

To Members of the Council

Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore (Chairman)
Cllr. Nick Chapman (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam
Cllr. Royston Bayliss
Cllr. Lee Breckon JP
Cllr. Nick Brown
Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Stuart Coar
Cllr. Luke Cousin
Cllr. Tony Deakin
Cllr. Roy Denney
Cllr. Alex DeWinter
Cllr. Susan Findlay
Cllr. Janet Forey

Cllr. Helen Gambardella
Cllr. Hannah Gill
Cllr. Nigel Grundy
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn
Cllr. Richard Holdridge
Cllr. Mark Jackson
Cllr. Becca Lunn
Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Les Phillimore
Cllr. Terry Richardson
Cllr. Ande Savage
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd

Cllr. Dillan Shikotra
Cllr. Mike Shirley
Cllr. Roger Stead
Cllr. Ben Taylor
Cllr. Matt Tomeo
Cllr. Bob Waterton
Cllr. Bev Welsh
Cllr. Jane Wolfe
Cllr. Maggie Wright
Cllr. Neil Wright

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Narborough on **TUESDAY, 21 MAY 2024** at **5.30 p.m.** for the transaction of the following business and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully



Louisa Horton
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

To receive apologies for absence, disclosures of interest from Councillors, and Minutes of the previous Council meeting.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Disclosures of Interests from Members

To receive disclosures of interests from Members (i.e. the existence and the nature of those interests in respect of items on this agenda).

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 (enclosed).

SECTION 2 - STANDARD COUNCIL BUSINESS

Any reports for consideration listed under this section will be moved in one block without discussion, unless any Member present requests otherwise.

SECTION 3 - PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

To consider any presentations from Council Officer's or an external body/partner agency.

SECTION 4 - QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC & PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

To receive questions to Councillors submitted by members of the public and to receive any petitions submitted in accordance with the Council's petitions scheme.

4. Public Speaking Protocol

Requests received by the Protocol deadline to be reported by the Monitoring Officer with details of the Agenda Item to which they relate. (Such persons entitled to use the Protocol attend for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business of the meeting and the time allocated to each person is a maximum of three minutes unless extended at the discretion of the Chairman).

SECTION 5 - MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

To receive any questions submitted by Councillors.

5. Questions from Members

Any Members wishing to submit questions must do so to the Monitoring Officer no

later than 5 working days before the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer will report if any questions have been submitted.

SECTION 6 - REPORTS FOR DECISIONS

To consider any reports submitted for consideration by Council.

6. Future Management and Use Options for Land to the Rear of Huncote Leisure Centre (Pages 15 - 48)

To consider the report of the Executive Director – Place.

7. Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 (Pages 49 - 64)

To consider the report of the Business Systems & Information Manager.

8. Review of Discretionary Pensions Policies (Pages 65 - 76)

To consider the report of the Finance Group Manager.

9. A proposed public consultation for a potential new Conservation Area in Braunstone Village (Pages 77 - 134)

To consider the report of the Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager.

SECTION 7 - MOTIONS/ DEBATES/CONSULTATIONS & MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

To consider Motions submitted by Councillors, take part in a debate or receive Member feedback from attendance at national briefings, key training initiatives or work on any Outside Bodies.

SECTION 8 - EXEMPT REPORTS

To receive any reports submitted which require consideration under exempt status.

There are no reports for consideration under this Section.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2024

Present:-

Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore (Chairman)
Cllr. Nick Chapman (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam	Cllr. Hannah Gill	Cllr. Dillan Shikotra
Cllr. Lee Breckon JP	Cllr. Nigel Grundy	Cllr. Mike Shirley
Cllr. Nick Brown	Cllr. Paul Hartshorn	Cllr. Roger Stead
Cllr. Adrian Clifford	Cllr. Richard Holdridge	Cllr. Ben Taylor
Cllr. Luke Cousin	Cllr. Mark Jackson	Cllr. Matt Tomeo
Cllr. Tony Deakin	Cllr. Becca Lunn	Cllr. Bob Waterton
Cllr. Roy Denney	Cllr. Antony Moseley	Cllr. Bev Welsh
Cllr. Alex DeWinter	Cllr. Les Phillimore	Cllr. Jane Wolfe
Cllr. Susan Findlay	Cllr. Terry Richardson	Cllr. Maggie Wright
Cllr. Janet Forey	Cllr. Ande Savage	Cllr. Neil Wright
Cllr. Helen Gambardella	Cllr. Tracey Shepherd	

Officers present:-

Julia Smith	- Chief Executive
Sarah Pennelli	- Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Louisa Horton	- Executive Director - Communities and Monitoring Officer
Nick Brown	- Finance Group Manager
Lisa Boland	- ICT & Transformation Group Manager
Mike Connell	- IT Business Partner
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

Honorary Alderman in attendance:-

Iain Hewson & Guy Jackson

Apologies:-

Cllr. Royston Bayliss and Cllr. Stuart Coar

244. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

245. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 January 2024, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

246. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore made announcements in respect of the following:

- Attended a planned visit from Mrs Henrietta Chubb - the High Sheriff of Leicester and Leicestershire. During the visit, Mrs Chubb visited the users and staff at A Place To Grow, attended a coffee morning and visited the Chair's charity – Leicester Animal Aid.

247. LEADER'S STATEMENT

Cllr. Mark Jackson arrived to the meeting during the consideration of this item.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Terry Richardson, presented his statement in respect of the following:

- Kirby Muxloe Gas outage
- New Lubbesthorpe milestones
- Community Awards
- Landfill gas works at Enderby
- Latest update on Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange
- Storm Henk financial support
- Great start for exercise scheme
- Residents survey
- Revised Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan adopted
- Rogue taxi driver prosecuted
- Carbon impacts examined

248. PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL

No requests were received.

249. QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Cllr Paul Hartshorn raised the following question, to Cllr. Nigel Grundy – Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder.

“The Huncote Leisure Centre BMX track was a much loved public facility used by Huncote Hornets, which is a BMX race club that has produced bikers of international standard in the past. Can the portfolio holder please tell me why the track remains closed despite reopening the surrounding path in August 2023? Keeping young people away from digital gadgets and getting exercise and fresh air is something this council should be encouraging, so please tell me and the Huncote Hornets club and all its numerous fans when the track will re-open. “

Response from Cllr. Nigel Grundy – Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Holder:

“As all members are aware, the whole of the Huncote Leisure Centre site was closed in November 2021 due to the discovery of high levels of methane gas associated with its historic use as a landfill site.

We implemented an active gas management system on the site to reduce the levels of landfill gas and manage a very complex historic landfill site, this work remains ongoing. We undertook significant upgrades to the monitoring and management of gas levels at the leisure centre itself and I am pleased to say we were able to reopen the building in October 2022.

We were then able to reopen the public land to the far rear of the site in August 2023 and reinstate the public footpath and bridleway as landfill gas levels in these locations had been significantly reduced.

The last part of the site which is currently under increased monitoring and management due to changing gas levels is on the area to the rear of the leisure centre including the land on which the BMX track sits. This section has proved to be more complex, with landfill gas levels fluctuating, meaning it has been much more challenging to reduce the gas levels to a consistent and acceptable range.

Additional works in this area were needed to be undertaken in November and December 2023 and monitoring of their impact is ongoing. In addition that area is still recovering, the grass has not re-seeded yet so it is currently very boggy and slippery, which is a further health and safety concern requiring the wider area to the rear of the Leisure Centre to remain closed.

As to be expected following an incident of this nature we are now reviewing the use of the site as a whole to ensure safety. The safety of site users, whoever they are, is our absolute priority and we will continue to ensure this

is the case and continue our monitoring and management to this end. We can only apologise for the impact on the community's use of the land but we must protect our residents from harm. If landfill gas remains at potentially hazardous levels in an area then we can not reopen that to public use – it simply would not be safe.

Cllr Hartshorn also asks that we advise Huncote Hornets Ltd when the track will reopen, I can confirm that we are in legal discussions with the Club and as you would imagine on that basis I can not comment further on those discussions.”

250. CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA

Under Part 4, Section 1, Paragraph 13 of the Council's Constitution, the Chair, Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore, moved that Agenda item 15, Exclusion of Press and Public and Agenda item 16, Future ICT Provision: Options Appraisal would be taken before Agenda item 7.

251. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Considered – A proposed resolution to exclude the public from the meeting.

Following consideration of this item the Chair, Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore announced that the livestream would pause to allow the item to be considered in closed session.

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that the item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

Agenda Item 16: Future ICT Provision: Options Appraisal – Exempt Report

Exemption Category: 3

252. FUTURE ICT PROVISION: OPTIONS APPRAISAL (EXEMPT)

Considered – Report of the Transformation Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Ben Taylor, Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation.

The Decision is Restricted in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

253. CORPORATE ACTION PLAN 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Performance & Information Service Manager, presented by Cllr. Terry Richardson - Leader of the Council.

DECISION

That the annual priorities for the Blaby District Plan be approved.

Reason:

The Blaby District Plan, approved by Council in November 2023, sets out the priorities for the Council for the period 2024- 28. An annual plan sets out the aspirations and intent of the Council for the year ahead.

254. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2023

Considered – Report of the HR Service Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISION

That the Gender Pay Gap Report for the year 31 March 2023 be noted.

Reason:

The Council is required by law to carry out Gender Pay Reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties & Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and this enables the Council to monitor pay differentials by gender throughout the Council.

255. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: QUARTER 3 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2023/24

Considered – Report of the Accountancy Services Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISIONS

1. That the report be accepted.
2. That the latest Capital Programme for 2023/24 totalling £11,760,992 be approved.

Reasons:

1. To ensure the Council has adequate resources in place to meet its capital expenditure commitments.
2. To reflect additions or other changes to the Capital Programme that have occurred in the 3rd quarter of the year.

256. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: 5 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 TO 2028/29

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISIONS

1. That the 5 Year Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.
2. That the application of capital resources of £3,826,900 for 2024/25, including a borrowing requirement of £1,665,938, be approved.
3. That the Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.

Reasons:

1. To obtain approval for the proposed level of capital expenditure in 2024/25 and the suggested method of financing that expenditure.
2. To provide a longer-term forecast of capital expenditure and financing requirements for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29.
3. To ensure compliance with the Prudential Code.

257. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR & TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

DECISIONS

1. That the capital prudential indicators and limits for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved.

2. That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 and the treasury prudential indicators be approved.
3. That the Investment Strategy for 2024/25 be approved.
4. That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2024/25 be approved.
5. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director (Section 151), in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance, Performance, and People, to decide whether to redeem its holding in the Lothbury Property Trust, or to transfer its investment to the proposed merger outlined at paragraph 4.3 of the report.

Reasons:

1. The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations requires the Council to “have regard to” the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.
2. The Act requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy. This covers the Council’s criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss.
3. The Act also requires the Council to undertake an annual review of its policy for calculating the minimum revenue provision (MRP) for repayment of external debt.
4. The timing of the proposed merger of the Lothbury Property Trust with an alternative property fund is such that the Council will only have a short window of opportunity to make its decision regarding the future of its property fund investment.

258. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: GENERAL FUND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer), presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the vote was recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr. Shabbir Aslam		
Cllr. Lee Breckon		
Cllr. Nick Brown		
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore		
Cllr. Nick Chapman		
Cllr. Adrian Clifford		
Cllr. Luke Cousin		
Cllr. Tony Deakin		
Cllr. Roy Denney		
Cllr. Alex DeWinter		
Cllr. Susan Findlay		
Cllr. Janet Forey		
Cllr. Helen Gambardella		
Cllr. Hannah Gill		
Cllr. Nigel Grundy		
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn		
Cllr. Richard Holdridge		
Cllr. Mark Jackson		
Cllr. Rebecca Lunn		
Cllr. Anthony Moseley		
Cllr. Les Phillimore		
Cllr. Terry Richardson		
Cllr. Ande Savage		
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd		
Cllr. Dillan Shikotra		
Cllr. Mike Shirley		
Cllr. Roger Stead		
Cllr. Ben Taylor		
Cllr. Matt Tomeo		
Cllr. Bob Waterton		
Cllr. Bev Welsh		
Cllr. Jane Wolfe		
Cllr. Neil Wright		
Cllr. Maggie Wright		

DECISIONS

1. To have regard to the comments of the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) in paragraph 4.7 of the report in respect of the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 2003.
2. That the 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Account net expenditure budget of £15.394m be approved.

3. That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make amendments to the Budget should it be necessary.

Reasons:

1. It is a requirement for the Cabinet Executive and Council to take into account the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 in relation to the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
2. Cabinet and Council are required to consider and approve the General Fund Revenue Account budget proposals in order to set the budget and Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year.
3. Delegated authority is sought in order to make any amendments to the Budget should any new information become available following approval by full Council.

259. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET EXECUTIVE: COUNCIL TAX 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by Cllr. Maggie Wright, Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Holder.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the vote was recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr. Shabbir Aslam		
Cllr. Lee Breckon		
Cllr. Nick Brown		
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore		
Cllr. Nick Chapman		
Cllr. Adrian Clifford		
Cllr. Luke Cousin		
Cllr. Tony Deakin		
Cllr. Roy Denney		
Cllr. Alex DeWinter		
Cllr. Susan Findlay		
Cllr. Janet Forey		
Cllr. Helen Gambardella		
Cllr. Hannah Gill		

Cllr. Nigel Grundy		
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn		
Cllr. Richard Holdridge		
Cllr. Mark Jackson		
Cllr. Rebecca Lunn		
Cllr. Anthony Moseley		
Cllr. Les Phillimore		
Cllr. Terry Richardson		
Cllr. Ande Savage		
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd		
Cllr. Dillan Shikotra		
Cllr. Mike Shirley		
Cllr. Roger Stead		
Cllr. Ben Taylor		
Cllr. Matt Tomeo		
Cllr. Bob Waterton		
Cllr. Bev Welsh		
Cllr. Jane Wolfe		
Cllr. Neil Wright		
Cllr. Maggie Wright		

DECISIONS

1. The Council Tax Requirement for 2024/25 be set at £6,526,402.
2. The District Council Band D Council Tax is set at £189.14, reflecting an increase of 2.99% (£5.49), all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.
3. The precepts and Band D Council Tax for Leicestershire County Council*, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the Combined Fire Authority, and the various Parish Councils within the District, be determined as set out in the following report, with all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

Reason:

The Council is statutorily required to determine its own Council Tax Requirement and to determine the Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year, after considering precepts set by the other preceptors.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.09 P.M.

Blaby District Council Council

Date of Meeting	21 May 2024
Title of Report	Future Management and Use Options for Land to the Rear of Huncote Leisure Centre This is a Key Decision and not on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Terry Richardson - Leader of the Council
Report Author	Executive Director - Place
Strategic Themes	Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment.

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report details considerations and recommendations for the future use of the land to the rear of Huncote Leisure Centre, previously allocated as a BMX track. Following identified safety and environmental concerns relating to the contaminated land site and the expiry of the BMX clubs lease, the report explores the options available for the future use of the land considering its complex management requirements and ongoing public safety risks.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That the Council approves the ceasing of the use of the land to the rear of Huncote Leisure Centre as formal BMX track provision.
- 2.2 That the land is reopened to the public, when it is safe to do so and upon completion of the outstanding legal action, as open space, which will include the planting of trees and rewilding.
- 2.3 To allocate £50,000 from the general reserve to implement the recommendation.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To address the legal and environmental issues arising from the land's previous use as a Landfill Site.
- 3.2 To determine the most beneficial use of the site, maximising the site's potential long term value to the community and supporting achievement of the council's priorities.

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 3.3 | To manage public safety and environmental risks, providing the Council with scope to assess the ongoing landfill site risks. |
|-----|--|

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

In 2014, Blaby District Council (BDC) supported Huncote Hornets BMX club with a Sport England Capital Fund Application to build a BMX track to the rear of Huncote Leisure Centre. During the course of relations with the BMX club the Council have dealt with both the club and the associated limited company. They are known as Huncote Hornets BMX Club ('the Club') and Leicester Huncote Hornets BMX Limited ('the Company') respectively. For the purposes of this report Huncote Hornets BMX Club will be used to describe the entity.

The Sports England Capital Fund application was successful and the track was funded by Sport England with contributions from the Council, Huncote Parish Council, the Huncote Hornets BMX Club and local businesses. The funding required open community use except for club sessions for a period of 7 Years (this has now expired). During this period, the Huncote Hornets BMX Club made alterations and carried out works to the site including the installation of flood lighting without permissions as required by the lease. This was subsequently addressed through a retrospective planning consent and the part recovery of costs associated with remediation of the damage to the landfill management systems.

For the context of this report it is noted that Blaby District Council own the land on which the BMX track is located. The Council do not own the physical track itself, this is owned by Huncote Hornets BMX club.

It was known that the track was built on a former landfill site and the construction was tailored to this. In 2021 planned landfill gas works identified dangerous levels of methane near the leisure centre building and as such the Council closed the leisure centre and the site with immediate effect, due to the risk of explosion. Remediation works since have been undertaken to the Leisure Centre and the surrounding land to mitigate the effects of the landfill and manage the gas. This has been a lengthy and costly process with significant expenditure (£729k as at 31st March 2024) being required to ensure the landfill gas is managed and does not pose a risk to those using the site.

