



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DOCUMENT: SEPTEMBER 2009

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

CS POLICY 1. LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The City Council will focus on the priorities for action set out in the One Leicester vision to ensure that Leicester develops as a sustainable city, with an improved quality of life for all its citizens. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) identifies the amount of new housing that should take place in Leicester by 2026. The City Council will work with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure the delivery of housing as part of sustainable mixed communities. Development will be located in accordance with the spatial strategy outlined below.

1. Residential development will take place in the following strategic locations in the City:
 - 55% in the Strategic Regeneration Area;
 - 17% in a sustainable urban extension at Ashton Green; and
 - 6% at Hamilton on committed housing sites.

The remaining 22% will be built on smaller non-strategic sites elsewhere in the City.
2. Significant new employment development will be focused in the following locations:
 - New Business Quarter;
 - Abbey Meadows Science and Innovation Park; and
 - Up to 10 hectares of land at Ashton Green.
3. The City Centre will be the focus for new retailing, leisure, and cultural development, to maximise choice in a central location and to enhance the scale, range, and appeal of the Centre. In addition to offices in the New Business Quarter, offices for small and professional businesses will be encouraged to locate in the City Centre. Beaumont Leys Town Centre and the district centres will serve local needs.
4. Residential, employment and City Centre growth will be supported by investment in an efficient and integrated public transport network and alternatives to using the car. This will focus on movement within the City, travel to work routes and links to London and other important centres, to include:
 - Quality public transport corridors;
 - Park and ride;
 - Rail links;
 - Walking and cycling networks to provide links to key facilities; and
 - Investigating the feasibility of a tram network.
5. Development in accordance with the master plans of the University of Leicester, De Montfort University and Leicester College will be supported where it is in the interests of education, skills, enterprise or economic growth.
6. Development to improve the standard and efficiency of Leicester's Hospitals and to provide health facilities to serve local communities will be supported.
7. Strategic Green Infrastructure to include:
 - Green Wedges; and
 - Maintenance of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal corridor as a resource for both wildlife and recreation as well as a focus for regeneration.

8. *Development of housing and employment in the area of search for Sustainable Urban Extensions outside the City boundary, in or adjoining the PUA, will be supported where it integrates with city communities and infrastructure.*
9. *If provision is made through the regional planning process for an eco town to the south east of the City boundary, the City Council will work with its partners to maximise the benefits to the City.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. It is correct that within the PUA the emphasis should be on first-rate public transport links to otherwise remote sites such as Ashton Green, Beaumont Leys and Hamilton. These areas cannot flourish without such connexions both into the City and through the City to other peripheral shopping and public transport hubs. Perhaps thinking of such matters in terms of through corridors would be helpful in the planning of transport infrastructure. Hamilton to Fosse Park and Enderby P&R, and Ashton Green and Beaumont Leys to South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby, are two obvious examples.

2. For such long distances with routes passing through the City Centre, Light Rapid Transit is the obvious choice but the high capital cost may make bus only lanes and guided bus lanes other possibilities worth considering.

3. Safe walking and cycling networks need to be provided in conjunction with the above corridors.

4. The City Council should already be working with Blaby and Oadby & Wigston DC's on these matters.

5. Provision for an 'eco-town' on the Pennbury site is to be strongly discouraged. The tram 'gain' is bogus, as LRT needs to serve areas of lowest car ownership as a priority. This can hardly be claimed for Oadby Hill Top, Stoneygate and South Knighton.

6. Such is the historic landscape quality of this quarter of the County down into the Welland Valley, that the Civic Society would support the establishment of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to forever rid it of speculative housing developments by this one major landowner.

7. All development, wherever located, needs to respect the historic built environment of the City. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester. We need a strategy for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. This must include all listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks & gardens and all buildings on the local interest list.

8. Development in or around Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.

9. The City Council should be taking the lead in heritage lead regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester is a fundamentally low rise City with a considerable architectural heritage and fundamentally historic structure.

10. There is great pressure in brownfield land for housing development. The definition of parks and sports fields, together with allotments and other private gardens as 'brownfield' land will continue to be ruinous to the quality of life within our City and increasingly crippling to its transport infrastructure.

11. Backland development or "garden grabbing" is strongly opposed by Leicester Civic Society, who will support local communities anywhere who are fighting such schemes. It is perfectly correct to quote residential areas that have larger gardens as been under threat from backland development but there are many other areas throughout Leicester that are under such threat. Areas where recent schemes have been opposed by local communities include Knighton Church Road, Swithland Avenue and Craighill Road. It is interesting however that the examples quoted are all conservation areas and, as with Stoneygate in the 1980's, the best means to combat such schemes may well be conservation area designation. Leicester Civic Society will be prioritising areas with this potential when it submits proposals for conservation areas to Leicester City Council.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should look at the location of sites for redevelopment in terms of the first-rate public transport links necessary to sustain them.

2. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them in connexion with all new development

3. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative and should ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions relating to the location of development.

4. Leicester City Council should actively seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate new housing development.

CS POLICY 2. ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

All development must mitigate and adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Council will prepare a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document to provide more detailed guidance and information on sustainable energy, building methods and climate change adaptation to minimise the impact of development.

The following principles provide the climate change policy context for the City:

- 1. Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 will be required as a minimum standard. This will be increased progressively over the plan period to support the Government's longer term aspiration for new homes to achieve Level 6.*
- 2. Best practice energy efficiency and sustainable construction methods, including waste management, should be incorporated in all aspects of development, with use of locally sourced and recycled materials where possible, and designed to high energy and water efficiency standards.*
- 3. Wherever feasible, development should include decentralised energy production or connection to an existing Combined Heat and Power or Community Heating System.*
- 4. Development should provide for and enable, commercial, community and domestic scale renewable energy generation schemes. Development of large scale renewable energy schemes will be considered in all suitable locations, including Green Wedges.*
- 5. Development should be directed to locations with the least impact on flooding or water resources. Where development is proposed in flood risk areas, mitigation measures must be put in place to reduce the effects of flood water. Both greenfield and brownfield sites should be assessed for their contribution to overall flood risk, taking into account climate change. All development should aim to limit surface water run-off by attenuation within the site as a means to reduce overall flood risk.*
- 6. Development should ensure a shift to the use of sustainable low emission transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas. Development will be located where it is accessible by sustainable transport to support the use of public transport, walking and cycling as an alternative to the car. Higher density development will be located in areas with easy access to local facilities to reduce the need to travel.*
- 7. Green Infrastructure should be used as a way of adapting and mitigating for climate change through the management and enhancement of existing habitats and the creation of new ones to assist with species migration, to provide a source of locally grown food through local allotments and for flood mitigation strategies.*
- 8. Existing development should wherever possible be adapted to climate change and help contribute to the reduction in carbon emissions by, where appropriate, including the introduction of green roofs, micro-renewable energy, recycling facilities, building efficiency measures and cycle parking.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Leicester needs to vigorously promote a sustainable environment. Sustainability is a key factor in the draft Regional Development Plan for the East Midlands that will provide the framework for planning from 2008 to 2026. All new developments, both commercial and residential, should demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. Combined heat and power schemes and carbon neutral developments achieved by the adoption of nationally published standards, as Supplementary Planning Documents must be rapidly implemented to ensure that future generations inherit a safe and clean environment.

2. Wind power must also be incorporated in national and regional policies. However the adoption of Leicester's identified green wedges as suitable for such development may be unsatisfactory policy, in view of the relatively narrow corridors they occupy within the City and the consequent adverse impact on the visual amenity of their surroundings.

3. Promotion of a sustainable environment is the best answer that Leicester can give to climate change. Comprehensive community heating systems are a major key in the development of a sustainable future for the City and the City Council must do everything possible to ensure their implementation.
4. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of sustainability in Leicester. Recognition must be given to the fact that older buildings and in particular older housing stock can be highly energy efficient. Retention of pre-1914 buildings in particular is an identifiable gain on the route to a sustainable future. Leicester possesses a huge stock of terraced houses totalling some 29,000 dwellings that are now close to, or in excess of one hundred years old and generally in excellent condition.
5. To revitalize run down areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate carbon neutral design and to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.
6. Leicester's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21st Century with an emphasis on sustainability. We need to follow the lead given by other cities to promote sustainable public transport, together with cycling and walking, at the expense of public and private transport systems directly dependent on fossil fuels.
7. Leicester needs a light rapid transport system.
8. We need the Leicester to Burton-on-Trent railway reopening, with stations inside the City, and rail-tram interchange and Park'n'Ride interchange.
9. We need tighter control on access to the City centre by the motor car. To this end a considerable expansion of Park'n'Ride schemes is badly needed.
10. Our buses still burn diesel oil whilst those of other cities run on gas or bio-fuel. Local networks of electronic buses could also be introduced.

Conclusions:

- 1. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester, promoting combined heat & power schemes, together with other environmentally and physically sound projects.**
- 2. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment, and in particular our historic housing stock, as a major policy initiative towards a sustainable future for the City.**
- 3. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as a principal behind their sustainability policies.**
- 4. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a more sustainable place for everyone to live and work. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.**

CS POLICY 3. DESIGNING QUALITY PLACES

Good quality design is central to the creation of attractive, successful and sustainable places. We expect high quality, well designed developments that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the local natural and built environment. Development must respond positively to the surroundings, be appropriate to the local setting and context and take into account Leicester's history and heritage. To achieve this new development should promote the image of Leicester as an exciting modern city, acknowledging its archaeological, landscape, historic and cultural heritage and the need to improve the quality of life of the City's residents. The use of design codes, design briefs, master plans and other design documents will be essential as part of planning applications for proposals at major sites where there are significant design issues. For example, at strategic development locations, in important historical areas and where development is expected to be phased over a number of years. Planning officers will seek to work pro-actively with landowners and developers to help prepare design documents to meet the Council's spatial objectives and design policies. New development should achieve the following urban design objectives:

1. Urban Form and Character:

- Contribute positively to an areas character and appearance in terms of scale, height, density, layout, urban form, high quality architecture, massing and materials;*
- Create a sense of identity and legibility by using landmarks and incorporating key views within, into and out of new development;*
- Create buildings and spaces that are fit for purpose yet are innovative, adaptable and flexible to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions. Consideration should also be given to future management and maintenance; and*
- Integrate car parking so that it is safe and does not dominate the development or have a detrimental impact upon the appearance of the area. Consideration should be given to underground car parking in the City Centre.*

2. Connections, Movement and Inclusive Access:

- Improve access, connectivity and permeability within and through the development site and the wider area,*
- Encourage walking and cycling by designing layouts that prioritise safe, well connected pedestrian and cycle routes and restrict traffic speed, and*
- Meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion, based on inclusive design principles, and the need to create 'lifetime neighbourhoods'.*

3. Public Realm and Open Space:

- Create high quality public spaces with full consideration given to the relationship between buildings and the spaces between them and to make best use of landscaping, lighting and public art;*
- Be designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime and promote public safety through the day and night by being in accordance with Secured by Design principles; and*
- Promote active frontages onto public spaces, streets and waterways, an uncluttered street scene and a clear distinction between public and private spaces.*

4. Preserve and enhance the historic built environment and support the sensitive reuse of quality historic buildings.

5. To ensure high design standards and good place making, all proposals for 10 or more dwellings must demonstrate how they have been designed to meet Building for Life (BfL) standards.⁴ We will aim to ensure that those proposals achieve as a minimum, a 'good' standard as defined by BfL. A Design Statement for such proposals must include a BfL assessment to demonstrate how each of the criteria have been addressed. Where appropriate, the City Council may undertake their own assessment using an accredited assessor. Where proposals are received and considered to be of a 'poor' or 'average' standard, as defined by BfL, improvements will be required to raise design quality and achieve a higher standard of design.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester and CS Policy 3 clearly recognises this fact.
2. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings. There are many examples in both the past and present of this not happening and there is in consequence a running list of historic buildings continually at risk in the City. In a quality City such lists should cease to exist.
3. We need to continue the development of the current strategy for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. This must include all listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks & gardens and all buildings on the local interest list.
4. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character, as a part of the quality of life within them. The best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.
5. The City Council should be taking the lead in quality heritage lead regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester is a fundamentally low rise City with a considerable architectural heritage and fundamentally historic structure.
6. To revitalize run down areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate quality architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.
7. All new developments, both commercial and residential, should demonstrate a commitment to sustainability as a vital part of the quality of life within our City. Combined heat and power schemes and carbon neutral developments achieved by the adoption of nationally published standards, as Supplementary Planning Documents must be rapidly implemented to ensure that future generations inherit a safe and clean environment.
8. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a wholly new 'quality approach' to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements. In particular there should be no subways.
9. The work currently being undertaken in the Cultural Quarter must be proceeded with quickly and efficiently. The Council must look again at the Cultural Quarter and seek means to improve its urban design and restore its historic buildings. The result otherwise will be a handful of glittering

new buildings surrounded by a drab and run down historic environment. There is otherwise a risk that the 'quality renaissance' of this area, so earnestly sought after, will not materialise.

