felt that they are very much a part of the community and hope that, as the population increases, they will be able to grow and expand their business. The management is concerned about the lack of street lighting after midnight when young people are potentially still around the front of the store unseen.

Shopping

Most of the retail shops are situated along the A47 corridor but there are services provided within the local housing areas.

Co-Operative Store - The co-operative feel that they are a part of the community and, from the perspective of increased business, look forward to a larger population. There are some issues concerning customer parking.

Hayres Convenience Store - This store too feels that its business is viable in the current circumstances. They are also concerned about the lack of street lighting throughout the night and the increased incidence of shoplifting.

The Grange Bakery / Deli - This local business feels part of the Leicester Forest East Community and plans to expand its outside catering provision. They cater mostly for passing trade in the week and more local customers at the weekends. Their main concerns are street lighting going out at midnight which contributes to teenagers breaking benches and windows, and young people smoking marijuana outside the shop.

Sainsburys Local - The shop is committed to the area but has no plans to expand as there is no place for expansion. The management feel that external lighting would help to reduce vandalism and more policing is needed. The store has a slight issue with shop lifting.

A new Tesco store - The impact of this store (which opened in May 2020) on local shops is, as yet, unknown.

Fish and Chip Co – takeaway. (these premises were once a hardware shop). The business sees real possibilities for expansion. However, they too are concerned by the lack of late night street lighting.

Lloyds Pharmacy - The pharmacy also feels a valued part of the community. They are concerned by an increase in the incidence of shoplifting and wish to see a greater police presence in the Parish.

Premier Convenience Store – Forest House Lane - This store feels a part of the community but cannot expand the shop on its current site. They seek more policing and better street lighting to prevent shoplifting and teenagers urinating outside the shop.

Hairdressers

Vanity Fair.

The business is certainly viable long term - business is booming. They absolutely see expansion and growth considering the large growth in housing and very much feel part of the Leicester Forest East community.

Candy Heads

The business is currently doing very well and growth in customers very much anticipated. They feel a (necessary) part of the community. The business is very frustrated about the traffic - customers trying to turn right when going to or leaving the shop can have very long delays.

Veterinary

Bell Brown and Bentley Vets – Hinckley Road. A very busy practice with purpose-built premises on Hinckley Road, It employs 8 people.

Currently they can just cope with the number of patients and may well have to expand premises and surgery times to cope with the increased demand from the expansion of Leicester Forest East / Lubbethorpe and surrounding areas.

The biggest challenges to the practice are recruiting staff (a problem throughout the profession) and car parking which is becoming a problem at peak times (concentrated between 9-10.30 am and 4-7pm). A possible solution is to open for longer hours to spread the load.

Medical Centres

Leicester Forest East has two medical centres, Forest House Medical Centre – Park Drive and Warren Lane. Below is their response to the questions they were asked through the community consultation process. Currently the number of patients is continuing to increase.

	Park Drive Branch	Warren Lane Branch
Can you cope with the current number of patients?	Yes	Yes
What area do you cover?	Leicester Forest East, Ratby, Kirby Muxloe, Thorpe Astley	Thorpe Astley, Ratby, Leicester Forest East
What are your thoughts on the expansion in Leicester Forest East and handling increased number of patients?	The surgery will not cope with an increased number of patients	Plans are in place to allow the surgery to handle the increase in patients
Are you anticipating expanding as a practice	Not sure	Yes

Dental Surgery

1. Care Dental Surgery (private) is located on Warren Lane
2. Many residents use a local dental practice, whilst located within the same building as the Forest House Medical Centre, is not within Leicester Forest East Parish. The surgery is currently open to NHS patients as well as private.

Opticians

The parish is well served by Henry Smith and Hamilton, Opticians on Park Drive, which is still a family run business with a small number of branches in the county. They believe they are meeting the needs of the community and those from further afield who have remained as customers over many years. They feel a part of the community and know many of the residents as relationships have built over the years.

The Lubbethorpe development can be seen as a positive in terms of business but also brings commensurate problems such as traffic, pollution and lack of parking outside.

Motor Trade

Braunstone Crossroads Motors (Trading as Prestige Car Sales) – Hinckley Road

The garage is one of two garages owned by the same company selling cars in Leicester. The Leicester Forest East site also does servicing and MOT's. The customers are from all over the country including London. They have been in Leicester Forest East for 8 years and feel that there is a future for them here but they could locate elsewhere if they needed to expand. Parking can be an issue.

The biggest challenges to the garage are the access to get onto the site (cars keep blocking the keep clear markings on the Hinckley Road outside the entrance while they are waiting for the lights to change) and the inability to expand the site. They do not feel a part of the community but use the Co-op opposite for lunch as well as the Red Cow in the evening. Use of the Post Office has declined as car registration and taxation is now completed on-line. The expansion of Leicester Forest East and surrounding area may bring more customers but the increased congestion and pollution (including dust from the building lorries) means that the stock need cleaning more often. They are lucky that they have only one incident of vandalism in the past 3 years and no anti-social behaviour.

Pub / Restaurant / Hotel

Leicester Forest East has only one public house / restaurant, The Forest Park Inn, situated on the A47 close to where it crosses the M1. Within the grounds is a Premier Inn Hotel.

Many residents and visitors venture to the Red Cow Public House / Restaurant, though sited on the A47, is within Kirby Muxloe Parish. The pub landlords and most residents also think that the pub is in Leicester Forest East. Quote from the Vintage Inns Web Site – “Welcome to The Red Cow in Leicester Forest East. The Red Cow started out in the 1650's as a very small inn in a row of cottages in a village near Leicester.” The Pub also has an LE3 post code.

Green Spaces, Footpaths & Dog Walking

Leicester Forest East has a large green area at Forest East Park, Kings Drive, which is used for football, dog walking, playing spaces, learning to ride bikes and cricket. The main Forest East Park has been used for summer galas. Also, within the parish are Kings Walk Park and the Spinney. These areas are vital as the green space is being drastically reduced around Leicester Forest East by the New Lubbethorpe and other developments as shown below.

As the new developments such as New Lubbethorpe and the Forest Chase, Taylor Wimpey are completed there is less countryside available to be enjoyed by the residents making the existing green spaces even more precious and valuable.

There are many dog owners in the parish. They use the facilities in the Leicester Forest park fields and the surrounding footpaths from Leicester Forest East to Enderby. These fields are also used daily by residents of Kirby Muxloe and Braunstone Town.

Footpaths are crucial for connectivity and communication within the parish, health and recreation. They also form a part of our desire to reduce the carbon footprint of our parish by, in this case, reducing the number of journeys made by motorised vehicles. Access to many of the footpaths that are in the Leicester Forest East

Parish were blocked by the New Lubbethorpe development restricting the ability of the dog walkers to take their dogs on longer walks. Most have now been re-opened but this increases the importance of the existing footpath network being retained, maintained, made safe and, where possible, enhanced and extended.