

GREEN SPACES IN LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE: LOCAL GREEN SPACES TOOLKIT AND EXISTING POLICY CONTEXT

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Introduction

Green spaces are a vital part of a vibrant and healthy community. The Leicestershire Together Priority Outcome Framework and the One Leicester Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy recognise the value that Green Spaces can have on the lives of people in the County and the City respectively and the value communities place upon them. This document is designed to support local communities and councils in making decisions about the future protection and use of existing green spaces. It does this by providing advice and support to those wishing to designate green spaces valued by local communities; and by bringing together into one document key policies and designations that exist. More localised policies will also be put in place by individual local planning authorities through their plans and guidance, details of which can be found through their websites (see Appendix 1).

Following its election in 2010 the Coalition Government declared its intention to give local communities the power to designate green spaces valued by local people. The nine local authorities across Leicester and Leicestershire agreed to work together to support communities in applying the new designation. The fruit of this collaboration forms the first part of this document which takes the form of a toolkit which will support local communities and councils wishing to identify and protect valued green spaces through local and neighbourhood plans in line with the Government's proposed new designation.

The nine councils have for many years worked together with other partners to identify, maintain and enhance green spaces of value. As a result there already exists a robust set of policies and designations to protect different types of green space. These are collated in the second part of the document which brings together in one place the evidence, approaches, designations and policies that relate to green spaces in the sub-region. It includes information about protective designations already in place and is designed to raise awareness amongst local communities of the existence, purpose and implications of these.

Part 1 – Local Green Spaces Designation: Toolkit for Communities

The Government is introducing a new type of designation, the Local Green Space designation that will allow communities to identify and protect small areas of land that are of true value to the local community. These will be identified and designated through Local and Neighbourhood Plans to ensure they are considered in the context of other possible land uses and community needs.

Local Plans are produced by the Local Planning Authority, which will be the relevant Borough, District or City Council (see map at appendix 1 for the detail of your local planning authority). These Local Plans (previously called Local Development Frameworks or Core Strategies) will include a vision and overarching priorities for the area for the next 15 to 20 years and set out appropriate policies to guide the use of land and infrastructure to achieve this.

On a smaller scale, the Neighbourhood Plans do the same thing. These will typically be led by a Parish or Town Council or a Neighbourhood Forum in non-parished areas. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to be approved by the Local Planning Authority and by the community it covers and must be consistent with the overarching priorities and policies of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will take precedence over Local Plan policies on issues of a non-strategic, local nature.

This section of the document sets out a guide, or toolkit, to support communities and organisations through the process of identifying and designating valued green spaces in Local and Neighbourhood Plans taking account of Local Green Space designation criteria.

Resources:

CLG's An Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1985896.pdf>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

1.1 The Local Green Spaces Designation

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a Government document that sets out how the planning system will operate across the country. The NPPF is the key national planning document containing policies that Local and Neighbourhood Plans will need to take account of. In these policies it proposes a new designation to protect local green areas of particular importance to local communities.

“Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts”

(Paragraph 78-78, NPPF)

1.2 Local Green Spaces in Leicester and Leicestershire

There is already a wealth of evidence available on green spaces in Leicester and Leicestershire (see part two) and this should be used as a starting point in identifying and considering the designation of the green spaces in your area.

Community Need

An important consideration when exploring the local green space is the quantity and quality of green spaces in your area. Although not identified in the NPPF as a criterion for Local Green Space designation, the NPPF does highlight the importance of access to green spaces and the evidence of a deficit or surplus as an important consideration in any Local and Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF states:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities

in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.”