The Council's analysis of the complexities and management of the contaminated land at Huncote has developed since the site was originally developed. This includes the land stability, which has experienced several issues relating to land compression resulting from the movement of waste underground. This is now a site that requires significant monitoring and management going forwards to maintain safe levels of methane. It is not considered suitable for a use that requires generators, electrics and the installation of lighting systems given the risks involved. Any such actions would compromise the safety of the site.

Once the extent of the site risks was understood an independent options appraisal was undertaken to explore the potential long-term use for the site going forwards. As part of this options appraisal the BMX Club, parish council, British Cycling, Sports England and officers at BDC were consulted. This resulted in a report being produced which is included at Appendix A highlighting the risks and a series of options available to BDC going forward. This work was used to inform the next stage of option appraisal which included the assessment of costs and risks associated with some the options proposed.

During this time, consideration was given to entering a new Lease with Huncote Hornets BMX Club which included additional responsibilities for them as a Tenant due to the additional requirements needed for site management. This was not something that the BMX club felt they could sign up to. As we learned more about the site, it became clear that further consideration was needed as to the future of the site, including the balancing of considerations as to its future use, the safe management of the site and the opportunities to provide open public space. It was at that point that the decision was taken not to pursue negotiations with Huncote Hornets BMX Club about a new lease.

The recommendations proposed are based on the current known risks to ongoing management of the site. Further assessments of the council's liability for the site will continue to be undertaken with our insurers. This will ensure site access for the public is managed safely in line with the Council's public liability responsibilities.

The recommendations also recognise the ongoing legal challenge by Huncote Hornets BMX Club who claim they have a legal right to a new lease for the site. This is something Blaby District Council do not agree with. Therefore, any decision by Council will only be enacted once the legal position is confirmed. This would be determined by the courts; however, it is likely to be within the next 12 months.

4.2 Proposal

This report recommends that the council returns the site to informal public open space. This recommendation includes the re-wilding of the site and the planting of trees, to ensure the public have access to and continue to benefit from this open space.

This proposal is being made because the current site usage as a BMX track is deemed unsustainable due to the ongoing environmental issues and the associated site management issues resulting from the landfill gas leakage and land movement. The challenges with the site mean that significant and complex management arrangements are needed to ensure the long-term safety of the site and its users. While there have been improvements in gas levels, bringing the site up to health and safety standards to be regularly used as a BMX track would require substantial financial investment, including repair works.

The proposed option balances the needs of the local community, feedback from the options appraisal and the financial considerations to ensure value for money for Blaby District Council residents. This has been a difficult and lengthy process, and we believe this reflects the best option going forwards for all Blaby District residents.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

Engagement with Huncote Parish Council, Huncote Hornets BMX club, Sports England, British Cycling, contaminated land and environmental health experts.

4.4 Significant Issues

Summary of Human Rights implications:

Right to Access Public Services

- Impact on Accessibility: Change in land use could affect how accessible public services are, particularly recreational services previously offered. The council must ensure that the new open space continues to provide equitable access to recreational facilities or alternatives that meet the community's needs.

Right to Non-Discrimination

- Equitable Use: The redesign and change of use should consider the needs of all community members, including marginalised and vulnerable

groups. The process should actively avoid any form of discrimination in access to and use of the open space.

Summary of Legal implications:

- There is ongoing legal action being undertaken at the time of writing this report regarding the site. The Huncote Hornets BMX Club have served a section 26 notice requiring an automatic renewal of their lease which is being resisted by the Council.

Summary of Equalities Act implications:

Accessibility

- Physical Accessibility: The new open space must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Economic Accessibility

- Affordability: Ensure that the open space remains free to access and does not include any features that might require payment, thus ensuring that low-income families and individuals can still enjoy the space without economic barriers.

Health Implications

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyles: Open spaces contribute positively to public health, offering opportunities for exercise, relaxation and social interaction. The option being recommended allows provision for the ongoing risk assessment of gas levels associated with the site. Should levels increase action will be taken to limit access to the site.

Equal Opportunities for Participation

- Volunteer Opportunities: Offer volunteer opportunities related to the maintenance or activities in the open space that are accessible to all.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

A summary of the identified costs are outlined below.

	£
Remediation of the land to return to open public access	30,000
Contingency funds	20,000
Total	<hr/> 50,000

It is proposed that £50,000 be added to the Council's existing revenue budget and provided from the Council's general reserve. As the works are

understood more fully the funds will be applied either to revenue or capital expenditure and reported accordingly.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
<p>Environmental Risks: The site is built on a former landfill, which has been found to emit elevated levels of methane. Any decision regarding the site must consider the need for ongoing environmental monitoring and potential remediation to mitigate these risks, especially if the area is opened to the public or repurposed.</p> <p>The movement of land and other associated issues with contaminated land is also a factor to be considered.</p>	<p>Continuous Monitoring: Maintain a robust environmental monitoring system to continuously assess methane levels and other pollutants.</p> <p>Remediation Plan: Develop and execute a comprehensive remediation plan tailored to the specific environmental challenges posed by the former landfill.</p>
<p>Legal and Compliance Risks: The unauthorised modifications made by the Huncote Hornets, such as the installation of flood lighting and a generator, pose legal challenges.</p>	<p>Legal Review: Conduct thorough legal reviews and audits to address all unauthorised modifications and ensure compliance with all current laws and regulations.</p>
<p>Financial Risks: Significant investment is required regardless of the chosen management option. The costs include initial capital outlays for site modifications or restorations and potential ongoing operational costs.</p>	<p>Financial Planning: Develop a detailed understanding underlying financial risks and establish a robust financial plan for the site.</p> <p>Cost Control Measures: Implement strict budget controls and regular financial reviews to monitor costs and adjust plans as necessary.</p>
<p>Operational Risks: If the site continues operations, either under its current management structure or a new one, there are risks related to the sustainability of operations, including maintenance standards, safety and compliance with health regulations, particularly</p>	<p>Operational Reviews: Conduct regular operational reviews to ensure that management practices meet safety and regulatory standards.</p> <p>Maintenance Schedules: Develop and strictly adhere to a comprehensive maintenance schedule to ensure they are in good working order and safe for users.</p>

in light of the site's history and location on a former landfill.	
Community Risk: Local BMX enthusiasts and users of the track may feel disappointed by the decision. This could lead to negative public perceptions of the Council prioritising environmental concerns over community sports.	Promote the Benefits of the New Public Space: Actively promote the benefits of the new public open space, such as increased accessibility for a broader segment of the community, enhanced environmental benefits and improved safety. Highlighting how the space can be used for various activities beyond BMX could help promote broader community support. The council's Physical Activity Development Officer will explore ways to work with the local community to promote the open public space and increase physical activity.

7. Other options considered

As part of the options appraisal process, several other options were identified. Outlined below are alternative options considered, with a summary of why they were deemed not to be viable to progress.

Option description	Reason for not progressing
Continue the operation of the BMX track under a private leisure contractor, for example SLM.	The initial capital costs for infrastructure improvements have been estimated to be upwards of £170,000. This coupled with the annual management fees result in the option not being feasible.
Continue with the BMX facility leased to the Huncote Hornets BMX Club.	The remedial work to bring the facilities back to a club standard is seen as cost prohibitive. Coupled with the ongoing site management activities this option is not recommended.
Fence off the site and wait for gas levels to stabilise.	This option is not considered necessary at this time as the gas and land monitoring systems in place ensure the site can be open to the public. However, should gas levels increase or land movement be detected the site will require closing to the public. This would also require a significant capital investment.

8. Environmental impact

Positive impacts include increased green space and reduced public safety risks. The site is built on a former landfill, which has been found to emit elevated levels of methane. Any decision regarding the site must consider the need for ongoing environmental monitoring and potential remediation to mitigate these risks, especially if the area is opened to the public or repurposed.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.
- 9.2 Significant issues relating to the environment, legal and compliance, finances and operation of the site have been addressed at paragraph 4.4.

10. Appendix

- 10.1 Appendix A – Active Communities Consultancy (ACC) report
- 10.2 Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

11. Report author's contact details

Marc Greenwood Executive Director - Place
Marc.greenwood@blaby.gov.uk 0116 272 7635



Leisure Options Appraisal For The BMX Tracks Site at Huncote

Final Report Version 1.0 – Dec 23 (edited)

Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Background	3
1.2	Project Brief and Scope.....	5
2	Methodology	5
3	Options Appraisal Summary and Conclusions	8
3.1	Site Options Appraisal	8
3.2	Management Options Appraisal – If the Council decides to retain BMX.....	9
3.3	Conclusions	11
	Appendix 1: List of Consultees	12
	Appendix 2: Site Risk Register.....	12

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In 2014 Blaby District Council (BDC) supported Huncote Hornets with a Sport England Capital Fund Application to build a BMX Track to the rear of Huncote Leisure Centre (adjacent to an existing small but well used casual use BMX track).
- 1.1.2 The application was successful and the track was funded by Sport England with contributions from BDC, Huncote Parish Council and Huncote Hornets. The funding required open community use at all times with the exception of club sessions for a period of 7 Years (this has now expired).
- 1.1.3 It was known that the track was built on a former landfill site and the construction was tailored to this.
- 1.1.4 BDC entered into a lease with Huncote Hornets from 14 August 2014 for use of the track on the Council's land. The lease contained a red line area for the site including the small casual use track as well as the main competition track. The lease expired on the 30 June 2021.
- 1.1.5 In April 2023, a new lease was issued to Huncote Hornets. This was never concluded and as such there is no current lease in existence and no rent having been paid during that time although it was only a "peppercorn rent if demanded."
- 1.1.6 Huncote Hornets as host club developed the club to a National level hosting events including Regional and National Championships attracting significant numbers to site and delivering financial benefit to the club and economic benefit to the surrounding area.
- 1.1.7 In 2019 the Council became aware of unauthorised development on site that might compromise the landfill site and put users at risk namely the installation of floodlights, erection of fencing and the use of a generator on site. These incidents and the absence of necessary documentation and assurance of site safety for major events, have led to BDC officer concerns about the capacity and capability of the club to fully understand the risks of operating on a landfill site.
- 1.1.8 The Council did not receive a request for approval for these installations and subsequent checks by the Council's retained landfill consultant highlighted areas requiring rectification (as a direct consequence of the unauthorised installations and use).
- 1.1.9 The Council undertook these rectification works in default in 2020/21 and agreed a payment plan with the Huncote Hornets for a share of the costs.
- 1.1.10 In 2020 routine land fill gas inspections identified high levels of methane near the leisure centre building and as such the Council closed the leisure centre and the site with immediate effect.
- 1.1.11 The Council has invested over £700,000 to date in active gas management and the readings on the rear of the site are now within acceptable levels with the rear field and public footpaths opening from 16th August 2023. However, there are still some boreholes in between the BMX track and the leisure centre that are not yet down to safe levels defined as 5% Lowest Explosive Level. As such further work is required to bring these down (scheduled for late October/early November) and in the meantime the track will remain closed.
- 1.1.12 With the BMX track area continuing to be closed it allows the Council an opportunity to undertake an options appraisal as to the BMX tracks future.

- 1.1.13 In September 2023, the Council commissioned the Active Communities Consultancy (ACC) to undertake an independent options appraisal of potential leisure use and management options of the site.
- 1.1.14 An arial shot of the BMX site and Huncote Leisure Centre is shown on Figure 1.

Figure 1: Ariel Shot of the Huncote BMX Tracks Site



1.2 Project Brief and Scope

1.2.1 The scope of the options appraisal covers the following:

1. To summarise the range of benefits of having an operational BMX track located at Huncote Leisure Centre.
2. To highlight the risks of having an operational BMX track located at Huncote Leisure Centre due to the on-going management of the landfill site i.e. are there any further risks and if so how would they be mitigated.
3. On the basis of points 1 & 2, to recommend whether each of the BMX Tracks should re-open or not (assuming safe gas levels can be established).
4. If not, what options are available for the Council to do with the two tracks.
5. If the recommendation is to re-open, what are the available options with regards to management and usage arrangements based on the original funding (grant award), the ownership of the track and the responsibility of the land owner for on-going site and user safety.
6. What would be the financial liability/risks to the Council in the future if we need to close it down again due to gas levels rising and how would we mitigate against those risks.

2 Methodology

2.1.1 The project has been carried out through stages:

- Project inception and site familiarisation
- Consultation
- Assessment of the social value yielded by the site
- Development and appraisal of alternative options for the site
- Development and appraisal of alternative management options for the BMX tracks if retained
- Risk register for the site
- Reporting.

2.1.2 Our detailed methodology is set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Methodology

Stage 1: Project Inception and Site Familiarisation	Key Outputs
Project inception meeting to establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information requirements• Project scope• Project plan.	Meeting notes Project plan.
Site visit to understand the BMX tracks, their condition and scope for other uses for the land.	Meeting notes Long list of site options.

Stage 2: Consultation	Key Outputs
BDC Environmental Services and Environmental Health	Understanding of the health and safety issues with the site and restrictions to its use.
BDC Leisure & Tourism	Consideration regarding the social value of the BMX tracks Exploration on the fit between the BMX tracks and the Council's strategic approach to sport and physical activity Alternative uses for the site as an active place.
BDC Property and Assets	Ongoing maintenance and safety costs for the site Alternative uses for the site.
Greenfield Technical Services	Understanding of the safety issues that affect the continued use of the BMX track or alternatives uses for the site.
Huncote Parish Council	To understand the extent to which the HPC values the BMX tracks To capture any views and ideas about alternative uses for the site.
Everyone Active/SLM (Face to face meeting whilst undertaking site visit)	To understand any issues caused by the BMX tracks for the leisure centre operation Alternative uses for the site Explore the option for Everyone Active to manage the BMX tracks as a community facility Explore if this could be financially sustainable.
British Cycling	Explore the need for the BMX tracks Explore whether there is any funding or other support for BMX from British Cycling.
Huncote Hornets	Understand the social value gained from the track (e.g. overall usage, usage amongst young people etc..) Understand the club's capacity to manage the site

Stage 2: Consultation	Key Outputs
	Explore alternative management options for the site.
Sport England	To find out if they have undertaken any social value assessments of BMX tracks To understand the current policy position regarding BMX What alternative uses for the site would be acceptable to Sport England? Identifying any funding opportunities.

Stage 3. Assessment of Social Value for the BMX track	Key Outputs
ACC will undertake an assessment of social value for the BMX tracks pulling from any usage data gathered and consultation.	Social value assessment included in the final report.

Stage 4: Development and appraisal of alternative options for the site.	Key Outputs
ACC will develop a list of long options for the site for the Council to consider and shortlist.	Short list of alternative options for the site.
Proposed evaluation criteria for the Council to consider. This was finalised at meeting with the Council project stakeholders.	Agreed evaluation criteria for alternative site options.
Assessment of the shortlisted options against the agreed evaluation criteria.	Assessment of alternatives for the site.

Stage 5: Development and appraisal of alternative management options for the BMX tracks.	Key Outputs
ACC will develop a list of management options for the BMX tracks for the Council to consider.	Short list of alternative management options for the BMX tracks.
Proposed evaluation criteria for the Council to consider. This will be finalised at meeting with the Council project stakeholders.	Agreed evaluation criteria for alternative management options for the BMX tracks.
Assessment of the shortlisted management against the agreed evaluation criteria.	Long list of site options.

Stage 6. Risk register for the site	Key Outputs
ACC will pull together a risk register for the site including alternative management arrangements.	Risk register including risks and mitigations via Microsoft Excel.

Stage 7. Reporting	Key Outputs
Draft report based on the project methodology for review. Following the Council's comments we will produce the final report.	Risk register including risks and mitigations via Microsoft Excel.

- 2.1.3 The club is focused on community use as much as competitive BMX including running sessions for children with physical and mental disabilities.
- 2.1.4 Huncote Parish Council view the BMX track as a major asset to the area including economic benefits to local businesses when there are major events at the track.
- 2.1.5 British Cycling view the facility a significant asset for the sport in the Midlands.
- 2.1.6 Nationally, BMX attracts a different cohort of young people to more traditional sports and provides an alternative vehicle to address inactivity.

3 Options Appraisal Summary and Conclusions

3.1 Site Options Appraisal

- 3.1.1 Combining the finance and risk appraisal with the non-financial and social value assessment provides the ranking of options shown in Table 7.1. This is based on Red (negative or high risk), Amber (neutral or medium risk) and Green (positive or low risk).

REDACTED INDIVIDUAL OPTIONS BROKEN DOWN

Table 7.1: Consolidated Ranking of Site Options

Site Option Ranking	Financial and Risk Appraisal	Non-Financial and social value Appraisal	Overall Appraisal
1) Retain BMX as a community facility for day time use only			
	Offers the most optimal balance between finance, managing risk and social value return		
2) Turn land into woodland			
	Ranked 2 as lower potential social return than BMX track.		

Site Option Ranking	Financial and Risk Appraisal	Non-Financial and social value Appraisal	Overall Appraisal
3) Retain land as open space			
	Overall appraisal “amber” as comparatively low risk with potentially low social return.		
4) Fence off site and wait for gas levels to stabilise			
	Ranked 4 due to low healthy and safety risks.		
5) Continue with BMX facility provided through Huncote Hornets via light lease			
	Overall assessment of “red” due to high financial and other risks. Lack of confidence in Huncote Hornets adhering to lease conditions.		
6) Alternative use for other sports			
	Overall assessment of “red” due to high financial and other risks. Ranked lower than retaining BMX tracks due to there not being established users and clubs.		