10. We need more investment in our museums and a serious investment in tourism to promote the City and enrich the quality of its life and its economy by putting its rich and varied history to work. Leicester's museums are seriously under funded and many suffer reduced opening hours.

11. In particular historic assets such as Leicester Castle are scandalously under used. The Castle possesses one of the largest, secular, timbered halls in England. As such it should be an immense source of civic pride and a major tourist attraction, transforming the quality and the local economy of its surroundings.

12. There is a clear wish amongst the people of Leicester to see a central swimming baths and central ice rink. Such facilities should be features of an expanded Cultural Quarter. This is a major quality of life issue and as such current proposals for the Corah site deserve the fullest support.

13. By means of Supplementary Planning Documents functioning as design guides, the City must encourage radically different housing design, if necessary embracing North European prefabrication, to escape from the dreary monotony of red brick, mock-Georgian boxes, packed as close together as possible. This low quality suburban landscape is creating the slums of the future.

14. Item 4.3.23 on page 36 of the Core Strategy Submission document states: "Leicester's long and varied history has created a city full of character. The City Centre's Medieval street pattern still influences the form of development today, whilst the rows of Victorian terraces and factories dominate the inner city areas. The City's rich history has left a legacy of historic buildings and street patterns, which varies from place to place in the City, forming areas with their own distinct character and identity. By respecting this we can avoid inappropriate change in the City, yet create a thriving place where people want to live and work." We are in complete accord with this statement.

15. As a result of this and other statements in this section of the document Leicester Civic Society has no hesitation in fully endorsing CS Policy 3 above.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative and ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their regeneration policies.

3. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester, promoting combined heat & power schemes, together with other environmentally and physically sound projects?

4. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

5. Leicester City Council should implement positive cultural policies to promote the quality of our museums, and above all promote tourism as a major economic boost for the City.

6. Leicester City Council should actively promote radical new housing design as a quality hallmark of life in our City in the 21st Century.

CS POLICY 4: STRATEGIC REGENERATION AREA

The Strategic Regeneration Area will be the focus of major development and physical change to provide the impetus for economic, environmental and social investment and provide benefits for existing communities. New development within the Strategic Regeneration Area must be comprehensive and co-ordinated, complementing and building on delivery programmes and Supplementary Planning Documents. Development will promote:

- *Prosperity and economic growth where regeneration is the focus for major employment development;*
- *Liveability, with high quality residential neighbourhoods having access to a range of facilities;*
- *High quality urban environments that provide mixed uses and spaces;*
- *The potential to live, work, play and enjoy opportunities for leisure and cultural activity;*
- *Improved accessibility to jobs, homes and services and connectivity between areas including the riverside and water corridors, through opportunities for walking, cycling and use of high quality frequent public transport;*
- *The protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas; and*
- *Protection of existing habitats and enhancement or creation of new areas for wildlife. A comprehensive management and maintenance programme for the canal and riverside will be required, to safeguard the natural environment and increase its ecological value.*

The strategy for specific parts of the Strategic Regeneration Area is set out below.

New Business Quarter

The New Business Quarter (NBQ) in the vicinity of the railway station, is the key area for providing office based employment and economic growth in the City. The Council will fully support the NBQ by concentrating new, large floorplate, major office development over 1,000 sqm in that area so that a critical mass of co-located offices is achieved and by promoting Leicester as an attractive place in which to invest. Parking provision will be considered on an individual basis to ensure that traffic flows are compatible with the Local Transport Plan. As a thriving prestige office area, the key features will be:

- *At least 50,000 sqm of new grade 'A' large floorplate offices; supporting retail and leisure uses; a hotel/conference centre; a new public square; a re-orientated railway station; a new car park; and improved bus and rail integration;*
- *Good connectivity with adjoining areas along key routes to the Central Shopping Core, the Cultural Quarter and New Walk area;*
- *Improved pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access to reduce the severance effect of the Central Ring Road; and*
- *Appropriate transport infrastructure to support delivery of the NBQ and to ensure it can compete against out of town office locations.*

Abbey Meadows

Abbey Meadows is a key area for delivering economic growth in the City, to attract new jobs in science and technology and related knowledge intensive business linking especially with the City's two Universities, retaining graduates and building a skills and knowledge base for Leicester's new economy. The canal and riverside location also provides a high quality setting for an expanding residential community. Our strategy is to achieve the regeneration of Abbey Meadows by:

- *The development of a Science and Innovation Park to create a centre for research, development and technology based business (Use Class B1b); Innovation Centre Building (Use Class B1a, b and c); Associated Educational Use (D1) and Associated Research Institute (No Use Class), which can demonstrate a need either to be located within the park or to be near the National Space Centre,*

- *Developing residential communities at Wolsey Island; the former BUSM site at Ross Walk; and Abbey Meadows West that are linked to existing adjacent communities,*
- *Focusing on the canal and riverside, enhancing their ecology and ensuring connectivity, through pedestrian and cycle links and bridges, between the Science and Innovation Park, Belgrave and Abbey Park; and*
- *Provision of a vehicular access spine road, public open space and access to education and health care provision.*

The Waterside

The Waterside area connects existing communities with the City Centre and the riverside and canal. Our strategy is to develop the Waterside as an attractive, high quality, residential-led, mixed neighbourhood and city leisure attraction, focusing on water, which enhances the riverside, the canal and its ecology, improves connectivity to adjoining areas and reduces the severance effect of the Central Ring Road. We will do this by:

- *Encouraging a full mix of housing types;*
- *Encouraging small scale offices and workspaces and supporting neighbourhood uses where they are on key safe, connecting routes;*
- *Defining a new local centre to serve the area on the A50;*
- *Improving vehicle and pedestrian access through and within the area, including improvements to the Sanvey Gate/Highcross Street/Great Central Street junction and assessing the case for provision of the St. Augustine's/Bath Lane link road and bridge; and*
- *Seeking to provide access links, education provision, improvements in the provision of public open space (including to Rally Park) and health care facilities.*

St. George's South

St. George's South offers the potential for encouraging small scale offices and workspaces where they are on key, safe, connecting routes and mixed City Centre uses, to support, reinforce and complement cultural and leisure attractions and City Centre living. Improvements to the public realm will support this transition.

St. George's North

St. George's North has the potential for mixed use regeneration, linking St. Matthew's estate and the City Centre. The area to the north of Humberstone Road provides opportunities for major leisure facilities in locations that will generate activity on key routes and provide 24 hour surveillance. Improved public open space and access to education and health care provision will be required to support any residential development.

St. John's

The area of St. John's presents the opportunity for some mixed use development where this will improve connectivity along key routes between Abbey Park, Waterside, the City Centre, and existing communities. Development should ensure that viable employment uses are protected.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. The proposed mix of uses within the SRA is broadly welcomed. But:
2. A major new office development, designed to attract regional and national office occupiers, although welcome in theory is fanciful in practice. It is difficult to imagine where a development on this scale could be accommodated within the SRA. An adverse impact on many other policies relating to the design of quality places, existing neighbourhoods, transport networks, managing

demand for car use and the historic built environment is almost bound to result from any such development.

3. In similar vein many of the proposals for the “New Business Quarter” are fanciful and their implementation potentially damaging to the historic built environment.

4. Improved pedestrian and cycle access to reduce the severance effect of the ring road is to be encouraged. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970’s by the application of an outdated “predict and supply” approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements. In particular there should be no subways.

5. Attempts to ‘redirect’ the station entrance could be counterproductive to the entire ethos of the City Centre and planning for the pedestrian within the City Centre. Any proposals could threaten the listed frontage of the station and the listed station gates on Station Street and lead to an ugly, open and windy square dominated by the ‘blue tower’. Pedestrian access between the station concourse and the City Centre would be across the top of St. Georges Way exactly as now. The only gains would be new office block(s) on the new ‘Blue Tower Square’ and a potential retail development within the large vehicle porch enclosed by the listed station façade. These would be the real reasons for such a proposal and not greater connectivity for station users many of whom would wish to gain direct access to London Road as now.

6. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester. These proposals must not compromise that environment. Any office development in or around the Granby Street Conservation Area must respect that conservation area and in particular the historic importance of the Thomas Cook Temperance Hotel building on Granby Street.

7. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings.

8. We need to continue the development of the current strategy for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. This must include all listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks & gardens and all buildings on the local interest list.

9. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character, as a part of the quality of life within them. The best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.

10. The proposals for Abbey Meadows are broadly welcome.

11. The proposals for the Waterside are broadly welcome. It is noted that the construction of woefully inappropriate tower blocks has been dropped. Though the possibility that these could

have been introduced in contravention of stated planning policies continues to pose a threat to the value of and public credence given to all local plans. An amended Waterside SPD should now go forward to the public examination and adoption phases. It has been isolated in draft format for far too long.

12. Greater emphasis needs to be given to the particular problems of the area now described as St. Johns. As a direct link between the City Centre and Abbey Park it is particular importance in the development of a quality City. New Walk has long existed as a quality link between the City Centre and Victoria Park. The potential for a quality link between the City Centre and Abbey Park must be recognised.

13. Regeneration within the Strategic Regeneration Area is an unnecessarily emotive issue. The City Council should be taking the lead in heritage led regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester is a fundamentally low rise City with a considerable architectural heritage and fundamentally historic structure.

14. To revitalize run down areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate 21st century architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.

15. Leicester repeatedly forgets that there is no proper regeneration without a commitment to renewal. We need to create a constant culture of renewal; revitalizing and cherishing the things we have already. As a consequence of the lack of this culture there is a prevalent attitude of always starting at zero, which leads to the same mistakes being made roughly every thirty years.

16. We need tighter control on access to the City centre by motorists and no illegal parking tolerated.

17. Local networks of electronic buses should be introduced

18. The work currently being undertaken in the Cultural Quarter must be proceeded with quickly and efficiently. The Council must look again at the Cultural Quarter and seek means to improve its urban design and restore its historic buildings. The result otherwise will be a handful of glittering new buildings surrounded by a drab and run down historic environment. This situation can otherwise only be exacerbated by developments in the New Business Quarter.

19. Other cities of Leicester's size enjoy varied performing arts and cinema outlets in different parts of their central areas. Leicester should not be afraid to do so. Putting all of our 'cultural eggs' in one basket is a mistake. In particular the Phoenix Theatre should continue as a priceless cultural asset on the opposite side of the City centre to the new Digital Media Centre.

20. There is a clear wish amongst the people of Leicester to see a central swimming baths and central ice rink. Such facilities should be features of an expanded Cultural Quarter.

21. We need more investment in our museums and a serious investment in tourism to promote the City and enrich its economy by putting its rich and varied history to work. Leicester's museums are seriously under funded, many with reduced opening hours and insufficient space to display the great collections owned by our Museums Service.

22. Historic assets such as Leicester Castle are scandalously under used. The Castle possesses one of the largest medieval, timbered halls in England. As such it should be an immense source of civic pride and a major tourist attraction, transforming the local economy of its surroundings.

23. By means of Supplementary Planning Documents functioning as design guides, the City must encourage radically different housing design within the Strategic Regeneration Area.

24. Leicester now possesses a genuinely first class 'retail corridor' running from the John Lewis Store through the Highcross Centre to the Market Place.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative within the Strategic Regeneration Area and ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration within the Strategic Regeneration Area and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their regeneration policies.

3. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making the Strategic Regeneration Area a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

4. Leicester City Council should implement positive cultural policies to promote the performing arts, sport and leisure facilities, the quality of our museums, and above all promote tourism as a major economic boost for the City. Much of this potential is within the Strategic Regeneration Area. It is a potential that must be realised.