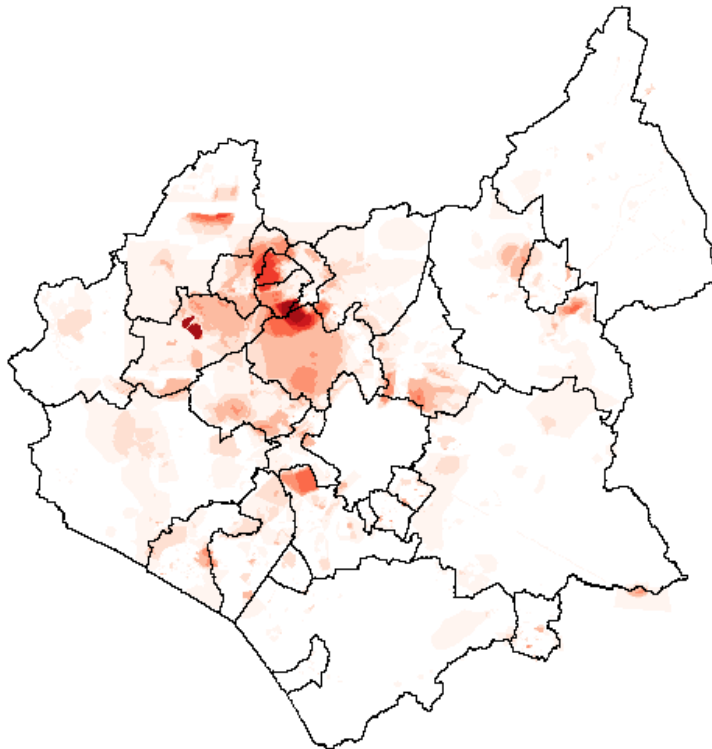
See your Local Planning Authority website for further details. Find your Local Planning Authority with the Map and Contact details at Appendix 1.

Community Value

Local and Neighbourhood Plans will also need to take account of community views about the value of green spaces. Local people value green spaces for a wide range of reasons, including for their landscape, nature, recreation and community attributes. Leicestershire County Council recently carried out an engagement exercise with communities across the county to understand which green spaces they value. The exercise was undertaken at each of the 27 Community Forums and through an innovative online tool. In total 3,114 green spaces were identified through nearly 2,000 representations.

The findings of the engagement exercise are set out in 27 detailed reports for each community Forum area, and are summarised in a countywide Green Spaces Consultation Report. The intensity map below shows a broad overview of the green spaces identified across the county. The intensity of colour corresponds to the number of times a green space was identified. Although a useful means of identifying areas of particular importance to respondents, the views described here are not necessarily representative of the population as a whole and therefore should not be interpreted as the only green spaces of importance within the County.

Leicestershire Intensity Map



The Local Green Space designation criteria make clear that community value must be attributed to a green space for it to be considered for designation. Local communities and councils will wish to draw on a variety of sources of evidence about valued green spaces. In the County the findings of the County Council's engagement exercise, available at www.lsr-online.org/greenspaces, will form part of this evidence base.

1.3 Community Designation Toolkit

The key part of the toolkit is a methodology, in the form of the 'decision tree' attached as Appendix 2, which sets out a decision-making process for deciding whether a particular green space can be designated as a Local Green Space. The process can also help decide whether other designations are appropriate if the green space does not meet the Local Green Space criteria.

Local Green Spaces Criteria

The Local Green Space designation will be determined locally by the Local Planning Authority through the preparation of its Local Plan and by Parish/ Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum through the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan.

The NPPF sets out the principles for the Local Green Space designation, including key criteria, and it will be for those preparing Local and Neighbourhood Plans to interpret these for their own area.

The Government has set 3 criteria that your green space will need to meet to be considered as a Local Green Space.

1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves

The NPPF does not prescribe what 'reasonably close proximity' means. It will be for Local Planning Authorities and local communities to decide how this will be applied in their area. There are a number of ways in which this could be applied and it will be necessary to justify the relationship the green space has with the community it serves. It may vary depending on the size of the community the green space relates to or 'serves' or vary depending on the size of the green space or the value placed upon it by the community.

A common sense approach to the criteria will need to be taken. It is clear that the Government does not intend green spaces which are isolated or distant from communities to be designated.

Section 2.8 of the Leicestershire County Council Green Spaces Consultation Report and the individual Community Forum Reports include analysis of the proximity of valued green spaces to centres of population.

2. Demonstrably Special to a Local Community

It is proposed in the NPPF that to be considered for designation as a Local Green Space it should be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance; for example because of its:

- beauty;
- historic significance;
- recreational value;
- tranquillity; or
- richness of wildlife.

The proposed designation should be a means of protecting parcels of land which do not fall under existing statutory designations or protective ownership and which for various reasons will not meet the criteria for doing so. The emphasis is on green spaces that are inclusive and benefit the wider community, rather than those which are only visible or accessible to a minority. Therefore, land covered by the following statutory designations would not be included, as there already exists a legislative and policy framework to protect them:

- SSSIs;

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/information_for/sssi_owners_and_occupiers/default.aspx

- National Nature Reserves;
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nr/default.aspx>
- Historic Parks and Battlefields;
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/registered-parks-and-gardens/>
- Town and Village Greens;
- Registered Commons;
Information available by inspection at County Hall during normal office hours (9am - 5pm Monday - Friday)
- Local Nature Reserves;
- Land under Protective Ownership (e.g. National Trust, Woodland Trust, etc).