- 3.1.2 Table 7.1 indicates that generally the higher level of financial and other risks the higher level of potential non-financial and social value benefits.
- 3.1.3 The options to retain the BMX track as a community facility or **return the site to woodland** offer the **most potentially favourable** solutions for the site.
- 3.1.4 Continuing with the **BMX track under the current lease with Huncote Hornets** or using the site for **other organised sport offer potentially the least favourable solution** because of the comparatively high financial and other risks including health and safety.

3.2 Management Options Appraisal – If the Council decides to retain BMX

Combining the finance and risk appraisal with the non-financial and social value assessment provides the ranking of management options shown in Table 7.2. This is based on Red (negative or high risk), Amber (neutral or medium risk) and Green (positive or low risk).

Table 7.2: Consolidated Ranking of Management Options

Management Option Ranking	Financial and Risk Appraisal	Non-Financial and social value Appraisal	Overall Appraisal
1) Hybrid management option: BDC or Everyone Active managing the site through a management committee which includes the Huncote Hornets as a stakeholder.			
	Ranked 1 due to modest financial and other risk and comparatively high potential social value. It would offer an approach to keep the Huncotes Hornets engaged with the running of the BMX track.		
2) Operate the BMX site as part of the Everyone Active leisure contract as a community facility.			
	Ranked 2 due to modest financial and other risks and comparatively high potential social value.		
3) BDC Operates the site as a community facility (daytime only) in a similar way to parks			
	Ranked 3 due to lower levels of risk transfer than managing the facility through Everyone Active.		
4) Leasing the whole outdoor Huncote site to a third party (e.g. the Land Trust).			
	Ranked 4 due to lower levels of risk transfer due to the uncertainty of a new leaseholder. There would also be uncertainty around social value and how the leaseholder will use the site. It is also unlikely that a leaseholder would be willing to pay a rent for the site.		
5) Heavy lease with Huncote Hornets			
	Ranked jointly 5 due to health and safety risks associated with Huncote Hornet running the site due to their track record of adhering to lease conditions. This has created a lack of confidence from the Council.		
5) Continue with BMX facility through light lease with Huncote Hornets			
	Ranked jointly 5 due to health and safety risks associated with Huncote Hornet running the site due to their track record of adhering to lease conditions. This has created a lack of confidence from the Council.		

- 3.2.1 The options to retain the BMX track as a community facility and manage this through either **Everyone Active or directly by BDC** offer the **most potentially favourable management solutions for the site. This could be enhanced by creating a joint management committee potentially involving Everyone Active, BDC and Huncote Hornets.**
- 3.2.2 An initial proposal from Everyone Active provides a management solution where SLM act as Management Agent for the BMX Track. They would manage the site operationally, opening and closing the facility and taking bookings. This would require a fee per annum and the Council would pick up maintenance and insurance cost. Any income generated would go back to the Council.
- 3.2.3 Given the complexities of the site managing it through a voluntary organisation or club such as Huncote Hornets via a lease represents a high risk strategy for the Council.

3.3 Conclusions

- 3.3.1 There is no site use or management option for the BMX site at Huncote that involves zero cost to the Council. The site will need to be monitored and managed by the Council to ensure gas levels are safe for the foreseeable future.
- 3.3.2 Similarly the health safety risks associated with site being a former landfill site sit with the Council.
- 3.3.3 The option to retain the BMX facility for community daytime use provides a balance of financial and other risk against a Social Value return.
- 3.3.4 Leasing the site to a voluntary organisation or club for BMX use or any other sporting activity presents BDC with risks as it does not allow sufficient control or assurance that the site is being managed safely.
- 3.3.5 Should the Council wish to retain BMX the optimum management solutions are either including the BMX track as part of the Everyone Active leisure contract or; BDC managing the facility directly in a similar way to parks and open spaces. This could be enhanced by creating a joint management committee potentially involving Everyone Active, BDC and Huncote Hornets.
- 3.3.6 Under this arrangement there could be a phased approach initially opening the facility for daytime use only. If gas levels remain low for a period of time the joint management committee could then consider reintroducing floodlights and other electrical installations to enable the track to be used for major events once more.
- 3.3.7 Everyone Active have proposed an initial solution based on them becoming an agent for the site which would require an agent fee per annum. The Council would need to insure the site and be responsible for maintenance and health and safety. Individual and club users would be charged to use the BMX track with the income going to BDC.
- 3.3.8 Any investment in the site as a BMX facility or other sporting facility runs the risk of the return not being fully realised, in the event that the site has to close again in the future due to unsafe gas levels.
- 3.3.9 Regardless of which option the Council decides to pursue, it is likely that the BMX area will need to be fenced off in order to meet insurance requirements.
- 3.3.10 A risk register for the site is provided in Appendix 2 (separate Excel document).

Appendix 1: List of Consultees

Julia Smith	Chief Executive, Blaby District Council
John Richarson	Executive Director, Blaby District Council
Nigel Grundy	Councillor, Blaby District Council
Anna Farish	Environmental Services Manager, Blaby District Council
Phil Fasham	Environmental Health Manager, Blaby District Council
Phil Turner	Health, Leisure & Tourism Service Manager, Blaby District Council
Chris Portess	Property & Assets Services Manager, Blaby District Council
Stuart Bacon	Parish Clerk, Huncote Parish Council
James Naylor	Area Contracts Manager, Everyone Active
Casey Daniell	Huncote Hornets, BMX Club
Jan Freakley	Huncote Hornets, BMX Club
Kathy O'Neil	Head of Investment, Sport England
Marcus Twomey	Head of Facilities, British Cycling
Steve Johnson	Sport Manager (North), British Cycling

Appendix 2: Site Risk Register

See separate Excel file.



THE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES
CONSULTANCY

The Active Communities Consultancy
David Rushton (Sole Trader)
“Gwentiles,” Field Lane, Boundary, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 7BT
T: 01283 208541 E: d.rushton61@btinternet.com

This page is intentionally left blank

Equality Impact & Needs Assessment (EINA) Form



Name of the policy, function or project:

Future Management and Use Options for Land to the Rear of Huncote Leisure Centre

Service:

Assets and Major Projects

Complete this form for any existing/proposed policy/function/project, regardless of whether it is aimed at external customers or internal staff. Please also be aware that equality policy applies to staffing/human resources issues as much as to external service delivery issues. Please note that existing policies/functions will be assessed as per an agreed annual programme. However if you are reviewing or devising a policy etc that is not currently in the 3 year plan, it still needs an INA.

Answer every question – even if it is negative

If you conclude that there is a negative impact you will need to review the policy/function/project to improve the equalities performance and minimise or remove the impact. This should be done using the 'Improvement Actions Planned' table. Where appropriate such actions should be included in your Service Plan for the following year.

If the Corporate Equalities & Access Group (CEAG) feels this impact assessment needs further consideration, **you will be asked to review your conclusions.**

As a result of this exercise, you will have checked that your policy/function/project does not have negative/adverse impacts in terms of Gender reassignment, Race or nationality, Disability, Age, Sex, Sexual orientation, Religion or belief, Marriage and civil partnerships, Pregnancy or maternity, Armed Forces (protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010). If it does you will have identified relevant actions needed to minimise or remove such impact and their likely resource implications.

This is not simply a paper exercise – it is designed to make sure that your policy/function/project and service (development) is delivered fairly and effectively to all sections of our local community, and our employees.

Please note, the Council may be required to update and publish the results of these assessments under the Freedom of Information Act, therefore, **your completed form may become a public document.**

Once completed, and/or when your corresponding report is submitted to Management Board - Cabinet, please pass this form, together with documentation describing both the policy/function/project it concerns and any evidence relating to assessed impacts, to Alison Moran, Performance & Systems Manager. ***If this relates to a new policy/service/procedure/function/project, please attach this form to your draft report for approval by your Director, prior to its first submission to Management Board. Reports cannot be considered by Management Board unless both the report and this INA have had prior approval by the relevant Director.***

To complete the form using 'check marks' in the boxes, position the cursor over the box you require, left double click, then select 'checked' in the 'check box form field options' box that appears on screen.

A Preparation

The work on this section should be done in advance and be used as part of your INA. Please attach examples of available evidence, including monitoring information, research and consultation reports.

1a Do you have relevant data available on the number of people within the scope of your policy/function/project (eg whole population of the district/ward or employee data)?
In relation to:

- Women and men
- Gender reassignment
- Black and minority ethnic communities
- People with disabilities
- Age groups
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marital status/civil partnership
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- The armed forces
- Care Experienced

Yes

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

No

☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒
☒

1b Do you have relevant data available on the number of people subject to or impacted by your policy/function/project (eg numbers of disabled people using the service)?

In relation to:

- Women and men
- Gender reassignment
- Black and minority ethnic communities
- People with disabilities
- Age groups
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marital status/civil partnership
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- The armed forces
- Care Experienced

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, your monitoring data should be compared to the current available census data to see whether a proportionate number of people are taking up your service. Please make any comments regarding service take up if relevant:

If you have answered 'no' please explain reasons for lack of relevant data:

The BMX track to the rear of Huncote Leisure Centre was run by Huncote Hornets, a local BMX team. As such, their membership and usage of the facility is not known to the Council. The BMX track is not a 'service' provided by Blaby District Council, but it is recognised that if a change of use for the land is granted, a small group of users would no longer be able to access the facility. However, the BMX track is currently closed and therefore there is no monitoring data to compare to census data.

- 3 Are you aware of any relevant equality or diversity related consultation, research, or good practice guidance in relation to this area?
If so, please list and attach here:

Yes

☐

No

☒

- 4 Do you need to carry out further research/consultation to identify impacts, needs etc? If so, please specify what and who with?

Yes

☐

No

☒

B Your policy, service, function or project

- 1 What is the title and main aim or purpose of the policy/function/service/project?

The purpose of this project is to change the use of the land to the rear of Huncote Leisure Centre, to 'general public use', enabling a whole community and population to access open, green space.

- 2 List the areas of activity of the policy/function/project, eg the recruitment strategy might have advertising, interviewing, short listing etc as activity areas.

- Access and opening up of public space
- Discontinue existing formal use of the BMX track

- 3 Who are the main intended beneficiaries of the policy/function/service/project?

A change of use to 'general public use' would enable a whole community of people to access open green space.

- 4 What people / groups may be affected by the policy/function/project – whole population or particular groups?

The positive impact will benefit the whole community. The ceasing the use of the site as a BMX track will impact the group of users. However, it should be noted the site has been closed to BMX users since 2021.

Although no data is available on the users of the existing function, it is expected that given the nature of the activity a younger age group maybe impacted more so than an older demographic.

- 5 Are you expecting to make any changes during the next year?

- Policy
- Function

Yes ☐
Yes ☒

No ☒
No ☐

- Project
- Procedure

Yes ☐
Yes ☐

No ☒
No ☒

6 Who else will be involved in undertaking the EINA (names and roles)?

Luke Raddon Jackson, Group Manager – Assets and Major Projects

C Impact Assessment

Page 42

Complete the following tables for each equality target group, by inserting a check mark or tick in one of the 3 options columns - Positive impact, Negative impact, Neutral.

Consider the information gathered in Section (a) of this form, compare monitoring information with census data and, considering any other evidence, research or consultations, identify any instances where you believe people in different equality groups could be impacted differentially. In **all** cases, please state briefly the reason/rationale for your assessment.

This is particularly important where you think that the policy/function/project could:

- have a **negative impact** on any of the equality target groups, ie it could disadvantage them
- have a **positive impact** on any of the equality target groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality target groups

If you think that neither negative nor positive apply, then choose **neutral impact**.

Note: Only **one** type of impact can be applicable for any particular equality group category, eg male or female.

a) How will the policy/function/project/procedure impact on men, women and those who are transgendered or have gone through gender reassignment (eg flexible working arrangements might have a positive impact on women with caring responsibilities)?

Gender	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason/Rationale for Assessment
Male	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
Female	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
Transgender/GR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space

- b) How will the policy/function/project/procedure impact on people from different or minority ethnic communities? This may involve using Council services differently (eg will Muslim women use the Council's swimming pool more often if separate sex swimming arrangements are in place?).

Ethnicity	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason/Rationale for Assessment
White British	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
White European	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
Mixed Ethnicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
Asian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
African or Caribbean	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
Gypsy/Roma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space
Other ethnic group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space

- c) How will the policy/function/project/procedure impact on people with disabilities (eg if information about council tax benefits are not made available in large print or alternative formats, access to such benefits might be denied to people with a visual impairment or learning disability)?

Disability / Health	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason/Rationale for Assessment
Visual impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New open space not identified as having positive or negative impact to those with visual impairment.
Hearing impairment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Physically disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	It is noted that accessibility for people with a physical disability will need further consideration as the site plans are developed.
Learning difficulty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Mental health problem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Other longstanding health problem which limits day to day activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.

- d) Does the policy/function/project/procedure impact on people differently based on their age (eg a job advertisement that requires at least ten years post qualification experience would clearly prevent people in their twenties from applying)?

Age Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason/Rationale for Assessment
Children (under 16)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space, is a positive, but losing access to BMX track could be seen as a negative to this group
(16 to 29)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space, is a positive, but losing access to BMX track could be seen as a negative to this group
(30 – 44)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space, is a positive, but losing access to BMX track could be seen as a negative to this group
(45 – 59)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space, is a positive, but losing access to BMX track could be seen as a negative to this group
(60 – 74)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Older (over 75)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.

- e) Does the policy/function/project/procedure impact on people differently based on their sexual orientation (eg if housing policy is only to offer temporary accommodation to couples of different sex, a gay or lesbian couple would be unable to be housed)?

Sexual Orientation	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason/Rationale for Assessment
Heterosexual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Gay or Lesbian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Bisexual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.

- f) Does the policy/function/project/procedure impact on people differently based on their religion or belief (eg would a person of the Hindu religion be able to give a binding affirmation if a procedure requires the swearing of an oath on the Bible?)?

Religion or Belief	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason/Rationale for Assessment
Christian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Hindu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Muslim	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Sikh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Jewish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.
Non believer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to open public space.

g) Does the policy/function/project/procedure impact on members of the armed forces? If so, give details below:

Access to open public space.

h) Does the policy/function/project/procedure impact on those who are care experienced? If so, give details below:

Access to open public space.

i) Does the policy/function/project/procedure impact on people differently based on any of the other protected characteristics where these are affected by aspects of the Equality Act (eg marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity)? If so, give details below:

N/A

If you conclude that there is a **negative impact** on one or more of the target groups, you will need to amend the policy/function/project and/or take further action to minimise or remove the impact. This should be done using the 'Improvement Actions Plan' table below. If you think that other actions could be taken to increase any positive impacts, please include these too. Where appropriate, such actions should be included in your current/proposed Service Plan.

Impact & Needs Assessment: Improvement Actions Plan

Please list below any recommendations for action to improve the equalities performance of the policy/function/project that you plan to take, as a result of this impact assessment. This could be to change the policy itself or involve other initiatives. Where appropriate, these actions should also be included in your current/proposed Service Plan.

Issue/Link to INA question number	Action Required	Lead Officer	Time-scale	Resource implications	Comments
	Work with the PADOs to	Phill	Over	Limited	

D – impact on younger demographic	ensure young people are able to access sports in the vicinity – through provision at the Huncote leisure centre adjacent to the existing BMX track site.	Turner	next 6 months		

Please ensure that the section below is completed and signed by one or both NAMED officers as applicable:

Page 46

NAME Luke Raddon Jackson Please print name)

Signed LRJ (/Group/Service Manager)

Date 9th May 2024

NAME:_____ (Please print name)

Signed:_____ (Completing Officer)

Date: _____

Please keep a copy on record to which the public could have full access. Also send or e-mail a copy of this completed form, along with documentation describing the policy/function/project it concerns, to:
Sally Dorans, Customer Insight, Experience and Engagement Manager

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaby District Council Council

Date of Meeting	21 May 2024
Title of Report	Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Terry Richardson - Leader of the Council
Report Author	Business Systems & Information Manager
Strategic Themes	All Themes: Enabling our communities and supporting our vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people.

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update councillors on the progress of actions outlined in the Corporate Action Plan 2023-24. This action plan was approved by Council in June 2023.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That Council notes the progress made against the Corporate Action Plan 2023-24.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 It is important that Elected Members, and staff are familiar with how the Council is delivering against its agreed actions and priorities.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background

The Council's vision for the district and its key strategic themes are set out in 'Blaby District Plan 2024 - 2028'.

The vision is that *"to ensure that Blaby District is a great place to live, work and visit."*

When the 23-24 action plan was approved our previous District Plan was in place and as such it aligned with the strategic objectives set out within that plan.

The role of the '**Corporate Action Plan**' is to outline specific projects planned for the forthcoming period that will contribute towards the delivery of the Blaby District Plan.

This report provides a progress update for those actions outlined in the Corporate Action Plan for 2023-24, which was taken to Council for approval in June 2023.