5. Leicester City Council should actively promote radical new housing design as a hallmark of life within the Strategic Regeneration Area.

CS POLICY 5. ASHTON GREEN

The City Council will support the development of Ashton Green as an exemplar of sustainable development, to provide up to 3,500 homes and other amenities including local shops, up to 10 hectares of employment land, schools, open space and other community facilities. It will incorporate a wide range of sustainable development principles, will be to a high standard of design and will promote social cohesion and inclusive communities.

It will be a key area for providing low carbon employment development in the City, for companies and businesses seeking to reduce their carbon footprints, and future proof their operations against rising energy costs and climate change.

Ashton Green contains several areas of good quality natural environment. These areas will be protected and enhanced to safeguard habitats and wildlife, to provide leisure opportunities and contribute to the overall sustainability of the development. Good connectivity with surrounding areas, Beaumont Leys Centre and the City Centre will be important to provide access to shopping, leisure and employment opportunities. Walking, cycling and public transport links in particular will need to be high quality. Highway and transportation infrastructure required to ensure that Ashton Green is sustainable will emerge from the transport assessment, which is currently being prepared to accompany the planning application.

The City Council will work with our partners and stakeholders to prepare a robust masterplan, implementation strategy and outline planning application for Ashton Green. These processes will inform and shape the delivery of this high quality sustainable urban extension over the plan period.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Leicester needs to vigorously promote a sustainable environment. Sustainability is a key factor in the draft Regional Development Plan for the East Midlands that will provide the framework for planning from 2008 to 2026. All new developments, both commercial and residential, should demonstrate this commitment. Ashton Green should be a carbon neutral development achieved by the adoption of nationally published standards as Supplementary Planning Documents.
2. The adoption of Leicester's identified green wedges as suitable for wind power development may be unsatisfactory policy, in view of the relatively narrow corridors they occupy within the City and the consequent adverse impact on the visual amenity of their surroundings.
3. Housing demand in Leicester based on Government targets cannot be fulfilled by the available supply of land. Furthermore the definition of parks and sports fields, together with allotments and other private gardens as 'brownfield' land will continue to be ruinous to the quality of life within our City and increasingly crippling to its transport infrastructure.
4. By means of Supplementary Planning Documents functioning as design guides, the City must encourage radically different housing design, if necessary embracing Northern European prefabrication ideas, to escape from the dreary monotony of red brick, mock-Georgian boxes, packed as close together as possible. This hideous suburban landscape is creating the slums of the future. It must be avoided in Ashton Green, which has the potential to become a landmark 21st century sustainable urban village.
5. There is a potential for low levels of civic pride in new neighbourhoods, which will degrade the quality of life in these communities. There are already high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem.
6. Education should include a strong element of local history to enable the young to appreciate our 2,000 years and not grow up the same as if they were living in a new town.

Conclusions:

- 1. Leicester City Council should adopt a sustainable environment in Ashton Green and promoting environmentally and physically sound projects.**
- 2. Leicester City Council should active seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate housing encroachment and actively promote radical new housing design as a 21st Century landmark in Ashton Green.**
- 3. Leicester City Council must seek means to promote Civic Pride in the young.**

CS POLICY 6. HOUSING STRATEGY

The housing requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy can be met through:

- *The strategic housing allocations outlined in CS Policy 1;*
- *Other non-strategic sites to be identified in the Site Allocations DPD;*
- *Limited housing growth within established residential areas and small housing infill and conversion schemes to support the development of sustainable communities; and*
- *Small scale industrial sites that are no longer appropriate for industrial use. Detailed housing issues will be considered separately within a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).*

We propose the following measures to ensure that new housing meets the needs of City residents:

- *New housing should be provided in accordance with the sustainable development and design principles set out in CS Policies 2 and 3 in order to protect residential amenity and provide quality development;*
- *The City Council will continue to work with its partners to ensure the delivery of sustainable communities to meet both current and future needs of the population as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment;*
- *New housing developments will be required to provide an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet the needs of existing and future households in the City, in particular, larger family housing (at least 4+ bedrooms) as identified by the SHMA. The City Council will seek to take advantage of any government funding programmes and initiatives, (e.g. the review of the Housing Revenue Account) which support local authority house building;*
- *In negotiations with developers the City Council will seek to meet the needs of specific groups through:*

Provision of Extra Care accommodation to meet identified needs of an increasing elderly population;

Provision of supported housing to meet other identified special needs;

Ensuring that all new housing units are designed to 'Lifetime Homes' standards so that they are adaptable enough to match lifetime's changing needs; and

Ensuring that an appropriate proportion of new housing units are designed to meet wheelchair access standards.

- *New student housing provision to meet identified needs within the university campus areas, as defined by the university master plans in consultation with the City Council, will normally be acceptable. Outside the university campus areas the City Council will expect new student housing accommodation to meet the same planning requirements and standards that apply to all Class C3 residential developments including adequate accessible accommodation which meets the needs of disabled students. The City Council will also seek a Section 106 financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the City;*
- *Careful consideration will be given to conversions and to further subdivision of existing flats to ensure there is no adverse impact on the character of the area or the maintenance of mixed communities. In particular, the conversion of existing large houses will be resisted where it would still be appropriate for family use and meet an identified demand for this type of accommodation. Specific considerations will be property size and location, including the amount of private amenity space and parking provision; and*
- *Within Conservation Areas the impact of flat conversions on the special character of the area, as identified in Character Statements, will be a material consideration. Detailed housing issues will be considered separately within a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Housing demand in Leicester based on Government targets cannot be fulfilled by the available supply of land. Furthermore the definition of parks and sports fields, together with allotments and other private gardens as 'brownfield' land will continue to be ruinous to the quality of life within our City and increasingly crippling to its transport infrastructure.

2. Backland development or "garden grabbing" is strongly opposed by Leicester Civic Society, who will support local communities anywhere who are fighting such schemes. It is perfectly correct to quote residential areas that have larger gardens as been under threat from backland development but there are many other areas throughout Leicester that are under such threat. Areas where recent schemes have been opposed by local communities include Knighton Church Road, Swithland Avenue and Craighill Road. It is interesting however that the examples quoted are all conservation areas and, as with Stoneygate in the 1980's, the best means to combat such schemes may well be conservation area designation. Leicester Civic Society will be prioritising areas with this potential when it submits proposals for conservation areas to Leicester City Council.

3. By means of Supplementary Planning Documents functioning as design guides, the City must encourage radically different housing design, if necessary embracing prefabrication, to escape from the dreary monotony of red brick, mock-Georgian boxes, packed as close together as possible. This hideous suburban landscape is creating the slums of the future.

4. Statement 4.4.32 on page 49 is particularly welcome and particularly relevant to C19th residential conservation areas such as Stoneygate, Spinney Hill Park, South Highfields, West End, Belgrave, Loughborough Road and Ashleigh Road. There must be more control over the conversion of large family houses into single person accommodation. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.

5. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage.

6. Statement 4.4.34 on page 49 on respect of student housing is weak and vague. The resulting policy statement is weak and vague. If there is a numerical oversupply of student housing in the City compared to immediate and short-term demand, then why is De Montfort University constantly on record as claiming a shortage in student accommodation? It can only be assumed that the University is unable to manage its student influx in relation to the accommodation it has available and this has worrying consequences for the built environment of the City both within and immediately without its campus.

7. The policy talks of university campus areas as defined by agreed "University Master Plans". It implies that the universities set these areas that are then agreed by Leicester City Council. These areas are only referred to but not defined by the policy statement. As such it is weak and vague. In view of recent major developments at De Montfort University and the generally poor quality and high-rise nature of student accommodation developments in Central Leicester, the statement in 4.4.35 on page 49 that "The scale of development, including the height and massing of buildings should not be detrimental to the general character and amenity of surrounding residential areas"

is wholly inadequate. A sea change in the control of university expansion in general and the design standards appropriate to student accommodation in particular, is now called for.

8. Leicester needs to vigorously promote sustainable housing. Sustainability is a key factor in the draft Regional Development Plan for the East Midlands that will provide the framework for planning from 2008 to 2026. All new residential developments should demonstrate this commitment. Combined heat and power schemes and carbon neutral developments achieved by the adoption of nationally published standards, as Supplementary Planning Documents must be rapidly implemented to ensure that future generations inherit a safe and clean environment.

9. There is a low level of civic pride in Leicester, which degrades the quality of life in our communities. This is evidenced by high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative in its housing strategy, to ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should actively work for sustainable housing in Leicester, promoting combined heat & power schemes, together with other environmentally and physically sound projects.

3. Leicester City Council should active seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate housing encroachment and actively promote radical new housing design as a hallmark of life in our City in the 21st Century.

4. Leicester City Council must promote Civic Pride in the young.

CS POLICY 7 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

New residential development should contribute to the creation and enhancement of sustainable mixed communities through the provision of affordable housing.

On all sites of 15 dwellings or more or 0.5ha or over, the Council will require the following percentages of the total number of dwellings proposed to be affordable, to meet local needs:

- 15 % in the Strategic Regeneration Area*
- 30 % in the South East of the City and Ashton Green*
- 20 % elsewhere in the City*

The Council will expect these requirements to be met and any proposal below the percentages indicated will need to be fully justified through clear evidence set out in a viability assessment, and will need to demonstrate that grant funding sources have been fully explored.

The type and mix of affordable housing sought will reflect the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Developers should not circumvent this policy by artificially subdividing sites, and are expected to make efficient use of land. If a site comes forward as two or more separate development schemes, of which one or more falls below the appropriate threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of affordable housing on each part to match in total the provision that would have been required on the site as a whole.

Affordable housing should be provided on site and only in exceptional circumstances will contributions to make an equivalent provision elsewhere be acceptable.

Affordable housing should be available to those in housing need in perpetuity.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

Leicester Civic Society is fully supportive of CS Policy 7.

Leicester City Council should active seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate housing encroachment and actively promote radical new housing design as a hallmark of life in our City in the 21st Century.

CS POLICY 8. EXISTING NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Council will work closely with a range of partners including health agencies, education providers, the police, housing associations, community groups and private developers to ensure that each neighbourhood will have access to a local centre, public open space, play facilities, public transport, sport and active recreation facilities and other community and leisure facilities. We want our neighbourhoods to be sustainable places that people choose to live and work in and where everyday facilities are available to local people. To achieve this the following will apply:

- *All new housing developments should be in accordance with Policy CS6 Housing Strategy;*
- *Existing district and local centres will be supported as the most sustainable and accessible way to provide local shopping facilities to meet people's everyday needs;*
- *The provision of new community facilities will be supported where they meet the identified needs of local communities and have a viable long term management and funding proposal. Where there are increased demands on existing facilities as a result of development, the enhancement of facilities or suitable additional provision will be sought where there is a loss of an existing facility suitable mitigation or alternative provision will be sought;*

The City Council supports the enhancement of the higher education establishments and Universities as an integral part of city neighbourhoods;

The City Council wants to create neighbourhood groups of schools and will ensure that the Local Development Framework supports School Organisation and Implementation Plans, the Building Schools for the Future programme and the Integrated Services Hubs model, which will help support the drive for school improvement and attainment. Due to the densely populated urban nature of the City, with the exception of schools serving new housing development, new schools will be rebuilt on existing sites;

- *The Council will seek to retain existing places of worship in order to ensure provision for the wide variety of religious groups active in the City. In considering proposals for new places of worship the Council will take account the demand for it within the local neighbourhood, the scale of activities for which it is likely to be used and the nature of the area around it. They will be acceptable in principle in lower quality employment areas.*
- *Through programmes like the City Warden scheme, the Council will work with its partners, particularly the police, to deal with issues such as vandalism, litter and graffiti to create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *The Council will support and work with NHS organisations to enable the development of health facilities in new development areas and elsewhere where they are needed and with primary care providers to ensure an equitable distribution of primary care facilities across the City;*
- *The Council recognises the importance of allotments across the City and supports the continuing use of existing publicly owned allotment sites where they meet the need of local neighbourhoods;*
- *The Council will seek to maintain existing green space and parks, and identify new opportunities for their creation and use by local communities whilst contributing to the green network of sites across the City; and*
- *Access to school sports facilities for organised and planned community use, outside school hours will also be encouraged to foster community sport links and provide out of school opportunities. The Council will also seek to maximise opportunities to counter the current uneven distribution of play areas across the City.*

Inner Areas

Provision is made for approximately 1,550 dwellings in the Inner Areas, which is just over 30% of all non-strategic location housing growth.