It should also be noted that the Government has recently consulted on changes to legislation relating to the registration of new village greens. It is anticipated that where pockets of land would not meet the proposed new criteria for village green registration, designation as Local Green Space would be an alternative approach.

See the Leicestershire County Council Green Spaces Consultation Report and individual Community Forum Reports for evidence of green spaces valued by local communities. Some of the sites may be protected by the designations listed above and this will need to be taken into account when considering designation.

3. Local in Character, not an Extensive Tract of Land

The NPPF states a designated Local Green Space should be “local in character” and “not an extensive tract of land”, in other words it should be small rather than large. The NPPF does not set out what a small or large area of land is defined as, so it will be for Local Planning Authorities and local communities to decide what this will mean for their area.

It is however likely that the following types of green space (in their entirety) would be excluded from the Local Green Space designation, although smaller parts could be included if they fulfilled relevant criteria:

- Charnwood Forest;
- National Forest;
- Strategic River Corridors (including the Trent, the Soar and the Ashby Canal etc);

- Large Green Wedges

The sort of area that could be designated as Local Green Space in Leicester and Leicestershire could therefore include:

- Some of the areas of importance to local communities identified through public consultation;
- Areas of Importance to the Form and Character of Settlements;
- Formal or informal sports and playing fields (if not already covered by an appropriate designation);
- Previously developed sites that now act as green or open spaces.

See section 2.7 of the Leicestershire County Council Green Spaces Consultation Report and the individual Community Forum Reports for analysis of the size of valued green spaces.

www.lsr-online.org/greenspaces

1.4 Land Ownership

Land ownership is an important consideration in designating Local Green Spaces. To be designated as a Local Green Space, the land does not need to be in the ownership of the designating body, i.e. the Parish Council / Neighbourhood Forum or Local Authority does not have to be the landowner. As with other site specific allocations in Plans the owners of sites should be involved from an early stage to ensure the owner's support for the designation. This is to make sure that the designation is viable. As a minimum a Local Authority should contact the land owner of the potential Local Green Space Designation to receive support for the designation.

As Local Green Spaces will be designated through Local and Neighbourhood Plans full consultation on any proposals will be required. Where landownership is unknown, this will provide landowners and other interested parties with the opportunity to express their views on potential designations, as with other types of allocation.

The Localism Act introduces a Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value) which aims to ensure that buildings and amenities can be kept in public use and remain an integral part of community life. It may be possible for communities to nominate green spaces they value to be registered as a community asset and therefore eligible for Community Right to Bid. The regulations detailing this process are expected from Government shortly, further details can be found through the weblink below.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityrights/righttobid/>

1.5 Next Steps

Although individual Local Planning Authorities are responsible for applying the Government's Green Spaces criteria through Local and Neighbourhood Plans, the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Authorities have agreed to progress this document to develop a consistent guidance and advice. As lessons are learnt and best practice emerges the document will be reviewed to provide additional support in identifying, evidencing and proposing Local Green Spaces for designation to help shape a consistent approach.