In total, there were 23 objectives contained within the action plan for 23-24. These covered some really significant areas such as the development of the Blaby District Plan, the Transforming Blaby Together Strategy and the Economic Development Framework.

Several important pieces of work were undertaken as part of the action plan such as the robust response to the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange submission, the District Council Elections and subsequently supporting new Cllrs in their roles as District Councillors.

Our objectives towards reaching carbon neutrality in 2030 continued alongside our work to ensure we progressed our new performance framework.

The progress detailed sits within the back-drop of challenging financial times, with several of the actions linking directly looking to mitigate those financial pressures without compromising the excellent standard of service provided to the residents, visitors and businesses of the district.

Many of the actions are relatively long-term endeavours, realistically taking longer than a year to complete, therefore you will notice that a significant proportion are contained within the Corporate Action Plan 2024-25, which was approved at Council in February this year.

4.2 Proposal(s)

Progress of the actions outlined in the Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 are detailed in the report at Appendix A. Members are invited to review the progress report.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The Senior Responsible Officer was consulted for each project contained within the Corporate Action Plan 23-24 to gain the most recent and relevant information. Some of the pieces of work contained within the action plan have been subject to separate consultations.

4.4 Significant Issues

There are none within this report, however, individual projects may have associated issues, and these will be detailed in the appended report.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 The annual budget, approved by Council in February each year, supports the delivery of the actions contained within the Corporate Action Plan.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
That the projects and actions within the Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 are not sufficiently progressed, meaning the key strategic objectives found in the Blaby Plan may also be diminished.	The delivery of the action plan will be monitored by SLT with reports to Council on a six-monthly basis. In addition, relevant Portfolio Holders will be kept up to date with specific activities.
Council members are unaware of key projects and their progress meaning they are unable to exert any influence or communicate this to residents, business and other stakeholders.	The provision of the appended progress report in addition to frequent updates to cabinet members collectively and portfolio holders individually.

7. Other options considered

- 7.1 No other options were considered. It is important that residents, partners, Elected Members, and staff are familiar with how the Council is delivering against its agreed actions and priorities.

8. Environmental impact

- 8.1 Any environmental impacts will be outlined alongside each individual project where relevant. However, our journey to Net Zero is a key priority for the Council and, there are specific actions within the annual plan which support the delivery of this priority.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

10. Appendix

- 10.1 Appendix A – Corporate Action Plan 23-24 Progress Report

11. Background paper(s)

11.1 [Blaby District Plan 2021 - 2024' and Blaby District Plan 2024 - 2028](#)

11.2 [Corporate Action Plan 2023 -2024](#)

12. Report author's contact details

Luke Clements Business Systems & Information Manager
Luke.clements@blaby.gov.uk 0116 272 7728

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live, Work & Visit

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Develop and lead a long term vision for the Blaby District.	A long term vision developed for the district of Blaby, produced in partnership with the residents, businesses and communities it will impact upon.	Chief Executive	Completed Nov 2023	The Blaby District Plan 2024 - 2028 was completed and approved at council on 27 November, and included an updated vision and 5 new strategic themes for delivering ongoing improvement to the district. Current and proposed work programmes and specific projects have been linked to the strategic themes so that progress can be tangibly tracked and shared.
	A new corporate plan will be produced clearly setting out the districts aspirations, priorities and with a clear understanding of the actions needed to achieve the priorities.		Completed Nov 2023	
	An action plan produced to deliver the new corporate plan for short, medium and long term.		Completed Feb 2024	
Produce a 'Transforming Blaby Together' strategy which aligns with our Corporate approach to transformation. This strategy will encompass our Blaby 'Customer and Digitalisation' approach/strategy.	Delivery of a clear strategy which crystalises our approach to Corporate Transformation including our pathway to project prioritisation. Also included will be our customer insights, experience and engagement strategy across all of our business with an action plan focusing on those elements that are the most important to us and our district. This will also convey our approach to digital for Blaby, hard to reach and vulnerable customers, and equalities, diversity and inclusion. We will understand our diverse communities and our Transforming Blaby Together strategy will reflect identified needs and requirements.	Transformation Group Manager	Completed Nov 2023	The Strategy has been completed and approved. Transforming Blaby Together is our over-arching response to the challenges that we face as a council. The world is changing around us, and we need to adapt. It is designed to enable the authority to adopt a culture of continuous improvement, grasping opportunities and different ways of working to drive operational effectiveness and efficiencies. There are 4 objectives at its heart, Customers At Our Heart, Prioritise Digital, Challenge The Way We Work and Financial Resilience. Each objective is influencing a range of projects taking place across the council that are being supported by our Transformation team.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live, Work & Visit

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Continue to robustly respond to the proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange	We will continue to invest in the planning service to ensure they are resourced to respond to the HNFRI application process, that we respond at every opportunity and continue to raise the concerns of residents, communities and professionals, we will support our communities to actively engage in the process to ensure they understand the proposals and will comment on the application as it progresses through the statutory process.	Planning and Strategic Growth Group Manager	Completed Mar 2024	Throughout 23/24 the Strategic Growth team prepared and submitted a series of formal responses to the proposed scheme. This included the submission of the Local Impact Report and Written Representation. These submissions provided the basis for BDC's position in relation to the proposed scheme. The call for evidenced has now closed. A decision by the Secretary of State for Transport is expected by 12 September 2024.
Support our new Councillors to fulfil their roles as District Councillors and representative of their communities	A detailed induction programme delivered to all Councillors, to provide the tools, guidance support and encouragement to represent their wards and fulfil any roles they are given as part of the new council going forward.	Corporate Services Group Manager	Completed Jan 2024	The Member Induction Programme delivered 25 training sessions on a variety of subjects including ICT, Democratic Process, Code of Conduct, Planning Essentials/Local Plan/Enforcement, Scrutiny introduction and questioning skills, Meet the Services and Corporate Planning. Online training, buddying and 121 support was also provided.
Review our governance arrangements for partnerships, performance and project management	A review of the governance arrangements will be undertaken to ensure decision making is informed, made in the right place and at the right time. A transparent framework exists to allow the required level of understanding and challenge to ensure we are doing the best we can for our residents and communities.	Executive Director (Communities)	Completed March 2024	A review has been completed and the governance in relation to Waste, ICT, Lightbulb and Building Control have been addressed and amendments are being made in ongoing work streams, in particular the Governance elements for ICT and Lightbulb are being addressed through their individual projects. A review will be undertaken annually going forward of all partnership arrangements.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report				A Place to Live, Work & Visit
Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Embed our new performance management framework	Open and transparent data on our performance, development of our performance baseline and the metrics to be measured and meaningful analysis and understanding of our performance in key areas. Service plans and personal appraisals embedded and informing and linked to the delivery of our corporate plan. the framework is used to develop services, enhance delivery and decision making.	Corporate Services Group Manager	Completed Sept 2023	<p>The foundations of a performance and business planning framework have been successfully implemented. This has included a priority-based structure for managing and sharing projects, measures and risks across the organisation. The purchase and development of an online platform has provided ongoing visibility and management of those items, which in turn has had a positive effect on awareness, business planning and decision making.</p> <p>Work continues to develop and evolve the framework, particularly in relation to tangibly connecting operational activity to the corporate aims and objectives of the Blaby District Plan.</p>
Deliver the 2023 District Elections to ensure democracy for the district of Blaby	A successful and legally compliant election is delivered that encourages both people to vote and people to stand for election.	Chief Executive	Completed June 2023	<p>An efficient election was delivered with an accurate result. We are pleased to report that this was a well ran project brought in on time and within budget provision. Benefits for future Elections included building skills and resilience for future election staffing. We were particularly proud of the positive cross organisational working and one team approach.</p>

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live, Work & Visit

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Continue to develop the local plan to ensure we have an up to date and robust local plan	An updated local plan to provide a clear outlook for the forthcoming period.	Planning and Strategic Growth Group Manager	Ongoing	Development of the Local Plan has been undertaken, with work continuing into 24/25. In 2023/24 the Regulation 18 consultation was undertaken to ascertain initial feedback on potential development sites. The next phase of the Local Plan development will include the identification of settlement capacity, landscape, green and blue infrastructure, employment premises capacity, transport and climate change impacts. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which supports the Local Plan is also under ongoing development. This requires engagement with statutory bodies including Leicestershire County Council (education & highways), National Highways, Environment Agency. Approval to undertake the Local Plan Reg 19 consultation will be sought in 2024.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Continue our drive to Net Zero through an updated Climate Action Plan	To deliver a clear Action Plan and work to further reduce our carbon footprint, support mechanisms for residents and businesses to work towards Net Zero, embedded low carbon culture across the organisation and advocate for Net Zero in our day to day work.	Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager	Completed Dec 2023 (Action Plan) - Ongoing Delivery.	The 2030 Council Net Zero Action Plan was approved published in December providing a clear roadmap for Blaby District Council to become a carbon neutral organisation. Huge progress has already been made, predominantly via our fleet switching to HVO fuel rather than diesel, and other contributions through LED lighting and Boiler replacement. Electric vehicle charging has also been installed at the main offices. A number of other projects found within the Action Plan are either underway or being actively scoped and have been brought forward to the current years Corporate Action Plan.
Continue our drive to Net Zero through an updated Climate Action Plan	We will have installed solar panels at the depot	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager	Ongoing - Anticipated Completion Mar 2025	Both the solar panel installation and the EV charging infrastructure projects have been combined into a single project. This has extended the completion time of the solar panel installation and both projects will now be delivered concurrently by March 2025. The pre-construction phase of the project has been completed resulting in a final proposed design currently being reviewed by the project team. Once design is agreed the project will move into the delivery phase which will include a tender process and a construction phased plan to meet the delivery deadlines.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Continue our drive to Net Zero through an updated Climate Action Plan	We will have installed EV infrastructure in place at the depot to support our Net Zero ambitions.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager	Ongoing - Anticipated Completion Mar 2025	Both the solar panel installation and electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects have been combined into a single project to be delivered concurrently by March 2025 to maximise value for money. Interim EV charging points have been installed to ensure facilities are in place for the Electric Compact Sweeper and conversion of an end of life diesel powered bin lorry to full electric conversion.
Deliver the requirements of the Defra air quality grant.	Purchase of an electric sweeper and the conversion of one of our existing diesel refuse lorries to electric.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager and Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager	Ongoing - Anticipated Completion October 2024	A suitable electric compact sweeper has been procured and will be delivered in May 2024. Quotes for the refurbishment and conversion to electric power of one of our existing bin lorry's have been received and the evaluation process has been completed with the conversion works to commence in May 2024 and anticipated delivery by end of October 2024.
Build on our Nationally recognised Lightbulb Service to set out how it can be even better, through a new development plan clearly providing a vision and way forward from 2024 - 2029.	A delivery plan produced to outline the role and governance of the lightbulb service, a partnership focus and robust financial position established. Clear roadmap produced identifying which of the pilots will be integrated into the service and how they will be funded.	Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager	Ongoing - Anticipated completion October 2024	The First stage review resulting in a Visioning Document has been completed and presented to all Partners, the second stage of the review has commenced focusing on agreeing the delivery model, identifying improvements to processes and outcomes for the customer.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report				A Place to Live
Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Ensure we are ready for the National introduction of food waste and other waste reform requirements.	A project is established to introduce a food waste service for Blaby, decision making is clear, a robust communications strategy is in place and delivered in partnership with our communities.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager	Carried Forward Anticipated Completion (of Implementation Plan) Dec 2024	New national government policy on food waste collections which was delayed by a year has mandated the introduction of separate weekly food waste collections by the revised date of 1 April 2026 (originally 01 April 2025). In preparation officers have been working to understand and plan for the introduction of food waste engaging with industry experts and with waste officers across Leicestershire. Capital funding information has now been provided by Defra and is in the process of being challenged. Officers continue to work with colleagues across the county looking for opportunities of joint delivery and procurement. A full implementation plan will be developed and shared with members and the public to ensure engagement and sustainability of approach.
Focus on our growing homelessness and housing supply issues to ensure we can meet the needs of our communities	A feasibility study will be produced to support us to identify the most appropriate actions available to us to increase the amount of temporary accommodation we have access to, to support the growing demands on our housing services.	Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager	Completed Apr 2024	This project evolved and progressed at pace following the award of a significant grant enabling the purchase of 16 properties intended for use as temporary accommodation. These are now furnished and in use. Subsequent projects have been activated to arrange ongoing property maintenance and the purchase of refugee accommodation.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Produce a new contaminated land strategy for the district with a supporting action plan.	We will have a clear approach to our contaminated land, a detailed action plan, a risk based approach to addressing contaminated land and focus our resources on sites that impact on our communities.	Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager	Completed Nov 2023	The strategy was approved by members in November 2023. Following a vacancy a new officer has been appointed into post starting in role in April 2024. Assessments and works at Sandhill Drive and Southey Close, have also now been completed and an ongoing management and monitoring programme is in place for both sites. Work has started on the strategies supporting action plan and identified workstreams.
Ensure our ICT service meets the needs of the business	A clear LICTP strategy and roadmap produced and articulated, ensuring a reliable and robust service is provided, that technology is used to its full potential and a clear action plan to make the required improvements is produced and managed.	Transformation Group Manager	Ongoing. Options Appraisal Completed Feb 2024.	The future direction of our ICT provision was determined by Council in February 2024 following the submission of a detailed options appraisal. The option approved by members was to move away from the Leicestershire ICT Partnership and create an in-house service specifically for Blaby Council only. A project is now underway to plan and implement that transition, whilst at the same time attempting to work with the LICTP to stabilise and improve the current provision in the short term

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Live

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Understand our assets and identify opportunities to utilise them to enhance local areas, develop income streams, ensure sustainability and that they are maintained to a high standard.	A clear asset register is in place and legal requirements and restrictions are understood for each of the assets. A management plan is in place for each of our assets to enable us to maintain them and meet any legal requirements.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager & Corporate Services Group Manager	Ongoing. Options appraisal undertaken.	This year the focus has been on understanding the Council's strategic assets; their potential and legal restrictions relating to them. Work continues to consider the future use of these assets. Now with the appointments to the positions of Group Manager for Assets and Major Projects and the Corporate Services and MO Group Manager this project will continue to expand to encompass all assets to develop a fuller asset register including the detail relating to the legal requirements and restrictions.
Produce a high level options appraisal to consider the opportunities that exist to deliver our fleet and waste services through a partnership arrangement.	A high level options appraisal is produced and considered focusing on the different options of delivering both fleet and waste services.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager	Completed March 2024	An options appraisal has been completed to assess the viability of providing waste collections and fleet management services on behalf of another partner authority. Whilst the Council remains open to all forms of partnership working it is not considered viable to take on delivery of fleet and waste services on behalf of another partner at this time due to uncertainty over government funding.
Produce a new Economic Development Strategy to help create a sustainable and vibrant economy that works for all.	We will have a clear strategy, with an action plan that focusses us where the need and action will have the greatest impact.	Business , Partnerships & Health Improvement Group Manager	Completed Nov 2023	The framework was approved by members in November 2023. It brings together all economic development activities that are occurring within the district and considers how they complement each other to maximise the benefits for our residents, businesses and visitors. Work will now be undertaken in 24/25 to develop an action plan to deliver the strategy.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Work

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Ensure our ICT service meets the needs of the business	A clear LICTP strategy and roadmap produced and articulated, ensuring a reliable and robust service is provided, that technology is used to its full potential and a clear action plan to make the required improvements is produced and managed.	Transformation Group Manager	Ongoing. Options Appraisal Completed Feb 2024.	The future direction of our ICT provision was determined by Council in February 2024 following the submission of a detailed options appraisal. The option approved by members was to move away from the Leicestershire ICT Partnership and create an in-house service specifically for Blaby Council only. A project is now underway to plan and implement that transition, whilst at the same time attempting to work with the LICTP to stabilise and improve the current provision in the short term
Understand our assets and identify opportunities to utilise them to enhance local areas, develop income streams, ensure sustainability and that they are maintained to a high standard.	A clear asset register is in place and legal requirements and restrictions are understood for each of the assets. A management plan is in place for each of our assets to enable us to maintain them and meet any legal requirements.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager & Corporate Services Group Manager	Ongoing. Options appraisal undertaken.	This year the focus has been on understanding the Council's strategic assets; their potential and legal restrictions relating to them. Work continues to consider the future use of these assets. Now with the appointments to the positions of Group Manager for Assets and Major Projects and the Corporate Services and MO Group Manager this project will continue to expand to encompass all assets to develop a fuller asset register including the detail relating to the legal requirements and restrictions.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report

A Place to Work

Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
Produce a high level options appraisal to consider the opportunities that exist to deliver our fleet and waste services through a partnership arrangement.	A high level options appraisal is produced and considered focusing on the different options of delivering both fleet and waste services.	Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager	Completed March 2024	An options appraisal has been completed to assess the viability of providing waste collections and fleet management services on behalf of another partner authority. Whilst the Council remains open to all forms of partnership working it is not considered viable to take on delivery of fleet and waste services on behalf of another partner at this time due to uncertainty over government funding.
Produce a new Economic Development Strategy to help create a sustainable and vibrant economy that works for all.	We will have a clear strategy, with an action plan that focusses us where the need and action will have the greatest impact.	Business , Partnerships & Health Improvement Group Manager	Completed Nov 2023	The framework was approved by members in November 2023. It brings together all economic development activities that are occurring within the district and considers how they complement each other to maximise the benefits for our residents, businesses and visitors. Work will now be undertaken in 24/25 to develop an action plan to deliver the strategy.