New housing provision within the Inner Areas will mainly be on small scale industrial sites that are no longer appropriate for industrial use.

Within the Inner Areas, it is the Council's priority to retain good quality existing housing for which there is a demand. In particular in Spinney Hills, Belgrave and other neighbourhoods where there is an identified demand, larger houses appropriate for family use should be retained, and conversion to other types of accommodation resisted.

In areas of high architectural quality or significant local distinctiveness (particularly Conservation Areas), the Council will seek to ensure that the distinctive characteristics of existing properties are retained and that any new development is sympathetic to its specific location.

New hostels and Houses in Multiple Occupation requiring planning permission will not be permitted where they would result in a local over concentration.

Residents Parking Schemes will be considered within the Inner Areas where local residents deem such measures necessary to address the issue of on-street parking.

Belgrave District Centre will be promoted as a national shopping destination for Asian goods shopping and for cultural events. In centres that have developed an evening economy based on food and drink related uses, such as Belgrave, Braunstone Gate, Evington Road and Queens Road, support will be balanced against the need to maintain residential amenity and the capacity of the centre to serve everyday needs.

The Council recognises the particularly important role that public open space plays in improving local health and well-being within inner areas in view of the lack of significant garden space within many houses. The Council will ensure that residential areas have good access to allotments and will protect the private allotment area to meet demand in Clarendon Park.

The Council will improve access to wildlife for residents of the Inner Areas by encouraging the creation of pocket parks and their management by local communities. Creating a series of "stepping stones" will also enhance the connectivity between sites through which wildlife can migrate across the City.

The Council will seek to address the lack of access to good quality outdoor and children's play provision in areas of play deprivation.

Outer Estate Areas

Provision is made for approximately 1,250 dwellings in the Outer Estate Areas, which is nearly 25% of the non-strategic locations housing growth.

Limited residential infilling in Outer Estate Areas can play an important role in the provision of new housing in the City, particularly on lower density estates where more opportunities exist. Within Braunstone, Saffron, New Parks, Beaumont Leys and Eyres Monsell the Council will consider opportunities for new housing types to be developed that complement the existing dwellings and which create a better choice and mix of housing and a more balanced community.

Beaumont Leys Centre will be a focus for town centre uses to serve the north and west of the City. The Council has identified improvement in the quality of the local shopping provision at Eyres Monsell as a priority.

The Council will encourage and support the improvement in accessibility to and between the Outer Estate Areas to increase connectivity, in particularly access to jobs and services

The Council will seek opportunities to improve the quality of existing green space provision and will seek to address the lack of access to good quality outdoor and children's play provision in areas of play deprivation such as Braunstone, Beaumont Leys, Eyres Monsell, New Parks and Thumcourt.

The Council will continue to work with its partners to tackle the clear links between levels of deprivation in the Outer Estate Areas and both alcohol dependency and obesity, to help improve the health and wealth of residents.

The Council is committed to maximising the role of libraries as focal points for community and personal development, and will work with partners in the fields of health, education and community development to increase local people's access to a range of

complementary services. We will increase partnership working and community engagement to improve literacy levels and motivation to access education, training and employment.

Suburbs

Provision is made for approximately 3,350 dwellings in the Suburbs. Around 2,200 of these will be on non-strategic locations, making up about 45% of the non-strategic housing growth. The other 1,150 will be at the Strategic Location of Hamilton.

The Suburbs are popular places to live for families due to a combination of their environment, house types and size and local facilities including schools. It is the Council's aim to ensure that these areas continue to thrive and so provide neighbourhoods that people aspire to live in and which are a genuine alternative to out-migration from the City.

Small scale infill sites can play a key role in the provision of new housing. However these should only be developed where damage can be avoided to the very qualities that make living in these neighbourhoods so desirable.

Backland development is a significant issue in the suburbs, particularly in areas with larger gardens such as Aylestone, Evington, Knighton and Humberstone. The Council will therefore not permit development on garden land where it will have an unacceptable impact upon the setting of existing buildings, the local landscape character and levels of biodiversity in the neighbourhood.

In areas of high architectural quality or significant local distinctiveness, such as Stoneygate Conservation Area, the Council will seek to ensure that the distinctive characteristics of existing properties are retained and that any new development is sympathetic to its specific location.

On the London Road corridor, new hostels, hotels and Houses in Multiple Occupation will not be permitted where the community is already imbalanced by a concentration of shared housing or where its development would result in such a concentration.

The Council will encourage proposals to increase the diversity of services available at Hamilton District Centre.

Development of new allotments at Hamilton will be supported to address the current under provision.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. The policy states that, "Within the Inner Areas it is the Council's policy to retain good quality existing housing for which there is a demand". It is the contention of Leicester Civic Society that there will always be a demand for good quality existing housing within the inner areas. This is particularly relevant to C19th residential conservation areas such as Stoneygate, Spinney Hill Park, South Highfields, West End, Belgrave, Loughborough Road and Ashleigh Road.

2. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines. Leicester Civic Society fully endorses the policy statement referring to areas of high architectural quality or significance, such as Stoneygate conservation areas. However this high quality and significance of certain residential areas goes way beyond Stoneygate and way beyond other residential conservation areas. 4.6% of the City is currently within conservation areas. Research shows that the real figure should be something like 8.5% much of which consists significantly high-quality residential neighbourhoods. The Civic Society is committed to working towards the achievement of this target.

3. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester.

4. Leicester Civic Society supports the introduction of residents parking schemes - but only where they are the genuine wish of the local residents - not where they are induced as a policy.

5. Every opportunity must be taken to develop the Belgrave district centre as a national cultural and shopping destination for the Asian community. This includes removal of the outdated Belgrave Flyover. The advantage of removing the flyover is that Leicester's famous "Golden Mile", now isolated to the north of Belgrave Gate, could be extended southwards to the very heart of the City. There should be a tree-lined boulevard as a replacement. This should accommodate well-designed shop units targeted at the promotion and development of the neighbourhood commercial community.

6. Support should be given to protect and enhance Braunstone Gate as a local centre. This is a last surviving fragment of the Old West End isolated between Narborough Road North and would be damaged by development of proposed De Montfort University sports facilities and destroyed by expansion of student accommodation.

7. The proposals for further introduction of "pocket parks" and wildlife "stepping-stones" are most welcome and a programme for their sites and their introduction is warmly encouraged.

8. Backland development or "garden grabbing" is strongly opposed by Leicester Civic Society, who will support local communities anywhere who are fighting such schemes. It is perfectly correct to quote residential areas that have larger gardens as been under threat from backland development but there are many other areas throughout Leicester that are under such threat. Areas where recent schemes have been opposed by local communities include Knighton Church Road, Swithland Avenue and Craighill Road. It is interesting however that the examples quoted are all conservation areas and, as with Stoneygate in the 1980's, the best means to combat such schemes may well be conservation area designation. Leicester Civic Society will be prioritising areas with this potential when it submits proposals for conservation areas to Leicester City Council.

9. Leicester Civic Society fully supports the prevention of concentrations of new hostels, hotels and HIMO's on or around the London Road corridor, which is almost totally embraced by South Highfields, Evington Footpath and Stoneygate conservation areas. These concentrations are damaging to the character and residential amenity of the conservation areas. Such concentrations should also be prevented from developing in other neighbourhoods and road corridors.

10. To revitalize run down neighbourhoods we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate 21st century architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.

11. Leicester needs to vigorously promote a commitment to sustainable environment in its existing neighbourhoods. All new developments, both commercial and residential, should demonstrate this commitment.

12. Wind power must also be incorporated in national and regional policies. However the adoption of Leicester's identified green wedges as suitable for such development may be unsatisfactory policy, in view of the relatively narrow corridors they occupy within the City and the consequent adverse impact on the visual amenity of existing neighbourhoods.

13. Housing demand in Leicester based on Government targets cannot be fulfilled by the available supply of land. Furthermore the definition of parks and sports fields, together with allotments and other private gardens as 'brownfield' land will continue to be ruinous to the quality of life within our City and increasingly crippling to its transport infrastructure.

14. By means of Supplementary Planning Documents functioning as design guides, the City must encourage radically different housing design in existing neighbourhoods, if necessary embracing prefabrication, to escape from the dreary monotony of red brick, mock-Georgian boxes, packed as close together as possible.

15. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban neighbourhoods, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements.

16. Leicester needs a green vision of public transport to enrich the quality of life within existing neighbourhoods. To this end the City's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21st Century, with light rapid transit and electric bus systems.

17. The work currently being undertaken in the Cultural Quarter must be proceeded with quickly and efficiently. The Council must look again at the Cultural Quarter and seek means to improve its urban design and restore its historic buildings. The result otherwise will be a handful of glittering new buildings surrounded by a drab and run down historic environment.

18. Historic assets such as Leicester Castle are scandalously under used. The Castle possesses one of the largest medieval, secular, timbered halls in England. As such it should be an immense source of civic pride and a major tourist attraction, transforming the local economy of its neighbourhood.

19. There is a low level of civic pride in Leicester, which degrades the quality of life in our local neighbourhoods. This is evidenced by high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem.

20. The City Council should be working with our schools to create a culture where this sort of activity will drastically reduce. Children should be taught civic awareness and encouraged to champion a clean and decent environment in which they will live and work as adults.

21. Education should include a strong element of local history to enable the young to appreciate our 2,000 years and not grow up the same as if they were living in a new town.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative and ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions affecting existing neighbourhoods.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their regeneration policies.

3. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester's existing neighbourhoods, promoting combined heat & power schemes, together with other environmentally and physically sound projects.

4. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester's existing neighbourhoods better places for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

5. Leicester City Council should implement positive cultural policies to promote the performing arts, sport and leisure facilities, the quality of our museums, and above all promote tourism as a major economic boost for the City.

6. Leicester City Council should active seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate housing encroachment and actively promote radical new housing design in existing neighbourhoods as a hallmark of life in our City in the 21st Century.

7. Leicester City Council must promote Civic Pride in the young.

CS POLICY 9. GYPSY, TRAVELLER & SHOW PEOPLE ACCOMMODATION

The Civic Society has no comments to make on this policy statement

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CS POLICY 10. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The City Council will work with partners to ensure that Leicester has a thriving and diverse business community that attracts jobs and investment to the City.

It will prepare a revised Employment Land Supplementary Planning Document to provide updated guidance on the assessment of "fitness for purpose" i.e. quality of employment land.

It will prepare City Centre guidance that refreshes The Strategic Regeneration Area Masterplan and which will identify the safe, key, connecting routes in the City Centre.

The City Council will also take the following actions:

Offices • Promote development of the New Business Quarter (NBQ) in the vicinity of the railway station.2 This will be the location for concentrating new high quality (grade 'A'3), large floorplate, major office development over 1,000 sqm, so that a critical mass of co-located offices is established and enhanced.

- Ensure that the NBQ has excellent connectivity via the national rail network, park and ride schemes with high quality frequent public transport routes as well as pedestrian and cycle access to the Central Shopping Core, Cultural Quarter and New Walk area.*

- At the five year review of this Core Strategy, the case for a subsequent phase of the NBQ will be considered. This would need to enhance the critical mass of new grade 'A'3 large floorplate offices in the NBQ, with potential to create successful city links.*

- The Council will promote small offices between 100 and 1,000 sqm in the City Centre on safe, key connecting routes at Waterside and St. George's South.*

- Allow small offices between 100 and 1,000 sqm outside the City Centre in local and District Centres, or where they extend existing offices or where they are part of a mixed use scheme, including a Business Centre (B1(a) at Ashton Green, as part of the Village Centre.*

Professional Office Area • Within the existing professional office area between New Walk and the Cathedral, small Class B1(a) offices between 100 and 1,000 sqm and Class D1 uses (except places of worship) will be acceptable. D1 uses should not adversely affect residential amenity. The change to residential use including live work units will be acceptable in principle, where premises are unsuitable for modern office uses. Proposals should promote the conservation, enhancement and sensitive use of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Science and Innovation Park • Land will be retained within the Abbey Meadows Science and Innovation Park for research, development and technology based business (Use Class B1b), Innovation Centre Building (Use Class B1 a, b and c); Associated Educational uses (D1) and Associated Research Institutes (No Use Class) which can demonstrate a need either to be located within the park or to be near the National Space Centre.