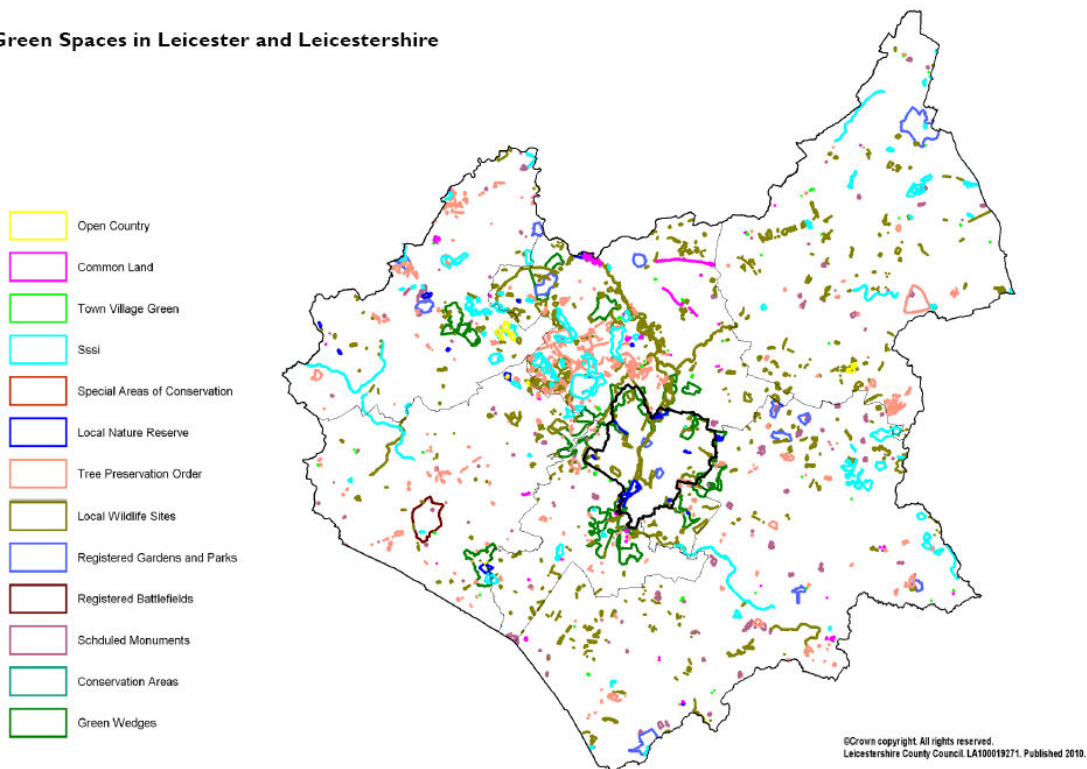
Part 2 - Leicester and Leicestershire Green Spaces Policy Approaches

Part two of this document shows the wide range of approaches, designations and protections that already apply to green spaces in Leicester and Leicestershire. It captures only part of the picture with many other green spaces used and maintained in less formal arrangements and on varying scales.

The local authorities of Leicester and Leicestershire have been working together with other partners to identify, protect and enhance green spaces of value for many years. Some of this evidence, these approaches and designations are set out in part 2 of this document.

The map below shows some of the key designations across Leicester and Leicestershire. These protective designations are in place as the land has a particular value or attribute that is deemed to be worthy of protection. As such these designations significantly reduce the likelihood of the land being allocated for built land uses.

Green Spaces in Leicester and Leicestershire



2.1 Leicestershire Together and One Leicester Sustainable Community Strategies

The Local Strategic Partnerships that cover Leicester (One Leicester) and Leicestershire (Leicestershire Together) bring together all of the organisations and partnerships that deliver public services in their areas. Each Local Strategic Partnership has produced a priority outcome framework, which sets out an agreed set of priorities which partners will work together to achieve. Both Local Strategic Partnerships recognise the importance of green spaces to the communities they represent. Although the value of green spaces will be important to a wide range of these priorities the most directly relevant are identified below.

Of the 28 key priorities identified in the Leicestershire Together Priority Outcome Framework, the following is most directly linked to green spaces:

Outcome 16: People have better access to and enjoy, value and engage with our environment and valued green spaces

- An improved multifunctional green infrastructure network linking urban and rural areas
- Improved access to our natural environment, where possible by walking and cycling
- Improved education which enables people to understand, enjoy and value the county's historical and natural environments
- More volunteering opportunities to support the maintenance and promotion of Leicestershire's natural and historical environments, especially with children and young people.

For further details on the priorities visit the Leicestershire Together website, www.leicestershiretogether.org/index.htm

One Leicester Sustainable Community Strategy identifies 7 main levers for change with priorities and actions to deliver each. The following priority in the section 'Planning for people not cars' relates to green spaces:

2. Greening the city: Trees are the lungs of Leicester. They also improve the feel of a city. So we will plant at least 10,000 more trees across the city, creating tree-lined streets, small forests and green spaces. Some of these will line new walking and cycling routes, whilst others will be used to create new spaces for people to meet and play and new 'wild spaces' where wildlife thrives.