Corporate Action Plan 2023-24 - Closure Report				Our People & Finances
Project	Intended Outcome	Lead	Current Status (at April 2024)	End of Year Position (as at April 2024)
People Strategy				
Update our People Strategy and develop an Action Plan.	A clear People Strategy and Action Plan that reflects new ways of working, the support, development and retention of staff and the actions that we will take to promote Blaby District and the Council as a place to work.	Strategic HR Manager & Strategic Director (Sarah Pennelli)	Completed Nov 2023	The People Strategy has been completed and approved as being incorporated into the Transforming Blaby Together (TBT) Strategy. Sitting underneath the umbrella of the TBT Strategy we have a People and Organisational Development (POD) Objectives and Delivery Plan which supports delivery of TBT and the wider Blaby District Plan. Transforming Blaby Together is our over-arching response to the challenges that we face as a council. The world is changing around us, and we need to adapt. It is designed to enable the authority to adopt a culture of continuous improvement, grasping opportunities and different ways of working to drive operational effectiveness and efficiencies.
Medium Term Financial Strategy				
Develop a business plan to support our Medium Term Financial Strategy to address our budget gap.	A clear plan linked to some of our key strategies such as transformation and commercialisation which clearly articulates our plans to address the budget gap within our budgets and the expected growing demands for our services.	Finance Group Manager	Completed March 2024	The Council's Medium Term Strategy (MTFS) was updated in February 2024 detailing the Council's current financial position and included a forecast for future years up until 2028/29. Given future budget gaps a plan was developed alongside the MTFS to close the financial gaps which included transformational savings, closing the gap initiatives and potential prioritisation/rationalisation should the business rate rebase be introduced. The plan gives confidence in the ability to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable.

Blaby District Council Council

Date of Meeting	21 May 2024
Title of Report	Review of Discretionary Pension Policy This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Maggie Wright - Finance, People & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Report Author	Finance Group Manager
Strategic Themes	Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people.

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The report seeks approval of the Council's updated discretionary policy in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That the updated Discretionary Pension Policy as shown at Appendix A are approved.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To ensure that the policy covering active and deferred LGPS members remain up to date and fit for purpose.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

LGPS employers are required to publish and keep under review a statement of policy to explain how they will apply a range of discretions that exist as part of the scheme regulations. This provides employers with the flexibility to manage certain issues relating to the benefits of their employees who are LGPS members, although exercising those discretions can have immediate costs attached to them.

Blaby's current Discretionary Pension Policy was approved by Council in September 2018, so is now more than five years old. It is considered good practice to review the policy on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects current pension regulations.

4.2 Proposal(s)

The updated Discretionary Pension Policy appears at Appendix A.

As mentioned above, the adoption of the policy may lead to additional pension capital costs being incurred in certain circumstances, depending upon the age and length of service of the employee. Therefore, the policy has been written to minimise the impact of the Council facing substantial costs in the future, and only in cases where there is a sound business case for doing so.

In future it is intended to review the Discretionary Pension Policy every three years.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

There are no significant changes to the Council's existing policy, and it is therefore, considered that there is no need for wider consultation with trade unions.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 Not applicable. The proposed policies aim to minimise the risk of the Council facing substantial pension capital costs due to LGPS members and deferred members taking early retirement.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Pension capital costs may still arise in certain circumstances where an LGPS member retires between the age of 55 and normal pension age.	The discretionary policies will only permit this to happen in circumstances where there is a sound business case which provides financial and operational benefits to the Council.

7. Other options considered

- 7.1 None, it is a statutory requirement to have discretionary pension policies in place.

8. Environmental impact

- 8.1 No issues arising directly from this report.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

10. Appendix

- 10.1 Appendix A – Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy

11. Background paper(s)

- 11.1 None.

12. Report author's contact details

Nick Brown	Finance Group Manager
Nick.Brown@blaby.gov.uk	0116 272 7625

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaby District Council Policy

Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy

Original Publish Date	01/10/18	Review Frequency	Every 3 Years	Current Version Publish Date	[00/00/00]
Approved By*	Council	Approval Date*	21/05/24	Version Number	001
Author Job Title	Finance Group Manager	Service Area	Finance	Document Register Reference	Input by iPlan Team

*Approved by and 'approval date' are in relation to the most recent version.

Review History			
Version*	Reviewed By (Job Title)	Review Completion Date	Brief Description of Changes (add 'no changes required' if applicable)
001			

*Version number remains the same if no significant changes are made upon review.

Document Definition / Approval & Review

Defining the document type and how it is approved and reviewed

Blaby District Council policies **‘outline a set of rules or principles that govern how the council (or services within the council) will operate’**.

Key published documents are approved for publication in line with the approval matrix illustrated in the [Key Published Document Procedure](#).

Unless agreed by exception, key published documents must be reviewed at least **every 3 years** from the date of approval.

Significant updates/changes must also seek reapproval in line with the approval matrix.

Scope

To what and to whom this policy applies

This policy sets out the following employer discretions in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS):

- Additional Pension Contributions
- Waiving of Early Retirement Reductions
- Switching on the “Rule of 85”
- Flexible Retirement
- Non-Mandatory Discretions

It applies to all active LGPS members (current employees), former LGPS members who left the Council’s employment between 1998 and 2008 (including Councillors), those who left between 2008 and 2014, and post-2014 leavers.

Terms & Definitions

Definition of any acronyms, jargon, or terms that might have multiple meanings.

Term	Definition
LGPS	The Local Government Pension Scheme
APC	Additional Pension Contributions
R85	The Rule of 85 – see section 4 below

Policy Sections

Section 1 Introduction – The purpose and reason for the policy.

The Local Government Pension Scheme regulations include numerous areas where scheme employers have discretionary powers, and it is mandatory for every employer to have a discretion policy in place. Setting a policy as a scheme employer gives employers flexibility in managing issues relating to LGPS benefits for both current and former employees.

There are four main categories where it is a statutory requirement to have a published policy. Additionally, there are some areas where it is recommended, but not mandatory to have a policy.

Exercising these discretions usually involves immediate costs for the employer.

Section 2 – Additional Pension Contributions

1. Whether, how much, and in what circumstances to contribute to a shared cost APC scheme.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)

Employers can decide whether to help scheme members who are buying additional pension by sharing the cost with them. However, this does not relate to members who are using an APC to buy back lost pension, as in some circumstances employers are obliged to contribute two-thirds of the cost.

Blaby District Council has not adopted this discretion.

2. Whether, at full cost to the Scheme employer, to grant extra annual pension, up to the LGPS additional pension limit (reviewed annually) to an active member, or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 31

Employers can decide whether to grant their scheme members an additional amount of pension. Employers will need to consider in what circumstances they might grant this extra pension.

Blaby District Council will not normally agree to award an additional pension under this regulation unless there is a clear financial or operational benefit to the Council.

Section 3 – Waiving of Early Retirement Reductions

When scheme members elect to take their pension before their Normal Pension Age (usually their state pension age but in some circumstances age 65), the pension will be in payment for longer than planned so the pension is reduced, based on factors issued by the Government Actuary Department. Employers can, in some circumstances, decide whether to waive these reductions in part or in full. There are five discretionary areas where employers are required to have a policy; three relate to waiving on compassionate grounds and two relate to waiving on any grounds.

3. Whether to waive, in whole or in part, actuarial reduction on benefits which a member voluntarily draws before normal pension age.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 30(8)

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Senior Leadership Team will consider any cases and will decide whether the actuarial reductions should be waived. In all cases the Council's financial position must be given due consideration.

4. Whether to waive, in whole or part, actuarial reduction on benefits paid on flexible retirement.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 30(8)

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Senior Leadership Team will consider any cases and will decide whether the actuarial reductions should be waived. In all cases the Council's financial position must be given due consideration.

5. Whether to waive any actuarial reduction on pre and/or post April 2014 benefits paid early on compassionate grounds.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 – paragraph 3(1) and paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Senior Leadership Team will consider any cases and will decide whether the actuarial reductions should be waived. In all cases the Council's financial position must be given due consideration.

6. Whether to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.

Membership Category: Leavers between 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 30(5), and paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Senior Leadership Team will consider any cases and will decide whether the actuarial reductions should be waived. In all cases the Council's financial position must be given due consideration.

7. Waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.

Membership Category: Leavers between 1st April 1998 and 31st March 2008, and Councillors
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 31(5), and paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Senior Leadership Team will consider any cases and will decide whether the actuarial reductions should be waived. In all cases the Council's financial position must be given due consideration.

Section 4 – Switching on the Rule of 85

The Rule of 85 (R85) is a complex protection for scheme members who were in the LGPS before 1st October 2006. A member will satisfy R85 when their age plus length of LGPS membership (in whole years) adds up to 85. For most scheme members R85 only protects pension benefits accrued from their membership before 1st April 2008.

Ordinarily where a member has met R85 and is retiring and drawing their pension after 60, it applies automatically. However, where a member has met R85 and is retiring and drawing their pension between age 55 and 60, the employer has the power to “switch on” R85 at a cost. R85 can be switched on by the employer for:

- a) Current employees retiring.
- b) Ex-employees with deferred benefits retiring.
- c) Ex-employees who had been awarded a tier 3 ill health pension that was subsequently suspended.

8. Whether to "switch on" the 85-year rule for a member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 – paragraphs 1(2) and 2(2) of Schedule 2

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion unless there is a business case to support this as an alternative to a redundancy situation.

9. Whether to "switch on" the 85-year rule for a deferred member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.

Membership Category: Leavers between 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2014
Regulation Reference: LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 – paragraphs 1(2) and 1(1)(c) of Schedule 2

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion.

10. Whether to "switch on" the 85-year rule for a deferred member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.

Membership Category: Leavers between 1st April 1998 and 31st March 2008, and Councillors
Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 60, and (paragraphs 1(2) and 1(1)(f) of Schedule 2 to the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014

Blaby District Council will not apply this discretion.

Section 5 – Flexible Retirement

If an employee aged 55 or over reduces their hours or moves to a less senior position, and providing the employer gives their permission, they may be able to start receiving their pension, even though they are still working. The arrangement is called flexible retirement and is designed to:

- Help the employee ease into retirement.
- Allow the employer to retain the knowledge and skills of experienced staff.
- Assist the employer in its succession planning.

Employees can still build up further pension benefits in their ongoing job on either lower hours or in a less senior role.

It is important to note that:

- Taking flexible retirement before state pension age means that the employees' pension benefits will normally be reduced as if they were retiring early.
- R85 is always switched on for flexible retirements and cannot be switched off. Therefore, granting flexible retirement for someone under age 60 may result in an unavoidable employer shortfall cost.
- Employers will need to obtain details of the cost of the flexible retirement before it can be approved.

11. Whether all or some benefits can be paid if an employee over 55 reduces their hours or grade (flexible retirement).

While essentially this is a relatively straight-forward discretion, in deciding whether to allow someone to take flexible retirement, there are several consequences to be aware of:

- Without a clear written policy staff may have unrealistic expectations of being approved for flexible retirement.
- Some cases under age 60 may have unavoidable employer shortfall costs, due to R85 being automatically switched on.

- The possibility of waiving reductions.
- How much of a reduction in hours is acceptable.
- Whether to allow an increase in hours or grade after taking flexible retirement.

Membership Category: Actives and Leavers since 1st April 2014
 Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 30(6)
 LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 11(2)

Blaby District Council has agreed to release pension where there is no cost and not to waive any reduction. LGPS members must reduce their hours by a minimum of 40% and/or reduce their grade.

Blaby District Council may, however, allow the release of pension where there is a cost or waive reduction in a potential redundancy situation, where a reduction may occur though redeployment, or in other exceptional circumstances supported by a business case.

Section 6 – Non-Mandatory Discretions

Whilst it is not mandatory for employers to have a policy on the following three discretions, for reasons of openness and good governance the Pensions Section recommends that employers approve a policy for each.

12. Whether to extend the 12-month limit a member has in which to elect to transfer other pension rights into the LGPS. This must be with the agreement of the Administering Authority.

Membership Category: Active Members
 Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 100 (6)

Blaby District Council will not normally extend this 12-month time limit. Extenuating circumstances may apply, and this would include:

- Where evidence exists that an election was made within 12 months, but this was not received by the Administering Authority.
- Where evidence exists that the LGPS member was not aware of the 12 month limit due to maladministration.

13. Whether to extend the 12-month limit a member has in which to elect not to aggregate their deferred benefits with their new LGPS employment.

Membership Category: Active Members
 Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 22 (7) & (8)

Blaby District Council will not normally extend this 12-month time limit. Extenuating circumstances may apply, and this would include:

- Where evidence exists that an election was made within 12 months, but this was not received by the Administering Authority.
- Where evidence exists that the LGPS member was not aware of the 12 month limit due to maladministration.

14. Whether to determine which contribution band is allocated on joining the scheme and at each April. It also determines the circumstances when an employee's band may be reviewed.

Membership Category: Active Members
 Regulation Reference: LGPS Regulations 2013 – Regulation 9

Blaby District Council will base pay on actual pay in April plus previous year's overtime, and re-band upon a pay award and all contractual changes, but not ad hoc hours changes.

Section 7 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations.

Blaby District Council promotes equal opportunities in the services it provides.

Our aim is to implement and maintain services which ensure that no potential or current customer is treated less favorably on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, age or sexual orientation nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law.

Section 8 – Carbon Neutral / Net Zero Benefits

Not applicable.

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaby District Council Council

Date of Meeting	21 May 2024
Title of Report	A proposed public consultation for a potential new Conservation Area in Braunstone Village. This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Ben Taylor - Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation
Report Author	Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager
Strategic Themes	Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the potential of creating a new Conservation Area covering the historic village core of Braunstone, and to seek approval to proceed a public consultation.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 To proceed to a public consultation on the potential designation of the Braunstone Village Conservation Area.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To progress the motion made by Council in November 2021 to consider the merits of a Conservation Area in this location.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background

Context and History

On 23rd November 2021, following interest and research by local residents, a motion was passed by Council to consider the merits of a Conservation Area in this location and to work in partnership with Braunstone Town Council to assist with a public consultation and the preparation of a character appraisal.

Blaby District Council has since engaged in discussions with Braunstone Town Council and has enlisted the services of Leicester City Council's Historic Environment team to assess the potential for designation and advise on the necessary procedural matters. A Character Appraisal has been prepared along with a draft Management Plan to aid with the future upkeep and improvement of the area (Appendices A and B).

Evaluation of the proposed conservation area

Local authorities have the power to designate new conservation areas under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that from time to time they determine which parts of their areas are of special or historic interest and should be designated.

As detailed in the Character Appraisal (Appendix A), there is considered to be a critical mass of surviving historic townscape, and that there is sufficient heritage significance to justify additional planning controls. The proposed boundary has been drawn in such a way to minimise the inclusion of properties that are of lower heritage significance, such as more modern or architecturally unremarkable buildings, however some of these are included to ensure that development in critical locations will be considered properly in terms of the broader townscape qualities of the area.

There is evidence of incremental change in this area, with the loss of more traditional building features and materials, as well as small scale developments that are more visually harmful. The area can be seen as being close to a tipping point in terms of this change, with the expanded permitted development rights for non-conservation area properties providing a heightened risk. Potential new planning controls that would come with conservation area designation are detailed in the draft Management Plan (Appendix B).

A new conservation area would help ensure new development was sensitive to the historic character of the area, but it would come with costs. An additional workload for the Planning Department would be created from planning applications relating to work that would otherwise have been permitted development, as well as conservation area guidance and potential planning enforcement on works that have become unauthorised. In addition, property owners will have additional costs relating to potentially preparing planning applications and/or potentially more expensive sourcing of higher quality materials for building repairs. However, research by Historic England has concluded that conservation area status can increase the value of properties.

To achieve broader efficiencies, the draft Management Plan proposes joint working with Leicester City. The existing Braunstone Village Conservation Area is located within the administrative boundary of Leicester City Council. The two areas are adjacent to each other and combine to cover the totality of the historic village.

Consultation

Although not strictly required by the relevant Planning Act, it is considered best practice to carry out public consultation on a potential designation. A 6-week consultation period is proposed, in line with comparable timeframes for similar projects. The Council would send letters and emails to local properties in the area and to other groups with an interest, and the Character Appraisal and draft Management Plan would be made publicly available. A public drop-in within the locality (venue tbc) will take place during the period. This will be facilitated by Braunstone Town Council.

It is expected that the consultation will be run to coincide with a consultation carried out by Leicester for a new character appraisal on the existing Conservation Area in Braunstone. This will allow improved and more efficient communications with the public, for example through the issuing of press notices.

4.2 Proposal(s)

That Council agree to proceed to a public consultation for a 6-week period (dates tbc).

Following the consultation and consideration of feedback, a further report will be prepared to go to Council to seek designation of the area, and will include a list of consultation responses with any actions taken as a result.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

None.

4.4 Significant Issues

In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate and there are no areas of concern.