Enterprising Leicester • The City Council will foster the Design, Creativity and Space Science Hubs that are developing in Leicester and encourage networking opportunities between existing companies and with both Universities.

General Employment Land • Employment land will be retained for B1(c), B2 and B8 uses. The Site Allocations DPD will identify land to be released from employment use. In lower quality employment areas, as defined by the existing Employment Land SPD (2007) and then the revised Employment Land SPD, day nurseries, places of worship, car show rooms and other uses that do not have a use class but are commonly found in industrial estates will be acceptable in principle.

Business Parks • Within Business Parks, high quality B1(c) and B2 uses will be acceptable. A high level of design and landscaping will be expected.

Ashton Green • The City Council will allocate up to 10 ha of new employment land within the proposed urban housing extension at Ashton Green, (B1(c), B2 and B8) development, with provision for a Business Centre (B1(a)), as part of the Village Centre.

Strategic Employment Sites Outside the City • The City Council will support the early delivery of strategic employment sites beyond the City boundary within or with a good functional relationship with the Sustainable Urban Extensions which provide connectivity with the City through access by walking, cycling and use of high quality public transport, by working with neighbouring Local Authorities and Prospect Leicestershire.

Relocations • The City Council will work with partners, to support businesses to relocate from the Strategic Regeneration Area into appropriate property where it enables regeneration.

General Economic Growth • The City Council will promote local labour agreements with developers to enable local people in deprived communities to secure employment and skills development; and

• The City Council will support local business to reduce their carbon footprint by bringing together business concerned with improving their environmental performance.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Leicester has a high proportion of old industrial buildings. This is a considerable asset. Such old buildings are often highly sustainable and can be converted into small units for high-tech businesses. An area of such buildings could be promoted and developed as a high-tech 'cluster'. Mixed use with apartments is an acceptable alternative use, encouraging younger people to live in existing neighbourhoods, closer to their work. By this means statement 4.4.55 on page 60, ties in with 4.4.60 on page 61. Dependence on car use would be reduced through aligning jobs with homes.

2. The office and residential proposals for the "professional office area" should be applied to all office areas.

3. "The City's office market had stagnated due to an oversupply of outdated 1970's offices around the north-eastern part of the ring road, with low rental values. In the past, supply had mainly been met through refurbishment but these older buildings are becoming increasingly obsolete and there are now comparatively high vacancy rates." This is an interesting statement. Leicester Civic Society predicted this over thirty years ago. These buildings were not built to supply a genuine demand for office space; they were built purely for speculative greed, are generally very ugly and out of scale with the City. Many have been empty for most of their existence and they should be pulled down. It is of course no solution to simply replace them with more of the same. Leicester repeatedly forgets that there is no proper regeneration without a commitment to renewal. We need to create a constant culture of renewal; revitalizing and cherishing the things we have

already. As a consequence of the lack of this culture there is a prevalent attitude of always starting at zero, which leads to the same mistakes being made roughly every thirty years.

4. That the delivery of a successful City office market is very important to Leicester's future is true but this may not necessarily be achieved by concentrating efforts in the "New Business Quarter". This is yet another example of Leicester's current tendency to put all the eggs in one basket. A more subtle demographic approach has likelier chance of success.

5. Office area development in Central Leicester should:

- Concentrate in mixed high-tech use in St. Georges North and St. Johns.
- Minimise impact on St. George's conservation area.
- Minimise impact on Granby Street conservation area.
- Protect the listed station frontage and its setting.
- Protect Cook's Temperance Hotel building.

6. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester.

7. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings. There are many examples in both the past and present of this not happening and there is in consequence a running list of historic buildings continually at risk in the City. These buildings, together with conservation areas at risk, are particularly prevalent in inner urban areas usually designated as employment land.

8. Leicester needs to continue and strengthen the strategy for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.

9. The "Enterprising Leicester" proposals are crucial if Leicester is to improve on its low record of graduate retention.

10. The proposals for the "Science and Innovation Park" are broadly welcome. This area will only be a long-term success if it is developed using high quality principles of urban design, radically good building design and sustainability as a design theme. Otherwise it will be just one more office park.

11. Existing lower quality employment land needs to be redeveloped using first class principles of urban design and sustainability. The City Council should be taking the lead in heritage lead regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester is a fundamentally low rise City with a considerable architectural heritage and fundamentally historic structure. Regeneration needs to be heritage lead.

12. To revitalize run down areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate 21st century architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.

13. Leicester's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21st Century. We need better, faster more sustainable means of public transport to get people to and from their places of employment and to help develop new places of employment. At present the only choice is to get on a bus, powered by fossil fuel and competing for limited road space with every other form of vehicle. This ridiculous state of affairs has not changed since 1949, when the last tram ran, and must be changed if we are serious about the promotion of employment opportunity throughout the City

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative to develop employment opportunity and ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions relating to employment opportunities in respect of the city's listed buildings and conservation areas.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their regeneration policies and as a boost to employment opportunity.

3. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

CS POLICY 11. RETAIL HIERARCHY

The Council will support the following hierarchy of retail centres in Leicester:

City Centre

To ensure that Leicester City Centre continues to be a sub regional centre as identified in the RSS the majority of town centre uses will be directed to it. The Central Shopping Core will be the focus for new retail development.

Town Centre: Beaumont Leys

This Centre is the location for town centre uses to serve the northwest sector of the City and the PUA, including Ashton Green.

Hamilton, Belgrave Road, Evington Road, Narborough Road, Uppingham Road (West).

District centres provide a range of facilities and are accessible by public transport.

Local Centres

The local centres in Leicester are listed in Appendix 5. New local centres will be provided in Ashton Green, Waterside and North Hamilton. Local centres provide convenience shopping close to where people live.

The Council will work with partners to protect and enhance retail centres as the most sustainable location for retail development by the following measures:

- a) Applying a sequential approach to the location of town centre uses;*
- b) Safeguarding the retail character and function of centres by resisting development that would detract from their vitality and viability;*
- c) Ensuring that new retail development is consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the hierarchy; and*
- d) Food and drink facilities (Classes A3/A4/A5) will continue to be supported in centres to meet demand and to add vitality and diversity. However this will be subject to considerations of residential amenity, the effect on the retail function of the centre and the cumulative impact of these uses.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Leicester now possesses a genuinely first class 'retail corridor' running from the John Lewis Store through the Highcross Centre to the Market Place.

2. Leicester Civic Society has warmly welcomed the City Council decision to keep the market in the Market Place. We believe that Leicester Market needs a few simple and relatively easy things that would yield great improvements. Moveable stalls and an ever changing, flexible layout dependant on traders needs would be the first and most obvious change for the better. Stalls half occupied and a dreary expanse of empty and grubby stalls when the market is not in progress are the last things that the centre of Leicester needs. The market was open-plan for 650 years before fixed stalls and canopies were first introduced in 1932.

3. Another big improvement would be to remove the circuit of noisy, dirty roadway - often packed with noisy, dirty and smelly rubbish lorries - that encircles the market and cuts it off from its surrounding buildings. Even Belvoir Street has gained from open-air bars and restaurants. But the

Market Place - the one area that could be really transformed by these - seems forever isolated by this dreadful roadway.

4. One thing the market does not need is a 'big build' response with new buildings and structures inside the Market Place. This would inevitably be expensive - and universally hated within at least a generation.

5. Retail centres are successful by virtue of being an integral part of their local neighbourhoods. Most of these neighbourhoods are residential but some are local business neighbourhoods. All are in a healthy symbiotic relationship with their retail centres that has developed naturally. The retail centres provide a range of services that their local neighbourhoods require. The principal threats to this healthy relationship are:

- The development of mini-supermarkets that by their space demands alone, squeeze out existing traders and reduce the variety and versatility of the retail centre. In addition they have a subtle impact on local traffic flows that very often has an adverse impact on the quality of the retail centre. Under such circumstances the increased development of service roads and car parks can serve to actually sever the retail centre from its residential hinterland.
- The over supply of hot-food takeaways, which apart from litter and other anti-social problems, reduces daytime footfall in the retail centre by once again squeezing out existing traders and reducing its variety and versatility.

6. To revitalize run down retail areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate 21st century architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.

7. It is often overlooked that new retail developments can be highly unsustainable. Combined heat and power schemes and carbon neutral developments achieved by the adoption of nationally published standards, as Supplementary Planning Documents must be rapidly implemented to ensure that future generations inherit a safe and clean retail environment.

8. Leicester's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21st Century. Light Rapid Transport systems need to link Park'n'Ride schemes and major retail centres on the edge of the City with the City Centre and with each other.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should take action to preserve and enhance the character - whilst promoting the future - of our 700-year-old Market Place as a vital component of the retail heart of our City.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as a principal behind their retail policies.

3. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable retail environment in Leicester, promoting combined heat & power schemes, together with other environmentally and physically sound projects?

4. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around to shop. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

CS POLICY 12. CITY CENTRE

The Council will promote the growth of the City Centre as a sub-regional shopping, leisure and cultural destination, as the most accessible and sustainable location for main town centre uses and in recognition of its central role in the City's economy and wider regeneration by adopting the following strategy:

1. *Maintaining a compact and accessible retail centre by:*
 - *Safeguarding the Central Shopping Core as the focus of City Centre retail development;*
 - *Ensuring that new retail development is well integrated and closely linked with the primary and principal secondary shopping streets in terms of proximity, continuity of function and ease of access;*
 - *Ensuring that the primary streets and principal secondary streets remain predominantly Class A1 retail; and*
 - *Maintaining and enhancing the market at the heart of the retail Centre.*
2. *Creating a hierarchy and network of pedestrian routes and good quality civic spaces to reconnect disparate and disconnected parts of the Centre by linking together the Centre's key historic and cultural assets, facilities and venues and reducing the severance effect of the Inner Ring Road.*
3. *Developing an economically prosperous Centre through the location of small offices and creative industries to complement the New Business Quarter and supporting related uses including new hotels and conference venues.*
4. *Create a safe and inclusive City Centre by:*
 - *Supporting family oriented leisure development and cultural facilities that appeal to all sections of Leicester's population;*
 - *Having regard to crime and disorder issues through the regulation of pubs bars and night clubs;*
 - *Creating a new Youth hub in the City Centre;*
 - *Providing for a new City Centre library;*
 - *Encouraging uses that make key night time pedestrian routes as safe and well used as possible;*
 - *Making the City Centre more attractive to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport passengers; and*
 - *Achieving high standards of access to and within the City Centre for disabled and older people.*
5. *Supporting residential development, whether by conversion of redundant buildings or new build, where an acceptable living environment can be maintained or created by:*
 - *The identification and development of quieter predominantly residential areas or streets, such as around the cathedral, with restraint on uses and opening hours to reduce the risk of noise and other disturbance impacting on residential amenity, particularly from the night time economy; and*
 - *Enabling facilities such as health centres and schools that would make City Centre living an attractive proposition.*
6. *Making the City Centre the focus of public transport initiatives:*
 - *New City Centre bus station and routing strategy;*
 - *Improving bus interchange facilities;*

- *Contributing towards City Centre Park and Ride bus stop facilities;*
- *Continuing our partnership work with the rail industry to improve interchange at the railway station, particularly with infrastructure, information and through ticketing for bus to rail interchange; and*
- *Reducing the separation of the railway station from the City Centre.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. There needs to be a greater emphasis on leisure facilities that embrace more than the current youth culture if Leicester City Centre is to enjoy a thriving economy, and enjoy a thriving social context relevant to the people of Leicester into the evening. In a society increasingly dominated by the demands of a population whose average age is increasing, the lack of a City Centre that recognises this fact and is welcoming to them becomes a serious fault.

2. Leicester needs a City Centre that is welcoming at all hours; that is bright, entertaining, clean, safe and readily accessible by clean, safe and sustainable means of public transport for all sectors of society.