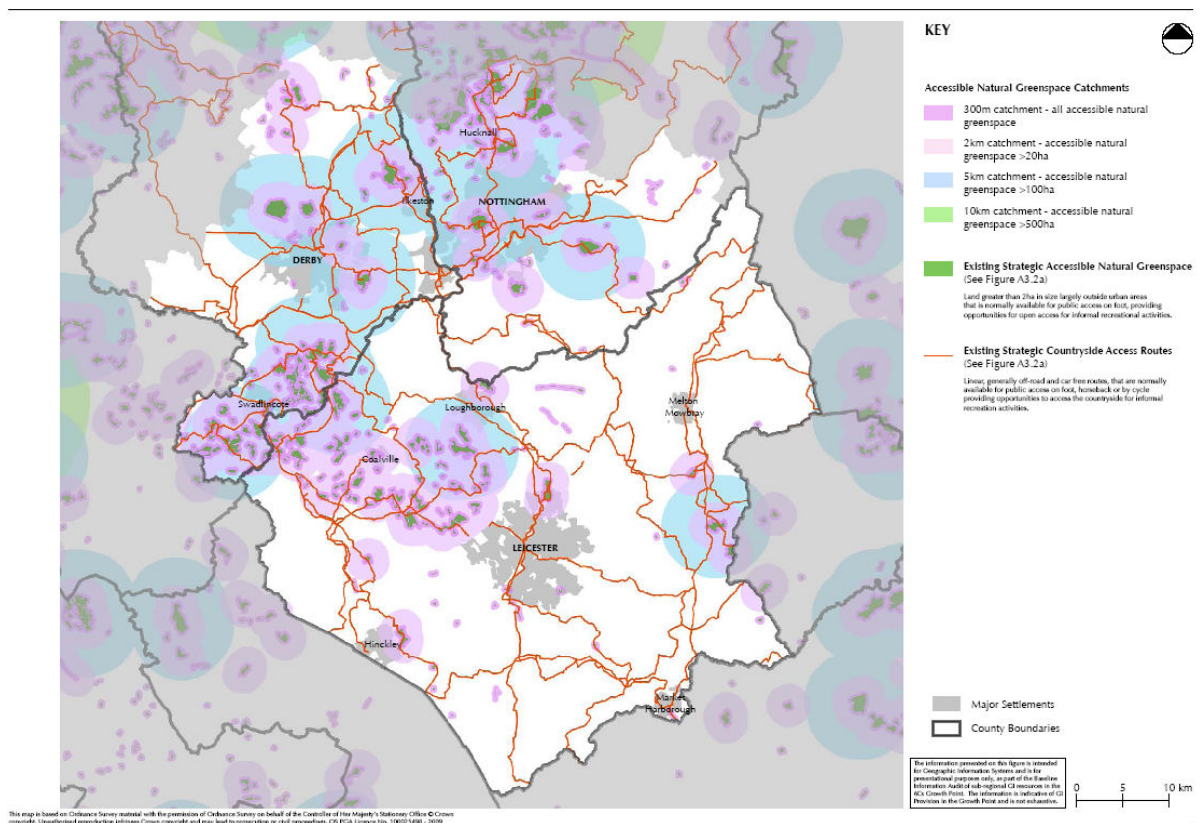
For further details on the priorities visit the One Leicester website, <http://www.oneleicester.com/leicester-partnership/>

2.2 6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategy

The 6Cs Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy was commissioned as part of the New Growth Point work jointly undertaken across Leicestershire/Leicester City, Derby City and South Derbyshire and Nottingham City/ Southern Nottinghamshire. Its aim was to establish a strategic level GI framework within which both higher and more local level GI works could be planned and developed. It was formally launched in 2010 and the baseline data it provides along with the strategic level targeting has been utilised by local authorities as they have developed their own core strategies.

It identifies areas of Green Infrastructure, which are of strategic importance, like Charnwood Forest and the River Wreake valley and also, through an analysis of a wide range of criteria, highlights those areas where investment in GI can bring multiple benefits.

<http://www.emgin.co.uk/default.asp?PageID=192&n=Strategy+286C+Strategy29>



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 Project 11100001 - 6Cs Strategy (2008) Project 11100004 - Access 11100002_Eng3-2b_Acc-Range_A3.mxd
 CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
 www.cba.uk.net

6Cs GROWTH POINT GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY
 Stage 1: Baseline Information Review & Strategic GI Audit



Figure A3.2b
 Access & Recreation - Existing Strategic Assets:
 Accessible Natural Greenspace Catchments

June 2009

2.3 National Forest Strategy

The National Forest covers 200 square miles of central England. Although the majority of it falls within Leicestershire, the Forest extends into parts of Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

In Leicestershire it extends from Groby westwards up to the county boundary and in doing so takes in the northern part of Hinckley & Bosworth's administrative area, the western part of Charnwood Borough Council's area and the majority of North West Leicestershire.