Consideration has been given to issues relating to Equalities. An Equality Impact & Needs Assessment has been completed for the proposal.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 There has been a fee of £5,427 to procure the services of Leicester City Council's Historic Environment Team to provide technical support including the preparation of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

No further significant costs are expected, only for the printing and posting of letters and press notices that will be required as part of the consultation process and associated notifications.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Consultation is carried out incorrectly or is incomplete	Close working with Leicester's Historic Environment team to ensure proposals are properly publicised and processes are followed. Continued liaison with Braunstone Town Council to raise awareness and facilitate consultation.

7. Other options considered

To not proceed to a public consultation

This could be considered contrary to the motion passed by Council to consider the merits of a conservation area in this location, as all views would not be fully taken into account. A decision would need to be made whether or not to continue work on the potential to designate, however the information informing this may be incomplete without community feedback.

- 7.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

8. Environmental impact

- 8.1 The proposal may help preserve or enhance the historic environment in this area. No other significant environmental impacts identified.

9. Other significant issues

- 9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.
- 9.2 An Equality Impacts Needs Assessment has been completed for this report and is included as a background paper.

10. Appendix

10.1 Appendix A – Braunstone Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal

10.2 Appendix B – Draft Management Plan

11. Background paper(s)

11.1 Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment (EINA)

11.2 Environmental Impact Checklist

12. Report author's contact details

Martin Needham	Senior Planning Policy Officer
martin.needham@blaby.gov.uk	01162 727710

This page is intentionally left blank



Braunstone Village Conservation Area
CHARACTER APPRAISAL

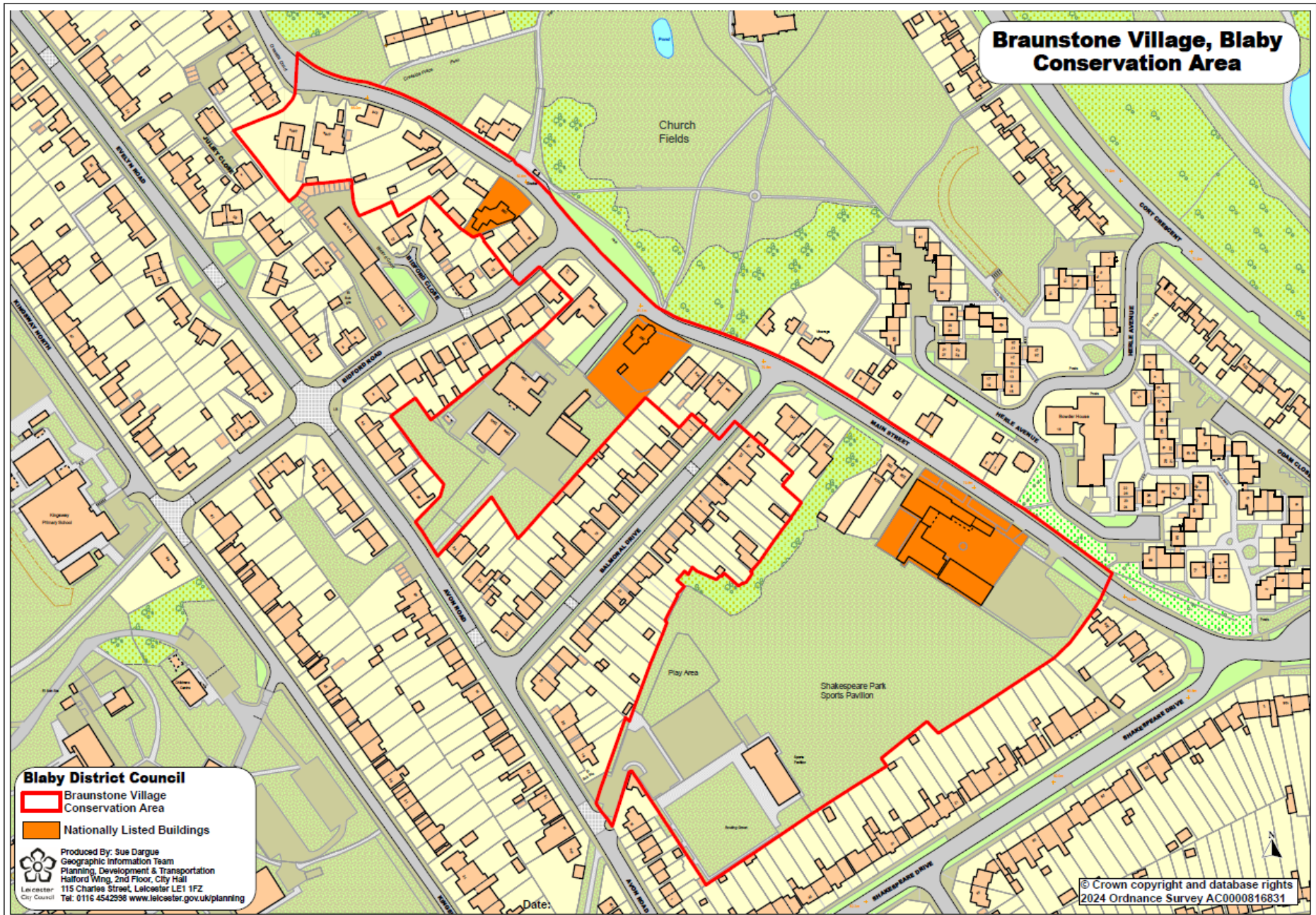
2024



VILLAGE STREET, BRANLITON
J.W. & CO (31)

Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Background, Designation, and Structure.....	4
3	Planning Policy Framework	5
4	Summary of Special Interest	7
5	Location and Setting.....	8
6	Historic Development.....	9
7	Architectural Character	13
8	Townscape	18
9	Building Materials	21
10	Open Spaces	25
11	Historic Routes	26
12	Intrusive or Harmful Factors	27
13	Capacity for Change.....	28
14	Conservation Area Boundary	29
15	Local Consultation.....	30
16	Management Proposal	30
17	Additional Planning Controls	30
18	Contact.....	30
	Appendix 1: Map.....	31
	Appendix 2: Endnotes	32



1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is the duty of local planning authorities from time to time to prepare and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas, commonly referred to as Character Appraisals.
- 1.2 The Braunstone Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal aims to set out the area's special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which is desirable to preserve and enhance.
- 1.3 This appraisal will be used to help inform the design of any future development proposals in the area. It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent change, but to manage it in ways that maintain and strengthen an area's special qualities.
- 1.4 It is important to note that no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive and that the omission of a particular feature, building or open space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2 Background, Designation, and Structure

- 2.1 The District of Blaby currently contains 11 conservation areas, the oldest of which were designated in 1972. Braunstone Village would be the district's twelfth conservation area if approved.
- 2.2 The section of the historic village of Braunstone north of Braunstone Lane, falling within the jurisdiction of Leicester City Council, was designated as a conservation area in 1974.
- 2.3 This Character Appraisal was prepared to support the designation of a conservation area for the historic village of Braunstone on the southern side of Braunstone Lane, which lies within the jurisdiction of Blaby District Council.
- 2.4 This appraisal is structured to include:
 - A summary of designation,
 - Policy Background,
 - A definition of the special interest of the area via a spatial and character analysis, historical development, and important features.

3 Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The concept of ‘conservation areas’ was first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act (1967) which defined a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’
- 3.2 The definition remains unchanged in current legislation, set out in the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**. The Act places duties on local planning authorities:
- To identify those parts of their area that are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas,
 - To review past designations from time to time,
 - To prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas,
 - To pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas.
- 3.3 The effect of designation means that planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings, with some minor

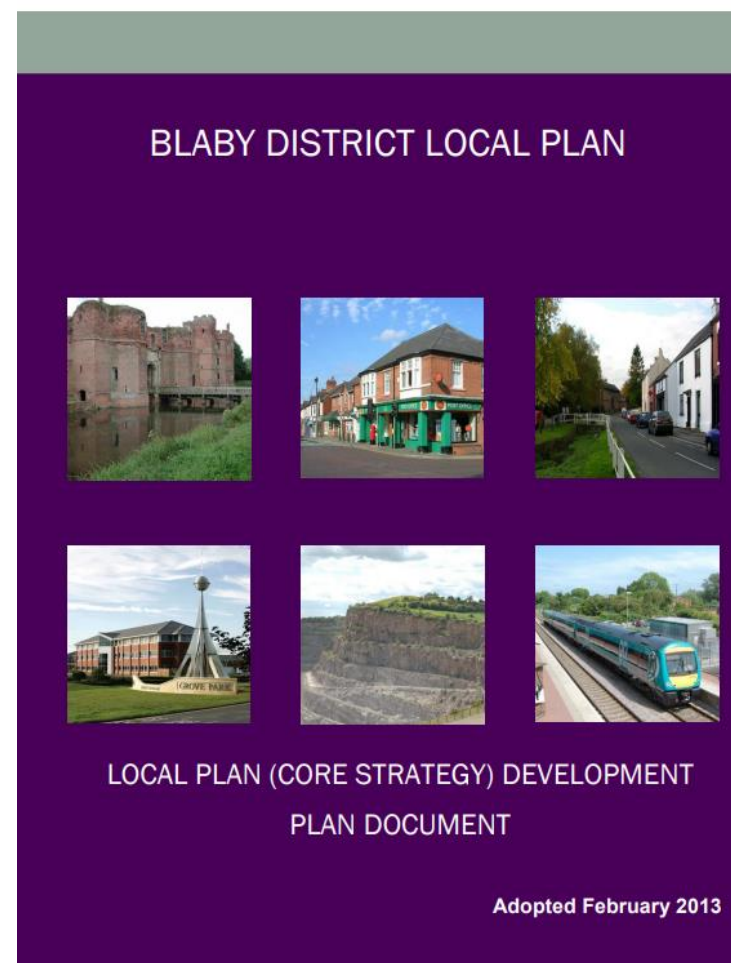


Image 1: Blaby District Core Strategy (2013).

exceptions. There are also stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land, and protection for trees.

- 3.4 Government policy is provided in the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**. It requires the significance of heritage assets – both historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in guidance published by Historic England.
- 3.5 The protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the **Blaby District Core Strategy**. It is mentioned as a key component in Policies CS2, CS12, CS14, and CS16 and is the subject of a comprehensive policy on the Historic Environment and Culture CS20 and in the Blaby District Local Plan Delivery DPD in Development Management Policy 12 (Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets).
- 3.6 There is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and the policy expects new developments and conservation-led regeneration to reflect the character and value of the historic environment.

- 3.7 Both local and national policy puts the emphasis on the enhancement of heritage assets and positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of an area that should be made through new development.

4 Summary of Special Interest

- 4.1 The Conservation Area preserves the southern core of the ancient settlement of Braunstone which was first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086.
- 4.2 It contains arguably the oldest surviving domestic buildings of the original village, several of which can be dated to the 17th century.
- 4.3 Although no longer in agricultural use, several former farmsteads are preserved within the built form of the village as physical reminders of the once rural nature of the settlement. Demonstrating the changing character of the area as suburban development grew.
- 4.4 Although modern development has taken place within the historic core, it manages to retain a sense of its village origins, principally due to the natural meanders of Braunstone Lane.
- 4.5 Although some 20th century development has caused harm and detracts from the area, there are examples of high-quality inter-war architecture which add their own contribution to the understand and appreciation of Braunstone.



Image 2: View looking south-east along Braunstone Lane.

5 Location and Setting

- 5.1 Braunstone Village is one of six former villages located outside the historic core of Leicester, which became enveloped by suburban expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 5.2 The village is likely Saxon in origin and was founded on section of glacial sands and gravels less than a mile west of Fosse Way and on the southern verge of the once extensive Leicester Forest. The superficial geology of the area is mostly boulder clay, with small areas of gravel and light sand to the east. The land is undulating, gradually rising westwards to a height of about 90 meters (300 feet) above sea level.
- 5.3 The area was historically associated with Braunstone Park and Braunstone Hall, located to the immediate north-east, albeit physically divided by modern development. Historically, the entire village settlement formed part of the parish of Braunstone, which lay within the jurisdiction of Blaby Rural District Council. In 1935 the city boundaries were amended and the part of Braunstone which had formed the Winstanley Estate was incorporated into the city administration boundary. The remaining parts of the village, principally the land south-west of Braunstone Lane, remained within the District Council.
- 5.4 The open space around the historic village was heavily developed during the post-war period. The land to the

north-west, south-west and south-east is occupied by twentieth century housing laid out in a loose grid pattern which encloses the conservation area of three sides.

- 5.5 The conservation area is located on the north-eastern edge of Blaby District covering an area of approximately 5 hectares (just less than 12.5 acres). It is bounded by Braunstone Lane and Main Street to the north, Shakespeare Drive to the south-east, and Avon Road and Evelyn Road to the south and west.



Image 3: Gibbons Map (1903) showing village in context with Braunstone Hall and Park.

6 Historic Development

- 6.1 The settlement of Braunstone is most likely Saxon in origin, established around the late 8th or early 9th century AD as a ‘daughter’ settlement of Glenfield. Archaeological evidence suggests this early medieval settlement was possibly located on land immediately south of St Peter’s Church in an area now known as Church Field.
- 6.2 The first recorded mention is in the Domesday Survey, where it was referred to as “*Brantestone*” meaning the place where Brant settled. At this time, it was held by Robert Burdet under Hugh de Grandmesnil, comprised of eight households, and considered to be worth 60 shillings. De Grandmesnil was a proven companion of William the Conqueror who fought in the Battle of Hastings and went on to be a great landowner in England. The mention of “*socmen*” as part of the entry indicates the presence of Scandinavian serfs in the village.ⁱ
- 6.3 The village sat on the edge of what was once the ancient Leicester Forest, which covered extensive lands to the north. Timber from the forest would have been a valuable resource and primary construction material for the local building stock. The woodlands were gradually converted to pastures and Leicester Forest was fully enclosed by 1628. Bendbow Spinney remains the only surviving remnant of this former natural asset.ⁱⁱ
- 6.4 Between the 13th and 16th centuries the Harcourt, or Horecut, family held an over-riding interest in the Braunstone Estate. A survey taken in 1299 documented 24 households in the village. A Manor House, first mentioned in documentary sources the same year, and defined as “*the capital messuage with herbage and fruit garden*” is thought to have originally stood between the Church and Braunstone Lane. It was demolished around the turn of the 17th century and a new Manor House was built by Henry Hastings on Braunstone Lane, close to the site of Old Hall Farm (now demolished).
- 6.5 What is now the Church of St Peter was purpose-built in the twelfth century as a private chapel for The Lord of the Manor and referred to as the Chapel of Ease for the Manor and Parish of Glenfield.ⁱⁱⁱ The close physical connection of the ecclesiastical facility to the former Manor House physically demonstrated its ‘private’ function.
- 6.6 Until the late 16th century, Braunstone was a village dominated by open-field cultivation, with the core of the settlement formed along Coalpit Lane (now Braunstone Lane). It was given this name “due to the packhorses bringing coal to Leicester from the Swannington coalfield”.^{iv} In the late 16th century the old agricultural routine of the village was broken up by the widespread conversion of arable land to pasture, followed in the early 17th century by the inclosure of Leicester Forest.^v

- 6.7 By 1483, The Manor was held by the well-known Yorkist William Hastings, who likely received the land as a grant from Edward IV. He and his son Henry were the main actors responsible for the inclosure of the village fields, which totalled over 97 hectares (240 acres) of land. Although no data documenting the exact number of people displaced by the widespread inclosure was recorded, an estimated 40 people left the village, an episode of major depopulation for a village of this size causing vacancy in several properties.^{vi} Henry Hastings contributed personally to further deforestation of Leicester Forest, commissioning the felling of up to 500 acres of tree cover to convert the land into pasture.
- 6.8 Due to the loss of a substantial amount of money as a result of the Civil War, the Hastings family were forced to sell the estate. In the mid-17th century, it was acquired by the Winstanley family from Lancashire for the total sum of £6,000. They had a significant impact on the broader area of Braunstone for the next three centuries, defining the economic and social history of the wider locality.^{vii}
- 6.9 In 1670, there appears to have been 28 households in Braunstone, a comparable number to a century earlier, meaning that some recovery had taken place since the depopulation episode.^{viii} The 18th century was a period of relative prosperity. At the time, Braunstone became a fashionable spot for foxhunting; the remnants of wide ditches and deer leaps designed to control stags for hunting still survive on Cressida Place.



Image 4: 17th century map of the county.

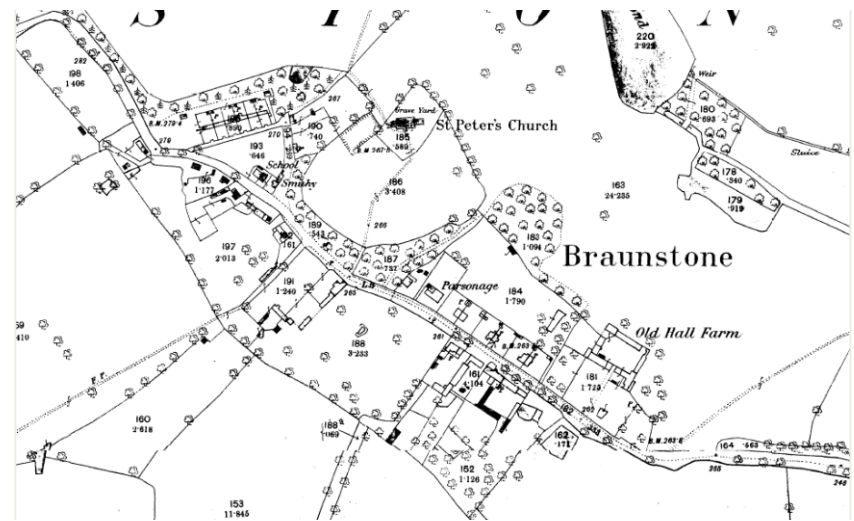


Image 5: OS Map of the village from 1884.