3. Leicester Civic Society does not understand what is meant by “The historic core of the City is cut off from the main activity of the centre”. The main activity of the centre inclines towards shopping during the day and the provision of facilities for youth culture in the evening. With the possible exception of the Cultural Quarter, the main activity of the adjoining historic cores (There are more than one) inclines towards office use during the day and residential during the evening. Better integration is desirable but how is this to be achieved whilst protecting residential amenity? If this problem is not solved then residential use of the City Centre other than by a transient population will be impossible to achieve. Following on from this failure a family orientated night time economy will be impossible to achieve and the provision of facilities for families will remain irrelevant. The policy is noticeably thin on ideas to avoid this threat.

4. Leicester now possesses a genuinely first class ‘retail corridor’ running from the John Lewis Store through the Highcross Centre to the Market Place.

5. Leicester Market badly needs investment – but of the right sort. The simple solutions are the best.

6. Leicester Civic Society has warmly welcomed the City Council decision to keep the market in the Market Place. We believe that Leicester Market needs a few simple and relatively easy things that would yield great improvements. Moveable stalls and an ever changing, flexible layout dependant on traders needs would be the first and most obvious change for the better. Stalls half occupied and a dreary expanse of empty and grubby stalls when the market is not in progress are the last things that the Centre of Leicester needs. The market was open-plan for 650 years before fixed stalls and canopies were first introduced in 1932.

7. Another big improvement would be to remove the circuit of noisy, dirty roadway - often packed with noisy, dirty and smelly rubbish lorries - that encircles the market and cuts it off from its surrounding buildings. Even Belvior Street has gained from open-air bars and restaurants. But the Market Place - the one area that could be really transformed by these - seems forever isolated by this dreadful roadway.

8. One thing the market does not need is a 'big build' response with new buildings and structures inside the Market Place. This would inevitably be expensive - and universally hated within at least a generation.
9. Leicester Civic Society welcomes the findings of the Retail Study that there is no need to extend the current shopping core.
10. A study to investigate ways to improving pedestrian connexion between the Castle and Jewry Wall areas and other historic parts of the City Centre is very welcome and long overdue. The severance effect of the inner ring road has been a major problem since its construction. We look forward to the results of this investigation with interest. There is a need to make better open space provision across this part of Leicester. The area above the underpass, site of the former Southgates Bus Garage and the New Street Car Park could make an excellent interconnecting series of high quality public open spaces complementing the proposed new 'Cathedral Square'.
11. There is a need to improve pedestrian connexion between De Montfort University and the City Centre. To this end major improvements for the pedestrian use of Friars Lane and Millstone Lane are needed to link them to The Newarke.
12. There is a need to improve pedestrian connexion between De Montfort University and New Walk. Through New Walk this would also connect to Victoria Park, Leicester University and Stoneygate. To this end major improvements to Newarke Street are needed to make it more pedestrian friendly. The improvements at The Newarke Gateway mean that one traffic lane can now be removed from Newarke Street to allow for a tree-lined pedestrian boulevard to be accommodated.
13. There a need to improve pedestrian connexion between New Walk and the retail core. To this end pedestrianisation should be extended to Pocklington's Walk, Berridge Street and Greyfriars to link New Walk with Loseby Lane and Cart's Lane. Public transport access to Horsefair Street for Leicester Market will have to accommodated some how but these streets, together with Friar's Lane, Millstone Lane, New Street and Peacock Lane are currently plagued by unrestricted and unnecessary car access that is disruptive to their enjoyment as part of the historic core of the City.
14. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester City Centre.
15. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings. There are many examples in both the past and present of this not happening and there is in consequence a running list of historic buildings continually at risk in the City Centre.
16. We need to strengthen the strategy for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City Centre that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. This must include all listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks & gardens and all buildings on the local interest list.
17. City Centre Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.

18. There is potential for conservation area extension to the south of Newarke Street and the area between Granby Street and New Walk conservation areas, which includes the largest single concentration of buildings on the Local Interest List that are not already within a conservation area.

19. Regeneration in the City Centre is an unnecessarily emotive issue. The City Council should be taking the lead in heritage led regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester has a fundamentally low rise City Centre with a considerable architectural heritage and historic framework.

20. All new developments in the City Centre, both commercial and residential, should demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. Carbon neutral developments achieved by the adoption of nationally published standards, as Supplementary Planning Documents must be rapidly implemented to ensure that future generations inherit a safe and clean environment.

21. De Montfort University has not created a market for any further student accommodation to the West of the City Centre. To give in to the University on this will threaten the integrity of the remaining parts of the Old West End and run counter to CS Policy 8 on Existing Neighbourhoods.

22. Proposals for the former Haymarket Theatre as a 'youth hub' for the City Centre are warmly welcome. Given the nature of the building any potential for youth orientated performing arts is to be encouraged.

23. Leicester Civic Society sees no need for a new City Centre Library. This risks becoming yet another highly expensive white elephant with the potential to adversely affect the historic built environment of the City.

24. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City Centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City Centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements. In particular there should be no subways.

25. It is agreed that facilities for the users of public transport are not adequate to provide a high quality service, but this is only a polite euphemism for public transport itself being of insufficient quality. Leicester's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21st Century. Our buses still burn diesel oil whilst those of other cities run on gas or bio-fuel. Local networks of electronic buses could also be introduced.

26. We need tighter control on access to the City centre by motorists and no illegal parking tolerated. To this end a great expansion of Park'n'Ride schemes is badly needed.

27. Leicester needs a vastly improved routing strategy for public transport with better connexion between bus and rail and better public transport connexion to the Market Place. What it does not need is a highly expensive new bus station. Leicester has one of the worst public transport services in Britain. A recent report by independent consultants states that among major cities, only Birmingham and Bristol are worse in this respect than Leicester. There are two major causes

of this unhappy state of affairs. The first was privatisation of Leicester City Transport, which was piecemeal and has consequently led to piecemeal services. The second is Leicester City Council's inability to see the wood for the trees and its obsession with bus stations and bus hubs at the expense of attempting to sort out the real problems, which lie with services and routes.

28. The present St. Margaret's Bus Station opened in 1985. It replaced the 1939 bus station on the same site, which by then was way past its sell by date but had the advantage of being sited on the Central Ring Road and only six or seven minutes walk from the Clock Tower. Like all good bus stations of the time the new St. Margaret's consists of a central hall with bus loading bays down one side and the usual facilities down the other. Major refurbishment commenced in 2006 and was officially completed in 2007. Meanwhile the Haymarket Bus Station opened in 1994, Causeway Lane Bus Hub opened in 2008 and there is now a proposed new Bus Hub for St. Nicholas Place, specifically to serve the level of park-and-ride service that Leicester should have seen years ago. Leicester badly needs a rationalised bus service that actually serves the needs of its potential customers. Leicester badly needs a fast and frequent electric mini-bus service running around the town centre on dedicated highway. It does not need another new bus station, costing many millions of pounds and to occupy a huge area of land as yet unidentified.

29. There is a low level of civic pride in Leicester, which degrades the quality of life in our communities. This is evidenced by high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem.

30. The City Council should be working with our schools to create a culture where this sort of activity will drastically reduce. Children should be taught civic awareness and encouraged to champion a clean and decent environment in which they will live and work as adults.

31. Education should include a strong element of local history to enable the young to appreciate our 2,000 years and not grow up the same as if they were living in a new town.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative in the City Centre and ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester City Centre and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their regeneration policies.

3. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

4. Leicester City Council should take action to preserve and enhance the character - whilst promoting the future - of our 700-year-old Market Place as a vital component of the retail heart of our City.

5. Leicester City Council must promote Civic Pride in the young.

CS POLICY 13. GREEN NETWORK

The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the quality of the green network so that residents and visitors have easy access to good quality green space, sport and recreation provision that meets the needs of local people. A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to provide detailed guidance and information on green space, sport and recreation provision and to support the following principles:

- The Council will safeguard and improve green space, sport and recreation facilities that are of value to the green network, local communities and biodiversity, especially those that are of strategic importance i.e. green wedges, the River and Canal Corridor;*
- Green wedges will be maintained as areas of land that prevent the merging of built up areas of the City and adjoining settlements, guide the development and provide a "green lung" into the inner urban area. Their function as open space for leisure or recreational purposes will be maintained and enhanced. Development within a green wedge will be expected to serve the open space, be of high design quality and of an appropriate scale and size for its location to minimise the visual and environmental impact of the development;*
- The Council will pursue opportunities to make green space, sport and recreation facilities more accessible and improve links and connections between spaces;*
- New development proposals should meet the need for provision arising from the development, taking account of local qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in green space, sport and recreation provision. New on-site provision or S106 contributions to improve the quality of, or access to, existing open space, will be expected and commuted maintenance sums will be sought; and*
- Where there are proposals that affect green space, outdoor sport or recreation facilities, land should not be released, either in total or in part, for development unless it is: surplus to requirements for its current green space function; and not needed for another type of green space use; or equivalent or better replacement green space would be provided in the local area.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. The River Soar and Grand Union Canal is the single most important green corridor in Leicester. It is eight miles long, completely bisects the City and for much of its length consists of a linked series of parks, gardens and nature reserves. From our Canal Clean-up Campaign of the early 1970's, its promotion and enhancement has been central to Civic Society policy.
2. The River and Canal is a vitally important green lung for the City. They are the most readily available public open space for large areas of Leicester.
3. The River Soar and Grand Union Canal are a priceless historical asset, both in their own right as a late C18th river navigation and late C19th flood prevention scheme, both with their full works intact, and as a high quality visual link between different areas of the historic built environment of Leicester; much of that built environment being originally dependent on the waterway for its existence.
4. As such they are also vital for the development and growth of water-borne tourism in Leicester. Waterways festivals and events throughout the year should be used to promote them as an exciting part of the national heritage of waterways.
5. Leicester City Council should join with Leicestershire County Council, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston and Charnwood Councils, in current and future schemes to develop the waterways throughout Leicester and Leicestershire as a sustainable green lung.

6. Leicester City Council should work with British Waterways and the Inland Waterways Association on current and future schemes to develop the waterway through Leicester as a major tourist attraction.

7. New conservation areas should be considered for the South, Central and North Riverside Areas, together with Leicester Abbey.

8. Existing conservation Areas at Aylestone Village, Leicester Castle and Belgrave Village must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines.

9. The best and simplest way to 'green' Leicester is to plant hundreds of thousands of new trees.

10. The adoption of Leicester's identified green wedges as suitable for wind power development may be unsatisfactory policy, in view of the relatively narrow corridors they occupy within the City and the consequent adverse impact on the visual amenity of their surroundings.

11. Sports and leisure facilities are an important part of green wedges but not at the expense of crucially important existing uses such as nature reserves. Sport and leisure facilities are best developed in peripheral areas away from the north-south river and canal corridor.

12. Leicester Civic Society does not believe in the concept of exchanging green space, either for other green space uses or for development, with 'new' green space being offered as a planning gain. We consider the natural environment of our City to be sacrosanct. It is not negotiable. There should be no development on playing fields or on allotments for housing or other uses. There should be no redevelopment of nature reserves for sports facilities.

13. Housing demand in Leicester based on Government targets cannot be fulfilled by the available supply of land. Furthermore the definition of parks and sports fields, together with allotments and other private gardens as 'brownfield' land will continue to be ruinous to the quality of life within our City and increasingly crippling to its transport infrastructure.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic and natural environment as a major part of its green network and ensure that the protection, enhancement and promotion of this environment is central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester, promoting environmentally and physically sound projects that contribute towards and enhance the green network.

3. Leicester City Council should actively seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate housing and other encroachments.

CS POLICY 14. THE TRANSPORT NETWORK

Development should be easily accessible to all future users, including those with limited mobility, both from within the City and the wider sub region. It should be accessible by alternative means of travel to the car, promoting sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking and be located to minimise the need to travel.