It was originally conceived by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) in 1987, as a project set in Middle England to demonstrate the many benefits which trees and woodlands can bring. The National Forest Company itself was established in 1995.

Its work is guided by The National Forest Strategy 2004-2014. As an aid to implementing the strategy, The National Forest Company is able to provide a range of grants to encourage private, public and voluntary sector landowners to undertake not only tree planting but also improve bio-diversity, public access and site interpretation.

Since its establishment, woodland cover within the Forest has increased from 6% to 18%. In association with this there has been a substantial increase in permissive footpaths and bridleways and large areas of once derelict land have been restored. Both within Leicestershire and also at a national level, the Forest is a leading example of the benefits investment in green infrastructure can bring.

<http://www.nationalforest.org/>

2.4 Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy

Originally produced in 2001 and then revised on 2006 this strategy has been adopted by all of the local authorities across Leicestershire and Rutland. It serves two purposes; firstly it complements the national level landscape characterisation work undertaken by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and secondly it examines ways in which woodland cover across the two counties can be increased.

It divides Leicestershire and Rutland into 18 landscape character areas and provides written descriptions of each and also identifies "issues" relating to them like "loss of hedges and hedgerow trees". The Strategy sets out objectives and guidelines for maintaining and enhancing each of the landscape character areas.

Individual District Councils either have or are in the process of undertaking their own district level landscape characterisation studies as part of their Local Development Framework documentation.

http://website/landscape_woodland_strategy_feb_2001_addendum_feb_2006.pdf

2.5 Charnwood Regional Park

For many decades there have been discussions over whether or not the Charnwood Forest is worthy of gaining a national landscape designation – such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Although ultimately no such designation was awarded, in recognition of its landscape, biological, geological and tourism value the East Midlands Regional Plan proposed that the Forest be designated as a Regional Park as a means of protecting and enhancing its special character.

This approach was adopted by all of the local authorities covering Charnwood Forest in 2007 and since then, through the combined work of a steering group supported by an extensive range of stakeholders, a vision statement has been developed and agreed for the area. Early in 2012 it is planned that a new steering group will be formed to lead on the implementation of the vision.

http://website/index/environment/countryside/environment_management/treeswodland/charnwood_forest.htm

2.6 Stepping Stones Strategy

The Stepping Stones Project was established in 1992 to help deal with the pressures on the landscape within the “urban Fringe” of Leicester. In 2007 in response to the increasing development pressures being faced within the parishes surrounding Leicester City the Project area was expanded to cover 62 parishes.

The Project is a partnership between the County Council, Charnwood, Hinckley & Bosworth and Oadby & Wigston Borough Councils and Blaby and Harborough District Councils. Its principal role is to act as the ‘green infrastructure facilitator’ for the Central Leicestershire Area, shown in the map below. It achieves this via the following routes: Facilitator; Partnership liaison/enabler; Advocate and Champion; Grant Distributor; Funding support; and Project Management and Review.

Stepping Stones Central Leicestershire Area



The Project has also produced management plans for the following Green Wedges: Scraptoft; Rothley Brook valley; Soar/Sence; Oadby and Thurnby.

http://website/index/environment/countryside/environment_management/stepping_stones/stepping_stones_project.htm