- 6.10 In 1775, Clement Winstanley, High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1774, commissioned a new Manor House to be set within 40 hectares (100 acres) of parkland, now known as Braunstone Park. Braunstone Hall was constructed to the designs of the local builder and politician James Oldham, who later became the Lord Mayor of Leicester.^{ix} The new hall marked the centre of a sizeable country estate, its immediate surroundings comprising of a well wooded park, featuring a lake and a series of ornamental gardens.
- 6.11 The prosperity of what remained a small agricultural village continued up to the 19th century. Beside some localised home-based framework-knitting and few tradesmen active in the area, Braunstone remained largely unaffected by the rapid industrial growth of the adjacent town of Leicester, which would engulf the villages of Aylestone, Belgrave, Humberstone, Evington and Knighton throughout the century.^x
- 6.12 In early 1800s, the local population barely exceeded 200, with only around 20 people employed in trade and the manufacturing industry.^{xi} The Winstanley's commissioned several amenities within the village throughout the 19th century for the benefit of the village inhabitants, including the row of six workers cottages at Cressida Place, the Parsonage and the small National School.
- 6.13 In 1877 Braunstone was described as a “pleasant and picturesque village”.^{xii} By this point “it still had to rely on a



Image 6: 1890s image of The Manor and Braunstone Lane.



Image 7: 1890s image of The Manor and Braunstone Lane.

passing carrier for its main external contact”.^{xiii} As of 1871 it had 39 houses and 215 inhabitants across 1,783 acres of land, bounded by River Soar to the east and the borough of Leicester to the north, crossed by the Roman Fosse Way.^{xiv}

- 6.14 The rural character of the village and surrounding area remained until the early 20th century; the OS map of 1903-4 shows the relatively undeveloped character of the village. In 1924, a guide to the county described Braunstone as a “curiously remote and isolated little village” with a “quaint, old-world character”.^{xv}
- 6.15 In 1925 the Leicester Corporation purchased the bulk of the Winstanley estate to provide for expanded housing provisions in the area. A major housing estate was subsequently built immediately north of the old village core, with further construction south of Braunstone Lane. As a result, the local population grew dramatically from 238 in 1921 to nearly 7,000 in 1931.^{xvi} Braunstone Hall was vacated in 1926 and on 29th of August 1932 it opened as Hall Junior School, after the National School had closed two years previously.
- 6.16 In 1935 the part of the parish, which had been within the Winstanley Estate was detached from Blaby Rural District and incorporated into the City of Leicester, creating the current split between Braunstone Village (Leicester City Council) and Braunstone Town (Blaby District Council).

- 6.17 By the mid-1950s, large areas of former agricultural land around Braunstone were extensively developed and some older buildings within the village were demolished. The direct physical connection between the village and Braunstone Hall was lost and small infill developed appeared along the south side of Braunstone Lane. The need for social housing led to the demolition of Old Hall Farm in 1967 and the redevelopment of the land for the housing development on Herle Avenue and Odam Close in 1973.
- 6.18 In addition to the larger scale development of new housing estates during the 20th century at its margins, the core of the village also saw incremental change. For example, the village shop at 266 Braunstone Lane, dominated by a former house dating to the 17th century, was extended with a larger residential unit in the 1960s. The most recent addition to the Conservation Area has been a new terrace of houses to the west of the older property at 208 Braunstone Lane, completed in 2023.
- 6.19 In the 21st Century, some work has been undertaken to help improve the legibility of the historic village core with various pieces of new signage put up. The pathway network within Church Fields was extended and a large heritage panel was installed on Braunstone Lane detailing the historic development of the village.

7 Architectural Character

- 7.1 The architectural character of the conservation area is a mixture of the original village buildings and later 20th century infill development.
- 7.2 Regarding the former, these original village buildings fall within two distinct character groups based on their original purpose and use, they are either domestic or agricultural/ancillary in nature. This has informed their differing appearance, design, form, material, construction, and siting.
- 7.3 These domestic buildings are all typically sited to the front of their plots, adjacent to or immediately abutting the pavement. They were built utilising traditional techniques and materials, such as timber frame construction, which can still be seen in their external elevations to this day. They are typically two storeys in height, likely to have one or more chimney stacks and contain multiple openings in their façades, suggesting the subdivision of internal space which require heating and natural light.
- 7.4 The historic agricultural and ancillary building are instead found to the rear of plots, typically along boundary lines. They are usually single storey in height with random or asymmetric openings, sometimes with large single openings to allow for the access of machinery. Their roofs are devoid of any projecting chimney stacks, reflecting their utilitarian purpose.
- 7.5 The 20th century development is principally domestic in nature, however there are also some of examples of ground floor commercial units.
- 7.6 The dwelling houses are a mixture of semi-detached and detached and are typically sited deeper within their plots than their more historic neighbours, allowing for generous front gardens or car parking space. For the most part they maintain the prevailing domestic building height of two storeys, although the roof forms differ as the hipped roof becomes more common in this later architectural style. They do utilise modern versions of traditional materials such as brick and timber framing, as well as incorporating traditional features such as chimneys, bow and bay windows for articulation to their primary elevations.
- 7.7 At the south-eastern end of the conservation is a complex of buildings, formally known as Ashleigh Farm, it is now called **The Shakespeare**. To the front of the plot, running parallel to the highway is the former farmhouse, the oldest sections of which is timber frame construction dating to the mid-17th century, with later alterations and extensions. The porch has the year “1655” recorded on its moulded lintel. The timber framed section contains brick infill in a mix of stretcher bond and herringbone patterns, and the building has been extended south in brick. The roof is thatched with a scalloped ridge and several thatched dormers. The Shakespeare and its curtilage are Grade II listed, designated in 1987.



Image 8: The Shakespeare.



Image 9: The courtyard to the rear of The Shakespeare.

- 7.8 The buildings to the rear of The Shakespeare form a courtyard of ancillary structures, formally part of a traditional farmstead. The original agricultural buildings have been altered and added to in recent years due to their change of use. The simple design and high-quality materials used have ensured the character of the former farmyard remains discernible. Worth noting is the stepped ridges of the south-west range which reflects the cumulative nature of the buildings and adds positively to roofscape in this area (Image 8).
- 7.9 The properties at **228 and 230 Braunstone Lane** are likely older and of more historic interest than their external appearance suggests. There is evidence of a building in this location on the historic mapping and in old photographs, taking on its current form in early 20th century but with a potentially older core. Unfortunately, many of its original features have been lost or replaced, and the exterior has been full enveloped in a modern render which detracts from its character and limits its contribution to the area.
- 7.10 The linear range of building to the rear are also of note and would have once formed part of a traditional farmyard. Similarly, they have been altered as their agricultural use fell away, the site has been subject to partial demolition and the original roof coverings have been replaced with modern alternatives. However enough material remains, including the stepped ridges, which allows for this original character to be read and appreciated.

- 7.11 There are two groups consisting of a pair of inter-war semi-detached properties on either side of Balmoral Drive. Nos. 236 – 242 Braunstone Lane are the plainer of the two groups, with a simple double height bay, decorated with render and a single diamond detail, to each property. They have also undergone a greater degree of external alterations, such as porch and side extensions, which compromise their integrity as a group.
- 7.12 Nos **244 – 250 Braunstone Lane** are of a higher architectural quality than the other pair, with sophisticated oriel windows, faux timber framed gables, and double height tile hung bow windows. Almost all the properties retain their original timber joinery which makes an important and positive contribution to their appearance and group value.
- 7.13 **The Manor** is a 17th century timber frame and brick farmhouse, which has been much altered and extended in several stages and over subsequent centuries. The inscription “16 WPM 89” survives on a timber rail. Sited perpendicular to the highway, its principal range is characterised by a prominent gable under a Swithland Slate roof, jettied first floor and later cantered bay window inserted to the ground floor. A secondary range extends north containing an 18th century flush panelled door and moulded architrave crudely cut into the beam above it. A 19th century brick and Welsh slate extension has been added to the rear with a set of four linked chimney shafts. The brink infill is a variety of stretcher bond and herringbone



Image 10: 248 & 250 Braunstone Lane.

pattern and there is a mix of window styles throughout the property including both vertical and horizontal slides sashes. The Manor and its curtilage are Grade II listed, designated in 1952.

- 7.14 As with the other former farmsteads in the village, The Manor once had a large courtyard of agricultural buildings to the rear. However much of this has been cleared and the area is now a small industrial estate containing modern office buildings and only the remnants of the two agricultural buildings. One 19th century structure survives relatively intact with modern cement roof tiles and



Image 11: Grade II Listed Former Shop with Storage Loft at 266 Braunstone Lane.

area is not as successful in retaining its former farmstead character.

- 7.15 **266 Braunstone Lane** is part of a 17th century much altered timber framed structure, originally built as a cottage which likely extended further north. It was turned into the village shop in the 20th century, a poor-quality shop extension was added to the south gable and a brick house was added to the rear, both of which are of no historic interest. It has painted brick infill, in a mix of stretcher bond and herringbone pattern under a Swithland slate roof. It retains some interesting historic features, such as the ledge and brace door and ground floor shuttered window. It is Grade II listed, designated in 1987.
- 7.16 **268 Braunstone Lane** is a 19th century brick house, with a simple rectilinear footprint, three half dormers in a plain clay tile roof and an attractive brick boundary wall. Unfortunately, recent alterations have impacted its character and limits its contribution to the area, including modern uPVC windows and a tall timber close-boarded fence.
- 7.17 **270 – 272 Braunstone Lane** is another example of a building which is likely older than it first appears although it has been much altered. Unfortunately, many of its original features have been lost or replaced, and the exterior has been full enveloped in a modern render which detracts from its character and limits its contribution to the area.



Image 12: Holly Tree Cottage, 278 Braunstone Lane

- 7.18 **April Cottage, 276 Braunstone Lane** is an attractive cottage which has been altered and extended in several distinct phases. Although it is now externally clad in brick, this appears to represent a 19th century phase of re-fronting work to an earlier timber frame building, the core of which may survive internally. A single section of frame is preserved within the external brick skin to the left of the bow window. The character of April Cottage is eclectic, with a variety of window style, roof material and ad hoc additions which result in a charming addition to the character of the area.
- 7.19 **Holly Tree Cottage, 278 Braunstone Lane**, similar to April Cottage, likely represents an older timber framed cottage which was re-fronted and extended in brick. Evidence of the previous catslide roof is discernible in the northern elevation. Unfortunately, its original openings have been enlarged and modern uPVC windows installed. However, its traditional proportions and construction remain clearly evident, and it retains sufficient historic material to add positively to the character of the area.

8 Townscape

8.1 The naturally meandering character of Braunstone Lane helps recall the village character of the area. As the road bends, differing views and focal points come to attention. Despite some of the more intrusive 20th century development, and the general loss its historic rural setting, its character as a village remains discernible in the surviving townscape.

8.2 This character is reinforced by the green and leafy appearance of the Conservation Area. Where they are present, mature trees, natural boundary treatments and soft verges make a positive contribution to the significance of the area.

Views and Vista

8.3 The principal views of the Conservation Area are the two gateway points into the historic village core. At the south-eastern edge, the distinctive gable of The Shakespeare containing dovecot openings is an important focal point. It marks the entrance to old Braunstone and has captured the attention of generations of visitors; this view has been represented in paintings and postcards of the village from the 19th century.

8.4 The northern gateway is a similarly important view into the Conservation Area. The curve of the road at this point introduces its village character and allows for a clear view

of Holly Tree Cottage, 278 Braunstone Lane, showcasing its traditional cottage proportions. Although historically Holly Tree Cottage sat just shy of the edge of the village core, it is now the oldest surviving building at this important transition point. The low scale, generous set back and green character of the bungalows at 278A and 280 Braunstone Lane help protect the rural feel of this entry to the historic village core.

8.5 Another view of note is the view eastwards from within Shakespeare Park. The open space of the park allows for clear views of the cluster of former agricultural buildings to the rear of The Shakespeare and nos. 228 and 230 Braunstone Lane. This dynamic roofscape demonstrates the variety of roofing material found within the Conservation Area as well as physical remnants of the traditional farmsteads which would have once defined the character of the area.

Landmarks and Corners

8.6 The loose urban grain of the Conservation Area means many of the buildings have a landmark quality without being tall or imposing and without forming prominent corners.

8.7 A good example is The Manor, which is prominent in the street scene based on the spacious character of its curtilage, its position abutting the highway and the distinctive jettied gable.



Image 13: "Entrance to Braunstone Village, near Leicester". A post card sent to Miss W Lewis on the 24th of March 1908, from the oil painting by Geo. S. Ramsey.

Lighting and Street Furniture

- 8.8 The majority of the street lighting within the Conservation Area is of a standard design and does not contribute to the character of the area.
- 8.9 Street furniture in the area is mostly found within Shakespeare Park, which contains some simple wood benches and litter bins. As the park is a relatively recent amenity space gifted to the local council in the mid-20th century, these items are modern in character, and of no special historic interest.

Activity

- 8.10 Despite the somewhat ‘rural’ character of the Conservation Area and its peripheral urban setting, Braunstone Lane is a busy thoroughfare, with high levels of vehicular activity. This is to the detriment of the pedestrian movement and cyclists’ safety; especially as limited facilities are provided for both.

Signage

- 8.11 Although many properties within the Conservation Area are dwelling houses with clearly domestic appearances, there are some commercial units within the boundary. These properties are distinguishable by the presence of advertisements and signage.
- 8.12 The Shakespeare, which was formally a public house and is now in use by funeral directors has an attractive and

cohesive signage scheme which allows for the advertisement of the business while respecting the sensitive heritage setting. They have utilised a combination of contemporary and traditional painted techniques which balances well the needs of the business and the appearance of the building (Image 13). Notably, the former pub sign has been retained and sensitively amended, preserving this element of the building’s history.



Image 14: Painted signage advertising Paul Pender & Sons Funeral Directors.

9 Building Materials

Facing Materials

- 9.1 The most widely used building material within the Conservation Area is brick, both painted and unpainted. The oldest properties, such as The Shakespeare, The Manor and the former village shop utilise a combination of structural timber framing and brick infill, sometimes laid in a chevron or herringbone pattern (Image 14). There is some variety in the tone and size of bricks corresponding with the age of the buildings. Red brick is the prevailing material throughout; however, some of the mid-20th century infill development utilises lighter, buff coloured brick.
- 9.2 Render is also found in the area, mainly as a decorative motif of the early-mid 20th century semi-detached dwellings, i.e. to embellish gables and bay windows. One exception is 228-230 Braunstone Lane where it is used as the principal surface material. However, based on the smooth texture and tell-tale indications around openings, this is a modern alteration and not a historic or original finish on the building.

Roof

- 9.3 Roof coverings vary significantly throughout the Conservation Area. Traditional materials such as thatch, Swithland slate laid in diminishing courses and Welsh slates are common on the oldest properties in the village. Red clay tiles are prevalent mostly in the 1930s semi-



Image 15: The Manor, detail showing herringbone brick pattern, later inserted door and surround and vertical sliding sash window.

detached houses. Modern cement tiles are used mainly in the later 20th century development, or as a replacement material on older buildings. There is one instance of a corrugated metal roof on an outbuilding in the grounds occupied by the 4th Leicester Scout Group (Image 15).

- 9.4 Chimneys have a significant visual impact on the townscape of the conservation area, piercing the local skyline. The difference of massing, form, and design between individual examples, and adds considerably to the architectural merit of these historic properties. All are constructed in red brickwork, with many clay chimney pots in place. The most decorative chimneys are found on The Manor, 252 Braunstone Lane, which add great interest to the building and Conservation Area.

Boundary Treatments

- 9.5 Boundary treatments throughout the Conservation Area vary and range in type, scale, and material, meaning there is a lack of overall consistency and cohesion.
- 9.6 Where present, front boundary treatments in the form of brick boundaries, timber fencing and trimmed hedges, provide a clear definition between the public realm and private property, creating a sense of enclosure and positively contributing to the local townscape. Decorative metal railings and gates are rare within the Conservation Area, with some examples found along Braunston Lane; however, there are instances of modern security fencing used in the vicinity of Shakespeare Park.



Image 16: View from Shakespeare Park looking east.

Road Surfaces

- 9.7 Road surfaces in the Conservation Area are dominated by dark tarmac and grey concrete, which defines the highway and pedestrian pavements along Braunstone Lane. Few granite kerbstones survive, the overwhelming majority being modern concrete examples. The path leading from Braunstone Lane to Shakespeare Park is unsurfaced. Additionally, the private curtilages of properties feature a wealth of additional surface treatments, including gravel, grass, cobbles, red tiles, brick and stone paving, and concrete slabs.