The Council will work with partners to develop and maintain a Transport Network that will maximise accessibility, manage congestion and air quality, and accommodate the impacts of new development. This will be achieved through:

- *New development being designed and located so that it is within close walking distance to frequent high quality bus services;*
- *Providing park and ride in appropriate major edge of urban developments such as Sustainable Urban Extensions, in line with the requirements of the Regional Transport Strategy;*
- *Identifying and safeguarding land for new city centre bus station and interchange facilities and for the Quality Public Transport Corridors;*
- *Assessing the strength of the business case, which could lead to the phased delivery of a tram, based system;*
- *The provision of pedestrian routes, cycle routes and infrastructure to give good access around the City;*
- *The delivery of highways and transport improvements as guided by the statutory Local Transport Plan and the Leicester and Leicestershire Infrastructure Assessment, through joint working with neighbouring Transport Authorities and districts where necessary;*
- *Enabling increased rail use through improvements to the rail station, safeguarding the spare track-bed alongside the Midland Mainline and by not prejudicing the implementation of future rail infrastructure at Knighton Junction; and*
- *Providing opportunities for sustainable freight movement where possible on rail and waterways by working with Network Rail, British Waterways and other agencies in considering potential low key freight uses and waterside freight connection.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Leicester Civic Society agrees that Leicester badly needs a greatly improved public transport network if it is to fulfil its aims as a quality City. Within the PUA the emphasis should be on first-rate public transport links to otherwise remote sites such as Ashton Green, Beaumont Leys and Hamilton. These areas cannot flourish without such connexions both into the City and through the City to other peripheral shopping and public transport hubs. Perhaps thinking of such matters in terms of through corridors would be helpful in the planning of transport infrastructure. Hamilton to Fosse Park and Enderby P&R, and Ashton Green and Beaumont Leys to South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby, are two obvious examples.

2. For such long distances with routes passing through the City Centre, Light Rapid Transit is the obvious choice but the high capital cost may make bus only lanes and guided bus lanes other possibilities worth considering.

3. Safe walking and cycling networks need to be provided in conjunction with the above corridors.

4. The City Council should already be working with Blaby and Oadby & Wigston DC's on these matters.

5. Road widening, which has been responsible for wholesale wrecking of the built environment and quality of life within the City is no longer acceptable. All additional transport capacity improvements will need to come from public transport together with improved and encouraged facilities for cyclists and walkers.

6. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements. In particular there should be no subways.

7. Leicester's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21st Century. We need Light Rapid Transit systems. We are a larger City than Nottingham, yet Nottingham possess one tramline and is already working on two more. Destinations served need to include Beaumont Leys, Wigston, Oadby, Hamilton and Fosse Park, as described above, with links to the railway station, bus stations, Royal Infirmary, Highcross, Glenfield Hospital, Leicester University, De Montfort University campus and the Tigers Ground. These can be achieved with two basic tram routes: Ashton Green to Oadby and Hamilton to Enderby P&R, with a central, or partial central circuit, embracing both routes and therefore with a combined service frequency. Use of the Great Central Way south of Upperton Road would allow the unused National Forest Line track-bed from its crossing at Marlow Road to be used to Meynells Gorse P&R.

8. This potential use for the vacant track-bed should not conceal that what Leicester really needs is the National Forest Rail Route reopening to passengers, with stations inside the City, rail-tram interchange and Park'n'Ride interchange. The line from Nottingham to Mansfield runs with tram on adjoining former rail track-bed from Wilkinson Street to Hucknall.

9. LRT uses for vacant track-bed of the Midland Main Line from Thurmaston to Syston, and from Welford Road to Wigston North Junction could also be considered. The Nottingham experience is that LRT is cheaper to construct on former railway track-bed and when running off-road, vehicles may achieve maximum speeds.

10. We need tighter control on access to the City centre by motorists and no illegal parking tolerated. To this end a great expansion of Park'n'Ride schemes is badly needed. The four PR proposals identified are not enough in themselves. Park'n'Ride should also be introduced at South Wigston, Oadby, Thurnby and Hamilton. Once again Nottingham leads the way with seven P&R sites.

11. Our buses still burn diesel oil whilst those of other cities run on gas or bio-fuel. Local networks of electronic buses could also be introduced, as could guided bus lanes as a cheaper alternative to the high capital costs of a tram infrastructure.

12. Leicester has wasted years doing little or nothing about these things, and is now getting left behind. The recent controversy over road charging is a taste of things to come. Stricter government guidelines will inevitably be implemented in the future and the City may find the cost of catching up with these is crippling. CS Policy 14 is too weak. In particular there is lukewarm commitment to an LRT network and insufficient support for the re-opening of the National Forest Railway.

13. Improved facilities and services for bus travellers are welcome. But what Leicester does not need is a highly expensive new bus station. Leicester has one of the worst public transport services in Britain. A recent report by independent consultants states that among major cities, only Birmingham and Bristol are worse in this respect than Leicester. There are two major causes of this unhappy state of affairs. The first was privatisation of Leicester City Transport, which was piecemeal and has consequently led to piecemeal services. The second is Leicester City Council's inability to see the wood for the trees and its obsession with bus stations and bus hubs at the expense of attempting to sort out the real problems, which lie with services and routes.

14. The present St. Margaret's Bus Station opened in 1985. It replaced the 1939 bus station on the same site, which by then was way past its sell by date but had the advantage of being sited on the Central Ring Road and only six or seven minutes walk from the Clock Tower. Like all good bus stations of the time the new St. Margaret's consists of a central hall with bus loading bays down one side and the usual facilities down the other. Major refurbishment commenced in 2006 and was officially completed in 2007. Meanwhile the Haymarket Bus Station opened in 1994, Causeway Lane Bus Hub opened in 2008 and there is now a proposed new Bus Hub for St. Nicholas Place, specifically to serve the level of park-and-ride service that Leicester should have seen years ago. Leicester badly needs a rationalised bus service that actually serves the needs of its potential customers. Leicester badly needs a fast and frequent electric mini-bus service running around the town centre on dedicated highway. It does not need another new bus station, costing many millions of pounds and to occupy a huge area of land as yet unidentified.

15. Leicester needs to vigorously promote a sustainable environment. Sustainable public transport must be a key factor in this environment. CS Policy 14 is perfectly correct in its assertion that it is best to minimise the need to travel by means of systems design.

Conclusions:

1. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move.

2. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester, promoting environmentally and physically sound public transport projects.

CS POLICY 15. MANAGING DEMAND FOR CAR USE

To meet the key aim of reducing Leicester's contribution to climate change, opportunities should be provided that will manage congestion on the City roads. This will be achieved by:

- *Reviewing Leicester's Car Parking Strategy to ensure that Leicester City Centre attracts inward investment that reduces the potential to travel by car;*
- *Preparing a Supplementary Planning Document for Parking Standards and Travel Plans*
- *Requiring travel plans for large scale development;*
- *Supporting a proposed hierarchy of parking enforcement zones;*
- *No additional new public and contract car parking provision (long stay or short stay; temporary or permanent) not associated with new development will be acceptable in the City Centre unless a need is identified by the City Wide Parking Strategy;*
- *Ensuring the provision of high quality cycle parking to encourage a modal shift away from the car; and*
- *Ensuring that parking for residential development is of the highest design quality and use land efficiency does not compromise viability and the need for high quality regeneration. It should be appropriate for the type of dwelling and its location and takes into account the amount of available existing off street and on street car parking and the availability of public transport.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. Leicester needs to vigorously promote a sustainable environment. Managing the demand for car use is central to the success of this policy.
2. There needs to be tighter control on access to the City Centre by motorists and no illegal parking tolerated. To this end a great expansion of Park'n'Ride schemes is badly needed, as are Street Wardens, CCTV systems and the whole system of City Centre vehicular control taken over by the City Council from the police.
3. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements. In particular there should be no subways.
4. 4.4.106 on page 80 states that the Local Transport Plan is based on no nett increase in off-street parking places within the City Centre. This is to be welcomed, as is the allowance of P&R spaces as City Centre parking stock and the requirement for high quality travel plans for new development. However the statement that temporary car parking on derelict sites will not normally be acceptable is too weak, allowing the exception to become the norm.
5. CS Policy 15 is generally too weak. Leicester's key contribution to climate change opportunities will not be achieved by the management of congestion on City roads that attract inward investment reducing the potential to travel by car. Tougher policies are needed.

6. Hopeful reference to the City Wide Parking Strategy is too weak. Tougher policies are needed.
7. Any SPD for Parking Standards and Travel Plans must be tough.
8. The introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy should be seriously considered.
9. The fundamental principal is that any policy for managing demand for car use will succeed or fail on the strength of the public transport policy. CS Policy 15 is therefore dependant CS Policy 14 for its success.

Conclusions:

- 1. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move.**
- 2. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester by seeking the tighter management of car use.**

CS POLICY 16. CULTURAL STRATEGY

We will work with our partners to develop culture and leisure facilities and opportunities which provide quality and choice and which increase participation among all our diverse communities. We consider that new developments should create an environment for culture and creativity to flourish by:

- *Encouraging investment to improve the quality of the infrastructure for arts, sports, museums, parks, play provision, libraries, cemeteries and crematoria and leisure. Facilities should be accessible and fit for purpose, attracting participants from outside Leicester as well as building communities at the neighbourhood level;*
- *Providing opportunities for the creative economy to prosper by developing creative clusters and appropriate workspaces for the creative sector;*
- *Creating or retaining cultural facilities and opportunities, including places of worship, cemeteries and crematoria, that help people who live here to develop a sense of belonging, to value the cultural diversity and heritage of our City and become more confident and proud of Leicester, seeing it as a good place to live;*
- *Developing a rich cultural offer which attracts people to Leicester such as visitors, businesses looking for a new location, graduates and people applying for jobs so that they see Leicester as progressive, ambitious, confident and vibrant; and*
- *Using good place design, activities and events to inspire people to get more active, more often.*

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. The work currently being undertaken in the Cultural Quarter must be proceeded with quickly and efficiently. The Council must look again at the Cultural Quarter and seek means to improve its urban design and restore its historic buildings. The result otherwise will be a handful of glittering new buildings surrounded by a drab and run down historic environment.

2. Other cities of Leicester's size enjoy varied performing arts and cinema outlets in different parts of their central areas. Leicester should not be afraid to do so. Putting all of our 'cultural eggs' in one basket is a mistake. In particular the Phoenix Theatre should continue as a priceless cultural asset on the opposite side of the City centre to the new Digital Media Centre.

3. We need more investment in our museums and a serious investment in tourism to promote the City and enrich its economy by putting its rich and varied history to work. Leicester's museums are seriously under funded, many with reduced opening hours and insufficient space to display the great collections owned by our Museums Service.

4. Historic assets such as Leicester Castle are scandalously under used. The Castle possesses one of the largest medieval, timbered halls in England. As such it should be an immense source of civic pride and a major tourist attraction, transforming the local economy of its surroundings.

5. There is a clear wish amongst the people of Leicester to see a central swimming baths and central ice rink. Such facilities should be features of an expanded Cultural Quarter. As such current proposals for the Corah site deserve the fullest support. Culture doesn't just mean the arts.

6. A positive and pro-active cultural strategy is of paramount importance in attracting genuine tourists, visitors and new residents to Leicester. It's function is very much more important than to act as an adjunct to regeneration. (4.4.110. Page 82)

7. The above paragraph is the only reference to tourism in this section. CS Policy 16 omits any reference. This is a staggering omission.

8. A cultural strategy that encourages “investment to improve the quality of the infrastructure for arts, sports, museums, parks, play provision, libraries.....and leisure” is indeed warmly welcomed. But for thirteen years we have been told there are no resources for many of these things. If CS Policy 16 is adopted it will therefore represent a long overdue change for the better in the life of our City.

9. The historic built environment is crucial to our culture as a City. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings. There are many examples in both the past and present of this not happening and there is in consequence a running list of historic buildings continually at risk in the City. Our architectural heritage is vital in defining our culture and in attracting tourists and visitors to Leicester,

10. To strengthen our culture need to strengthen the strategy for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. This must include all listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks & gardens and all buildings on the local interest list.

11. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be a clear programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines. The potential for enhanced conservation with up to 8.5% of the City directly affected must be realised to promote and enrich our culture.

12. There is a low level of civic pride in Leicester, which degrades the quality of life in our communities. This is evidenced by high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem.

13. The City Council should be working with our schools to create a culture where this sort of activity will drastically reduce. Children should be taught civic awareness and encouraged to champion a clean and decent environment in which they will live and work as adults.

14. Education should include a strong element of local history to enable the young to appreciate our 2,000 years and not grow up the same as if they were living in a new town.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative to enrich the cultural life of our City. The protection and enhancement of this environment must be made central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should implement positive cultural policies to promote the performing arts, sport and leisure facilities, the quality of our museums, and above all promote tourism as a major economic boost for the City.