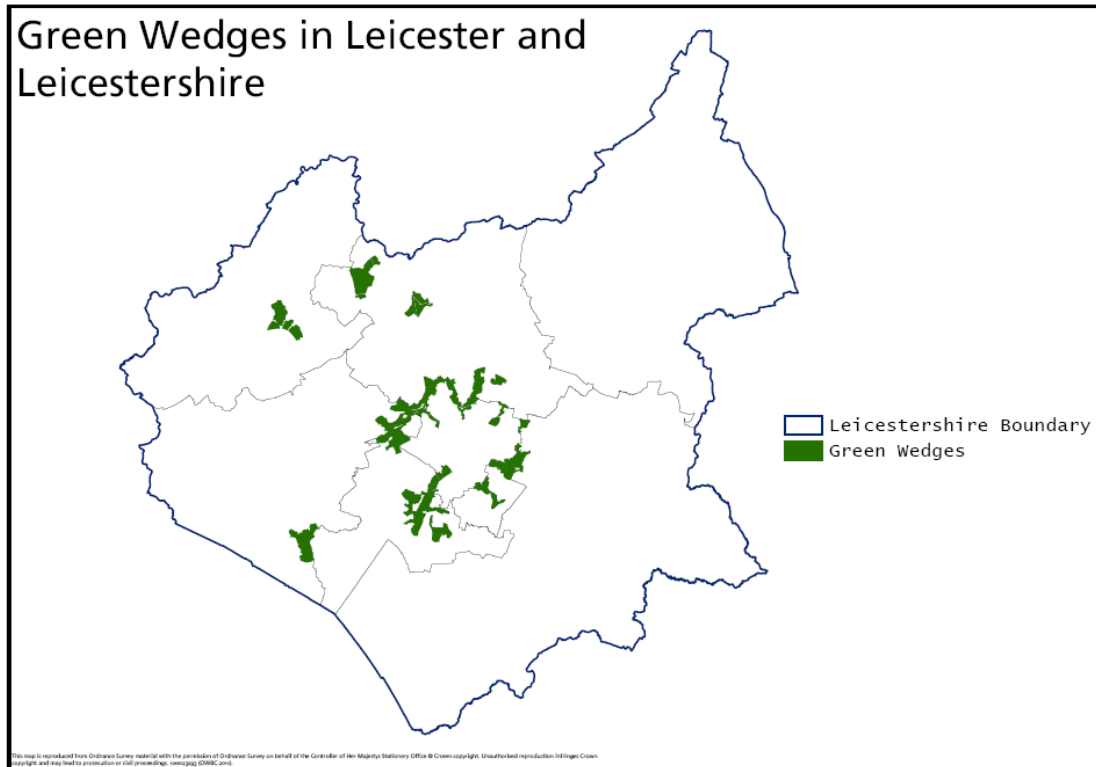
2.7 Green Wedges

Green Wedges have been an established part of Leicester and Leicestershire planning policy for many years. Originally defined through the Leicestershire Structure Plan (1987) they continue to provide structurally important areas of open land that influence the form and direction of urban development. More recently the principle and value of Green Wedges was carried forward into the 2009 East Midlands Regional Plan.

The Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities remain committed to the principle of Green Wedges and acknowledge the vital roles they play. Many authorities in Leicestershire have cross boundary Green Wedges (as shown in the map below), so a joint methodology was agreed in July 2011, which can be used when/if each individual local authority carries out their Green Wedge Review. Having a consistent approach to such a review across the sub-region is considered vital to ensure the soundness of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

This Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology has been agreed by the following six local authorities of Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Leicester,

North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston, which form part of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area. Blaby District Council and Melton Borough Council are also part of the Housing Market Area but are not partners to the joint methodology. Melton Borough Council does not have a Green Wedge within its administrative boundary.



When assessing a Green Wedge (on a macro scale) in its entirety, or when identifying a new green wedge; a green wedge should achieve all of the evaluation criteria, or be capable of fulfilling all criteria in the future. The criteria that need to be met are:

- Preventing the merging of settlements
- Guiding Development Form
- Providing a Green Lung into urban areas
- Acting as a recreational resource

Local Planning Authorities will review their Green Wedge boundaries as part of the preparation of their Local Plans.

The 2011 Green Wedge Joint Methodology can be viewed through the following link:

http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/green_wedge_review_joint_methodology/Green%20Wedge%20Review%20Joint%20Methodology%20Final.pdf

2.8 Strategic River Corridors

The Strategic River Corridors project aims to bring a holistic approach to the management and enhancement of the natural, cultural and historic environment of the region's strategic river corridors and their regeneration and economic development to the benefit of people, wildlife, landscape, townscape and the management of flood risk.

The project seeks to protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of the Region's strategic river corridors comprising the Nene, Trent, Soar, Welland, Witham, Derwent and Dove, along with their tributaries. Actions of agencies and other bodies including those of adjoining Regions should be co-ordinated to maintain and enhance the multi-functional importance of strategic river corridors for wildlife, landscape and townscape, regeneration and economic diversification, education, recreation and managing flood risk.

The Strategic River Corridors approach has been developed in Local Plans in Leicestershire and the rivers highlighted in bold above, along with their tributaries, have been incorporated in Local Plans.

2.9 Local Planning Authority Green Infrastructure Strategies and Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Studies

A number of local authorities have Green Infrastructure Strategies. Green infrastructure can be considered as an organising framework for integrating physical resources and natural systems with ecological, geological and historical assets. Green Infrastructure Strategies can help to integrate socio-economic and environmental evidence with emerging policies on environmental protection. Urban development is central in considering needs and opportunities for protecting, enhancing and extending green areas.

Local authorities are required to produce an Open Space, Sport and Recreational Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17). The key attributes of a local assessment should include accessibility, quality, multi-functionality, primary purpose and quantity of green space. The National Planning Policy Framework has retained the need to carry out these local assessments.

See Appendix 1 for details of your Local Planning Authority website where such studies would be available.

2.10 Access to Open Land (Countryside and Rights of Way Act)

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) new statutory provisions created new Open Access sites that allow people to walk freely in the designated areas.

In Leicestershire there are more than 100 sites, amounting to about 290 hectares. Although most are small there are a few significant areas, including

Burrough on the Hill, Loughborough Meadows and Charnwood Lodge. A number of the sites are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest and require a balance to be sought between access and ecological value. The County Council is the Access Authority for the sites and works with land managers, including where appropriate, developing access management plans. The CROW Act also established new Access Forums. The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (www.leics.gvo.uk/laf) advises the Authority on proposals for these sites and broader access matters as a whole, including the Rights of Way network.

One new provision is the ability of landowners to dedicate areas of open access or allow other types of use on access land. Since this is granted through statutory provisions, it reduces occupier liabilities for those entering the land and can be attractive if areas are already being used by the public.

Further details on open access are available at

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/openaccess/default.aspx>

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenertravel/Enjoyingthecountryside/DG_187645

2.11 Green Belt and other designations

Whilst Leicestershire has a wealth of attractive countryside and Greenspaces, there are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Charnwood Forest was on an early list (the Hobhouse Committee List) for consideration as an AONB, but it has not yet reached the stage of designation.

There is also no Green Belt in Leicestershire. Green Belt is a national designation that originated across England in a national policy statement in 1955. The Green Belts in England cover approximately 1,639,540 hectares of land, about 13 per cent of the land area. There are 14 separate Green Belts, varying in size from 486,000 hectares around London to just 700 hectares at Burton-on-Trent.

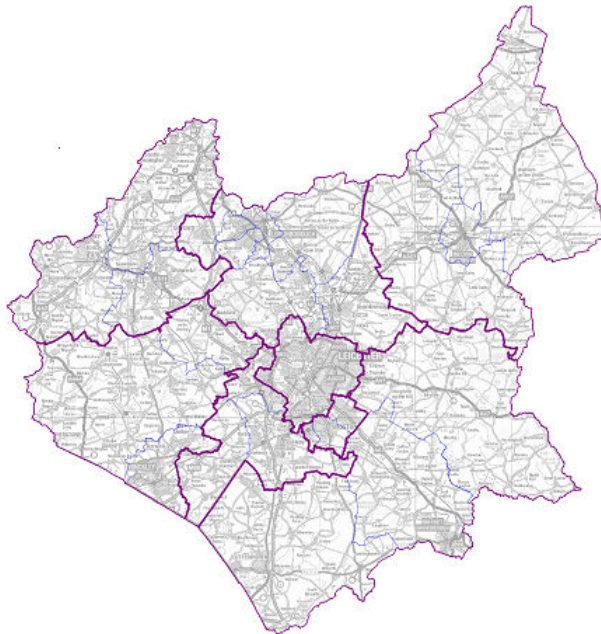
Green Belts have a number of functions which can include:

- preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open;
- preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- preserving the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to support urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of brownfield land.

A Green Belt has never been deemed appropriate in Leicestershire although it has been considered on a number of occasions. The Leicestershire approach has focused much more on Green Wedges which help to guide and shape urban form whilst giving residents access to green space. Green Wedges are therefore

a much more fine grained and sympathetic to growth and change in urban form and to the specific geography of Leicester and Leicestershire. They do not have the same degree of planning policy permanence as Green Belts but have proved to be effective and have had the necessary support through a number of generations of Local Plan Inquiry processes and individual planning appeals.

Appendix 1 - Local Planning Authorities Map and Contact Details



Blaby District Council

<http://www.blaby.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/planning-and-building/planning/>

Charnwood Borough Council

<http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/charnwood2026>

Harborough District Council

http://www.harborough.gov.uk/homepage/102/planning_policy?adminID=28&prevIew=666ef08b51615645d682ea5bdca58c52&expire=1310482003

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

http://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/planning_policy

Leicester City Council

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/planning/plansandguidance/>

Melton Borough Council

http://www.melton.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy.aspx

North West Leicestershire District Council

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/planning_policy

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/planning_policy_framework

Appendix 2 - Designation Decision Tree