3. Leicester City Council must promote Civic Pride in the young.

CS POLICY 17. BIODIVERSITY

The Council will expect development to maintain, enhance, and/or strengthen connections for wildlife, both within and beyond the identified biodiversity network. In Leicester's urban environment private gardens, previously developed land, buildings and built structures can also provide important habitats for wildlife. Such sites that are either connected to the overall biodiversity network or act as wildlife refuges for animals moving out from these sites across the broader network of green spaces in the City will also be assessed for their biodiversity value.

In considering the potential impact of development on wildlife, the Council will require ecological surveys and assessments of the site to be undertaken where appropriate to establish the presence or absence of protected species or habitats of particular value prior to any development taking place. Careful consideration will then be given to the potential to find an alternative location for the development, to avoid harm to wildlife and geological interests. If this is not possible the Council will require adequate mitigation measures to be put in place. Compensation measures to offset significant harm caused by the development may also be necessary e.g. through off-site contributions or by integrating biodiversity features within new development.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. The River Soar and Grand Union Canal is the single most important green corridor in Leicester. It is eight miles long, completely bisects the City and for much of its length consists of a linked series of parks, gardens and nature reserves. From our Canal Clean-up Campaign of the early 1970's, its promotion and enhancement has been central to Civic Society policy.
2. The River and Canal is a vitally important green lung for the City. They are the most readily available public open space for large areas of Leicester.
3. Leicester City Council should join with Leicestershire County Council, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston and Charnwood Councils, in current and future schemes to develop the waterways throughout Leicester and Leicestershire as a sustainable green lung.
4. The best and simplest way to 'green' Leicester is to plant hundreds of thousands of new trees.

Conclusions:

1. **Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our natural environment as a major part of its green network and ensure that bio-diversity is central to all of its decisions in respect of this network.**
2. **Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester, promoting environmentally and physically sound projects that contribute towards and enhance bio-diversity.**
3. **Leicester City Council should actively seek to protect open green spaces from inappropriate housing and other encroachments.**

CS POLICY 18. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The Council will protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment including the character and setting of important historic buildings, spaces and places. This includes Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings (both statutory and locally listed), registered and locally listed parks and gardens, Conservation Areas and archaeological remains.

We will support the sensitive reuse of high quality historic buildings, promote the integration of old and new buildings to create attractive spaces and places, encourage contemporary design rather than pastiche replicas, and seek the retention of historic shop fronts and the historic public realm. Within the regeneration areas particular importance will be given to the integration of the historic environment with new development.

An archaeological assessment will be required where a proposal would affect a site, which is known to contain archaeological remains or thought likely to contain archaeological remains. Where that assessment indicates that there is a potential that significant remains exist on a site an archaeological field evaluation will also be necessary. In addition to this all major applications within the Archaeological Alert Area will be required to include an assessment of the impact of the proposal upon archaeological remains.

There is a presumption that nationally important remains will be preserved in situ. In the case of less important remains, where it is not possible to preserve remains in situ, provision for the excavation and recording of remains will be essential. In all cases developers must demonstrate a thorough consideration of any potential archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, wherever possible prior to submitting a planning application.

The Council will work with local communities to protect and enhance the quality and diversity of Leicester's historic environment, in particular through the production of Conservation Area Character Appraisals incorporating management strategies. The City Council will also monitor historic buildings at risk and take action where necessary to secure and improve those buildings deemed at most risk. We will consider the advice of statutory and local consultees in considering applications affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. Where a development is likely to have a significant affect on important archaeological remains, the City Council will work with the developer to reconcile the need for development with the desirability of preserving the information contained within the remains.

COMMENTARY BY LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

1. PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment states that it is fundamental to the Government's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment. The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes, though formal education and in many other ways, to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness, which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside. The historic environment is also of immense importance for leisure and recreation. Also:

2. The Government urges local authorities to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies and their allocation of resources. It is important that, as planning authorities, they adopt suitable policies in their development plans, and give practical effect to them through their development control decisions. And:

3. Authorities are also required by section 72 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act, in the exercise in a conservation area of their powers under the Planning Acts, and Part 1 of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

4. In addition the following policies contained in the Government's Draft PPS15 currently completing its consultation period are of particular relevance:

5. Policy HE3: Having assessed the evidence, local planning authorities should, where appropriate, set out a positive, proactive, strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment in their area. They should particularly focus on the local distinctiveness of the historic environment and how this can be used to promote a sense of place. They should include consideration of how best to conserve individual, groups or types of heritage assets that are most at risk of loss through neglect, decay or other pressures.

6. Policy HE4.1 The continued use of heritage assets can contribute to sustainable development. Keeping assets in use reduces the consumption of building materials and energy and reduces waste.

7. Policy HE6.1 Local planning authorities should consider how they can best proactively monitor the impact of their planning policies and decisions on the historic environment. They should pay particular attention to the degree to which groups of heritage assets and individual heritage assets are at risk of loss or decay, how they expect this will change over time, and how they propose to respond.

8. Policy HE9.2 Local planning authorities should use appropriate expert advice to inform decision-making relating to heritage assets where the need to understand the significance of the heritage asset demands it. This may be from in-house experts, experts available through agreement with other authorities, or consultants, complemented by specialist national organisations and local amenity societies.

9. Policy HE9.3 Local planning authorities should particularly seek the views of the local community where the evidence suggests that the asset may have a historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic significance to the local community that may not be fully understood from records or statutory consultees alone.

10. Policy HE9.4 In determining individual applications, local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of enhancing the significance of heritage assets, securing their conservation for the longer term and utilising their positive role in place-making.

11. Policy HE11.1 When considering applications for development within the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that enhance the significance of the asset.

12. Policy HE11.2 Where an aspect of an asset's setting does not positively contribute to its significance, local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of enhancing or better revealing the significance, including through high quality design of new development. This should be seen as a positive public benefit and part of the process of place making.

13. The historic environment is described as an important asset for the City. Leicester Civic Society contends that it is *the* important asset for the City. The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in Leicester. By its very existence it expresses our love, admiration and care for our City and is the key factor that underpins almost everything else. In view of this it is depressing that CS Policy 18 is last in the document.

14. In reality our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings. There are many examples in both the past and present of this not happening and there is in consequence running lists of historic buildings compiled by English Heritage, Leicester City Council and Leicester Civic Society, which are continually at risk in the City.

15. We need to develop and build on the existing City Council Heritage at Risk Strategy and Register for dealing with historic buildings, monuments and sites within the City that are at risk through under investment, under development and neglect. This must include all listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks & gardens and make allowance for buildings on the local interest list.
16. Leicester City Council and Leicester Civic Society need to work closer together on the strategy and the register and in particular explore the City Council Heritage Strategy in respect of heritage at risk under the direct stewardship of the Council.
17. Leicester City Council and Leicester Civic Society need to take joint direct action to reduce the number of entries on the English Heritage, Heritage at Risk Register, and on their own registers.
18. Leicester City Council must not hesitate to use its powers to serve notices under Sections 47, 48 and 88A(1) of the Listed Buildings Act. Section 215 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act must also be used where necessary.
19. Back-to-back agreements with bodies such as historic buildings trusts must be encouraged.
20. Conservation Areas must not be overlooked as their existence depends on the preservation of character and the best way to achieve this is the enhancement of their buildings in addition to high quality hard landscaping, street furniture, tree planting and public art. There must be clear continuation of the programme in place for Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans, and for their timely renewal, in line with English Heritage guidelines. Leicester City Council has already made a good start with this work and is in front of many other local authorities.
21. Leicester Civic Society has identified potential extensions to existing conservation areas at West End, Aylestone Village, Knighton Village, New Walk, Market Street, Evington Footpath and Evington Village.
22. In addition there is potential for extension of Braunstone Village across the City boundary into Blaby DC and this should be investigated with them.
23. We have also reached the stage where we need to consider the status of substantial areas of quality 1920's and 1930's houses that may also need Conservation Area Status in accordance with EH guidelines.
24. Leicester Civic Society has identified potential wholly new conservation areas at Western Park, St. Anne's, St. Paul's, Riverside North, Leicester Abbey, Riverside Central, Riverside South, Clarendon Park, South Knighton and Portland. The latter would provide a physical link between Stoneygate and the Oadby Hill Top conservation area in Oadby.
25. Talbot Lane, The Jewry Site and St. Nicholas Church were arbitrarily removed from the Castle Gardens conservation area in 2008. Leicester Civic Society wishes to see this wrong decision reversed.
26. Using teams on the ground the Society will be researching in detail the potential for all of the above extensions and new conservation areas as follows:

- Southeast Leicester in 2010.
- Central Leicester and the River Soar corridor in 2011.
- West Leicester in 2012.

27. CS Policy 18 states that the City Council will support the sensitive reuse of high quality historic buildings. This begs the question of who decides if a historic building is high quality or not. The policy is weak and should confirm that the City Council will support the sensitive reuse of historic buildings.

28. The whole paragraph dealing with archaeological assessments is hopelessly vague.

29. CS Policy 18 concludes with a statement on the subject of working with local communities. This is satisfactory and welcome. It does however represent a sea change in past and current practice, sufficiently bold as to arouse considerable suspicion. We need to see firmer guarantees.

30. In view of the above the whole of CS Policy, which is only four paragraphs in length, together with the indicative map on page 87 is completely inadequate. In recognising only what is there now it fails totally to make any prediction of identifiable historic built environment that may emerge in the future, in line with the Government Draft PPS15. Leicester City Council policies in this respect are reactive not proactive. This is a wholly negative approach to take in this vitally important part of the Local Development Framework.

31. In addition to the above Leicester possesses a huge stock of terraced houses totalling some 29,000 dwellings that are now close to, or in excess of one hundred years old, and very few of which - despite their age, architectural style and generally excellent condition - are afforded the status and character protection given by Conservation Area inclusion. This situation also needs to be reviewed but it is admitted that the widespread use of replacement UPVC doors and windows over the last thirty years makes this extremely difficult.

32. The City Council should be taking the lead in heritage led regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester is a fundamentally low rise City with a considerable architectural heritage and fundamentally historic structure. Consequently future regeneration needs to be heritage led.

33. To revitalize run down areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate 21st century architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history.

34. Leicester needs to vigorously promote a sustainable environment.

35. Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming, tree planting and massive environmental improvements.

36. The work currently being undertaken in the Cultural Quarter must be proceeded with quickly and efficiently. The Council must look again at the Cultural Quarter and seek means to improve its

urban design and restore its historic buildings. The result otherwise will be a handful of glittering new buildings surrounded by a drab and run down historic environment.

37. We need more investment in our museums and a serious investment in tourism to promote the City and enrich its economy by putting its rich and varied history to work. Leicester's museums are seriously under funded, many with reduced opening hours and insufficient space to display the great collections owned by our Museums Service.

38. Historic assets such as Leicester Castle are scandalously under used. The Castle possesses one of the largest medieval, timbered halls in England. As such it should be an immense source of civic pride and a major tourist attraction, transforming the local economy of its surroundings.

39. Leicester Civic Society has warmly welcomed the City Council decision to keep the market in the Market Place. We believe that Leicester Market needs a few simple and relatively easy things that would yield great improvements.

40. There is a low level of civic pride in Leicester, which degrades the quality of life in our communities. This is evidenced by high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem.

42. The City Council should be working with our schools to create a culture where this sort of activity will drastically reduce. Children should be taught civic awareness and encouraged to champion a clean and decent environment in which they will live and work as adults.

43. Education should include a strong element of local history to enable the young to appreciate our 2,000 years and not grow up the same as if they were living in a new town.

Conclusions:

1. Leicester City Council should adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy initiative and ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions.

2. Leicester City Council should take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their regeneration policies.

3. Leicester City Council should work for a sustainable environment in Leicester,

4. Radical transport policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Leicester City Council should actively and imaginatively promote them.

5. Leicester City Council should implement positive cultural policies to promote the quality of our museums and libraries, and above all promote tourism as a major economic boost for the City.

6. Leicester City Council should take action to preserve and enhance the character - whilst promoting the future - of our 700-year-old Market Place as a vital component of the retail heart of our City.

7. Leicester City Council must promote Civic Pride in the young.

CS POLICY 19. INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Civic Society has no comments to make on this policy statement.

STUART BAILEY

Chairman, Leicester Civic Society
28th October 2009.