Windows and Doors

- 9.8 There is a variety and range of window type and material within the Conservation Area. Where they survive, original and historic timber windows make an important and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Worth noting is the relatively rare Yorkshire (horizontal) sliding sashes present in The Manor (Image 14) and the survival of the original timber casements with stain glass top lights in nos. 244-250 Braunstone Lane typical of the Arts and Crafts movement.
- 9.9 The Shakespeare is the only property in the Conservation Area to contain metal frame casements with lattice patterned leaded lights. Although they are a later alteration to the building, dating to the 20th century, they are an increasingly rare feature with historic interest and make a

positive contribution to the character of the building and wider area.

- 9.10 There are several examples of historic timber doors and original metal fittings within the Conservation Area, of differing styles and construction. The former village shop retains a traditional ledge and brace door with a latch, while The Manor has been retrofitted with a flush panelled door and ornate knocker set within a moulded architrave which cuts through the beam above it (Image 14).
- 9.11 Several buildings in the Conservation Area have installed replacement uPVC windows and doors. Although attempts have been made to replicate glazing patterns and decorative detailing in some examples, it has resulted in inconsistency within groups of buildings and the fine detail of the originals have been lost.

Other Materials

- 9.12 Timber is used for other features of contribution to the local streetscene, such as soffits and bargeboards and the faux timber framing of the inter-war houses.
- 9.13 Some of the oldest properties in the Conservation Area retain original cast-iron or replacement metal rainwater goods, compete with thin gutter brackets.



Image 17: Mixture of more and less traditional boundary treatments.



Image 18: More natural vegetation dominates along the public footpaths with more utilitarian fencing.



Image 19: Traditional materials dominate on the building with less cohesive floorscape materials below the plinth.

10 Open Spaces

- 10.1 The Conservation Area boundary line is intentionally drawn as a tight perimeter around the historic built core of the village. The open space and field system which once defined the setting of old Braunstone has mostly been lost.
- 10.2 Shakespeare Park is the principal area of open space which appears within the Conservation Area boundary. Although this is a relatively recent element of the village's character, it is considered to make a positive contribution to the appreciation and appearance of the area.
- 10.3 The park was gifted to the local council by Everards Brewery in the mid-20th century when The Shakespeare (formally known as Ashleigh Farm) was converted into a public house. Historically, this land was subdivided into various smaller fields and orchards associated with the agricultural use of the farmstead. Although the park does not retain this agricultural use or character, it does replicate the sense of openness which once would have defined the village setting. Evidence of historic field boundaries can also be found within the grassed area and in parts, the perimeter of the park loosely follows the line of these original boundaries.



Images 20 & 21: Shakespeare Park playing fields and clubhouse.



11 Historic Routes

- 11.1 Interestingly, two historic routes originating within the Conservation Area have been preserved within the modern plan of the wider Braunstone area. Evidence of at least one of these routes can be found as early as the 17th century. By the 19th century they are clearly recorded and labelled on maps of the village and wider area.
- 11.2 On the 1884 OS Map, a footpath simply marked “F.P” is shown extending from Braunstone Lane, approximately 60m north of The Manor, in a south-westerly direction.
- 11.3 In the mid-20th century, it appears this footpath formed the basis of a new road. At the section closest to Braunstone Lane, new housing was constructed along the recently widened and paved street, now named Bidford Road. This new road retained the natural meanders of the original footpath evident on the historic mapping, whereas elsewhere other new roads such as Balmoral Drive were built on a straighter axis. Bidford Road runs in a south-westerly direction until it meets Kingsway North. After this point it continues in the form of a paved footpath, now aptly named *The Old Bridal Lane*, reinforcing the historic origin of this route.
- 11.4 The second route marked “B.R” for Bridle Road, evident on the historic mapping further south on Braunstone Lane. It appears to originate immediately north of 228 and 230 Braunstone Lane, pass through the courtyard of buildings,

skirt the corner of a field boundary and continue in a general southerly direction.

- 11.5 This historic route is preserved as the path leading from Braunstone Lane to Shakespeare Park. It can be traced through the park, crossing Avon Road, and continuing along the public bridleway and Lubbesthorpe Bridle Road through Mossdale Meadows. Again, continuation of the term “bridleway” and “bridle road” confirms its historic origins.



Image 22: View looking south from Avon Road down the public footpath below Shakespeare Park

12 Intrusive or Harmful Factors

Building Alterations

- 12.1 As outlined in the appraisal, uPVC windows and PVC rainwater goods have had an adverse impact on some of the non-designated historic structures in the Conservation Area.
- 12.2 Satellite dishes and antennas have been installed on several buildings adding clutter and making a negative contribution to the streetscene along Braunstone Lane.
- 12.3 Where non-designated historic properties have been externally clad in modern render, it stands in stark contrast with the prevailing use of both traditional and modern brick in the area.

Boundary Treatments

- 12.4 The inconsistent boundary treatments throughout the Conservation Area have already been noted but are worth highlighting as negative factors affecting the character of the area. Despite its compact size, the disparity of front boundaries is prominent, especially along the main thoroughfare of Braunstone Lane. Not only are the boundaries different in height, design, materials, and finish, but they are often incomplete, with notable 'gaps' punctuating the streetscene. This has caused visual disconnection between properties and obscured the definition of the private and public domain.



Images 23 & 24: Issues with boundary treatments and hard landscaping, as well as traffic on Braunstone Lane.



Traffic and the Public Realm

12.5 Traffic can dominate Braunstone Lane and make the experience for pedestrians and cyclists less comfortable. Sections of public pavement and highway along Braunstone Lane are in poor condition. In particular, the junction of Bidford Road, and the parking and forecourt area associated with 266 Braunstone Lane is dominated by mixed quality hardstanding. There is poor integration between different sections of hardstanding here, made worse by poor quality boundary treatments.

12.6 Commercial signage in this area is also of a more standard quality and does not reflect the sensitivity of its historic setting.

Infill Development and Setting

12.7 Some of the later 20th century infill and surrounding development has a big impact on the character and setting of the Conservation Area. The bulk and scale of 12 – 16 Bidford Road is out of keeping with the prevailing character of the area, its largely blank gable fronting Braunstone Lane is particularly harmful and incongruous.

12.8 While many houses further north along Braunstone Lane are well maintained, there are some unsympathetic alterations which detract from the setting of the Conservation Area.

13 Capacity for Change

13.1 The only larger scale undeveloped area within the Conservation Area is Shakespeare Park, which benefits from its own status as public open space. As such, there is limited scope for new development here.

13.2 As outlined in previous sections, some buildings within the Conservation Area boundary make a neutral or negative contribution to the character and appearance of the area. These sites represent a potential opportunity for enhancement in the future. The frontage to 266 Braunstone Lane is a notable example of a more visible space that has clear capacity to be enhanced.

13.3 The land to the rear of the Manor has been subject to a series of development proposals. If further proposals were to be submitted, these should be carefully considered in terms of the historic development of the site and the setting of heritage assets close by.

13.4 Change must not come at the expense of the character that makes the area special, and alterations to properties need to be sympathetic to their context. Any new development should aim to preserve or enhance the character and streetscene of the locality, be compatible with the existing building stock and the local townscape.

14 Conservation Area Boundary

- 14.1 The Conservation Area boundary line is intentionally drawn as a tight perimeter around the historic built core of the village, based on historic maps of the area.
- 14.2 At the northern edge of the boundary, nos. 278A and 280 Braunstone Lane were included as it was felt their low-scale, generous set back and green character contributed to the character of the area and act as an effective “buffer” at this important transitional point.
- 14.3 At the south-eastern edge, the newly completed terraced row was included within the designated boundary. Historically this site was associated with The Shakespeare (formally Ashleigh Farm), during its operation as a public house and traditional farmstead. The new properties are considered to be of sufficient quality to warrant inclusion and add cohesion to the Conservation Area.
- 14.4 The boundary extends to Avon Road at two points. It is good practice for Conservation Area boundaries to follow physical features and avoid bisecting properties.

15 Local Consultation

- 15.1 This draft Character Appraisal is being published for public consultation. The final version will be produced with the benefit of the comments received during this exercise.

16 Management Proposal

- 16.1 A separate Conservation Area Management Plan has been produced. This management plan sets out proposals and actions to preserve and enhance the special character of the Conservation Area.

17 Additional Planning Controls

- 17.1 The District Council is consulting on an option to potentially introduce a bespoke Article 4 Direction for unlisted properties within the area to remove certain permitted development rights. This would mean most works affecting the external appearance of properties within the Conservation Area would now require planning permission or listed building consent.

18 Contact

- 18.1 For further information on this, or other, conservation areas you can contact the Council's Planning Development & Strategy Team by phone, letter or via the contact form available on the Council's website:

Planning Development & Strategy
Blaby District Council
Council Offices
Desford Road
Narborough
Leicester
LE19 2EP

Tel: 01162 272 7710

Contact Form: www.blaby.gov.uk/contact-us/

Information on all conservation areas is available on the Council's website:

www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation/conservation-areas/

Appendix 1: Map



Appendix 2: Endnotes

ⁱ J. E. Wiltshire (1983). Old Braunstone, p.5.

ⁱⁱ East Midland Oral History Archive (2016). Braunstone. Available at: <<https://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/braunstone/village.html>> [Accessed 26 February 2019].

ⁱⁱⁱ G. E. England (1970). The story of Braunstone Parish Church, p.3

^{iv} East Midland Oral History Archive (2016).

^v A. McKinley, ed. (1958). "Parishes added since 1892: Braunstone". A History of the County of Leicester: Volume 4, the City of Leicester. British History Online. Victoria County History. London. pp. 428–433.

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} M. Burch (2019). "History". *St Peter's Church – Braunstone park, Leicester, UK*. Available at: <http://www.stpetersbraunstone.org.uk/?page_id=16> [Accessed 3 March 2019].

^{viii} McKinley, ed. (1958), pp.428-433

^{ix} England (1970), p.29

^x England (1970), p.16.

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} W. White (1877). "History, Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland".

^{xiii} England (1970), p.17

^{xiv} Ibid

^{xv} East Midland Oral History Archive (2016).

^{xvi} McKinley, ed. (1958), pp.428-433.



Braunstone Village Conservation Area

Management Plan

May 2024



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Planning Policy Background.....	3
3 Local Consultation	4
4 Publicity and Information	5
5 Development Management	6
6 Setting and Views	7
7 Building uses.....	7
8 Building features.....	8
9 Boundaries.....	9
10 Highways and Footpaths	10
11 Green infrastructure	11
12 Trees and Green Spaces	12
13 New Development.....	13
14 Grant Funding.....	13
15 Local Community	14
16 Enforcement Strategy.....	14
17 Article 4 Direction.....	15
18 Links with Braunstone Park	16
19 Monitoring.....	16
Bibliography	17
Appendices.....	18

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Management Plan sets out Blaby District Council's and Leicester City Council's approach for preserving and enhancing the two designated areas known as Braunstone Village Conservation Area.
- 1.2 Conservation areas make a significant contribution towards the urban fabric of the city and county. These historic areas are important to the area's cultural inheritance, economic wellbeing, and quality of life. It is important to recognise that these places are not static and are subject to change. The aim of the Management Plan is to ensure that change is managed in a way that maintains and enhances the special qualities of the conservation areas.
- 1.3 This document sits alongside the two character appraisals for the Braunstone Village Conservation Area on either side of the administrative border. The character appraisal documents provides detailed analysis of what is positive and negative in the areas under consideration and identifies opportunities for beneficial change or the need for additional protection.

2. Planning Policy Background

2.1 National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework details the importance of identifying and managing heritage assets. It details that local planning authorities should set out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.2 Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 details that:

- It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.
- Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.

- The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

2.3 Government policy is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It requires the significance of heritage assets – both its historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in advice published by Historic England.

2.4 Local Policy

The protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the **Blaby District Core Strategy**. It is mentioned as a key component in Policies CS2, CS12, CS14, and CS16 and is the subject of a comprehensive policy on the Historic Environment and Culture CS20 and in the Blaby District Local Plan Delivery DPD in Development Management Policy 12 (Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets). Within the administrative boundary of Leicester City Council, the protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the **City of Leicester Core Strategy**. It is identified as a key component in spatial objectives 7 and 9. This is further strengthened in a number of policies. The Core Strategy also makes an explicit commitment to the preservation and enhancement of Leicester's heritage in Spatial Objective 10. This is amplified in a wide-ranging policy (CS18) for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

2.5 There is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and the policy expects new developments and conservation-led regeneration to reflect the character and value of the historic environment. Both local and national policy puts the emphasis on the enhancement of heritage assets and positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness that should be made through new development.

3 Local Consultation

3.1 There is a requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for the local authority to consult the local community about any management proposals for conservation areas.

3.2 A draft version of this document is published for public consultation. The Council seeks to consult those with an interest in the subjects covered by the

document. Details of the consultation will be sent to all local heritage and community groups and efforts will be made to reach a wider audience through local media and the respective councils' websites. Partnership working with Braunstone Town Council will be a key focus. A public display relating to the draft Management Plan will be arranged. Responses received will help to shape the final version. Following adoption of the Management Plan, the local authorities will endeavour to consult on any relevant changes in their respective administrative areas with each other.

4 Publicity and Information

- 4.1 Public consultation relating to conservation areas in Blaby and Leicester has revealed that many property owners and occupiers are unaware of the extent and implications of conservation area coverage. Ambiguity about restrictions increases the likelihood of inappropriate development occurring and damages the integrity of the conservation area designations.
- 4.2 Given the complexity of legislation relating to heritage designations, such as conservation areas, the two councils will look to work with Braunstone Town Council on producing guidance detailing both the rights and responsibilities of living in such areas for property owners and occupiers. As national legislation on restrictions relating to conservation areas is liable to change, the best medium for guidance is on the respective councils' website, which have the capacity to be easily updated.
- 4.3 Another potential issue is the turnover in residency and ownership of properties in the conservation areas. To ensure that all property owners and occupiers are aware of both the conservation area designation and any significant changes to related planning controls, a 'conservation area guidance leaflet' will be sent to all properties in the conservation areas.

ACTION G1

Guidance and Information

Each council has produced a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and will make guidance available on its website.

- 4.4 A number of cast-iron conservation area signage roundels are attached to lampposts in the area. To provide greater clarity over the boundaries of the conservation areas, these signs should potentially be installed at the various entry points and renovated/replaced where appropriate.
- 4.5 Heritage interpretation panels have been located within the conservation areas. If appropriate, additional panels should be installed making the history

of the areas more legible. New technology may also present opportunities for improving the accessibility of information regarding conservation areas.

ACTION G2

Raising the profile of the conservation areas

Each council will look to raise the profile of conservation area by potentially installing new street signs, working with local community groups and exploring the potential of media/technology.

- 4.6 Local heritage groups may arrange events to promote the heritage of the areas, including walking tours, seminars, and expert talks. Such work should be supported, such as through additional publicity.

5 Development Management

- 5.1 Demand for new housing, residential extensions and alterations can impact on the character of conservation areas through unsympathetic or poor design. The role of each councils' development management function in overseeing future changes to conservation areas is therefore crucial.

ACTION G3

Delivering effective development management

Each council will use strategic policy and guidance documents to ensure that development respects the character of the conservation area as outlined in the character appraisal.

- 5.2 As detailed in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, all development within each conservation area should preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Development within conservation areas should be in keeping with local character and this is summarised in the character appraisals.

6 Setting and Views

- 6.1 Some sites, which are outside the boundary of the conservation areas, have an impact on its character through setting and framing. Should development on these sites come forward the impact on the conservation areas will be a material consideration.

ACTION G4

Setting and views

Each council will ensure that development, which affects the setting of the conservation area, respects its character and that important views are protected.

- 6.2 As detailed in the character appraisals, there are also important views which are part of the significance of the conservation areas. The impact on these identified views will be a material consideration of any planning application. Care must be taken at an early stage to prevent harm to these key views through new development. Opportunities should be sought to enhance the setting of the conservation areas through appropriate and attractive development.

7 Building uses

- 7.1 As detailed in the character appraisal for the conservation area in the City Council administrative area, the buildings in that conservation area, with the exception of the church, are residential in character, being largely consistent with their historic uses. The surviving commercial elements of the former village are located within the boundary of the conservation area in Blaby District, which also has a significant residential element.
- 7.2 Where a change of use is proposed, this should be appropriate to the architectural character of the property. Conversion or excessive subdivision of a property can harm the amenity of the conservation areas through structural alterations and associated developments, such as large bin and cycle stores. Each council will not support changes of use that harm the character of the conservation areas.

ACTION G5

Building uses

Each council will seek to protect the residential character of their conservation area and ensure any new uses are consistent with this.

- 7.3 Should a property become long-term vacant each council will pursue appropriate steps to ensure the condition of the building is maintained and to encourage re-use. In exceptional circumstances, the use of enforcement powers will be considered. Long-term vacancy will not be a justifiable reason to allow for demolition unless it can be demonstrated that all options for re-use have been investigated.

8 Building features

- 8.1 Within the conservation areas there are examples of unsympathetic alterations to the external fabric of buildings. This includes the removal of original chimneys, windows, doors, and other features/detailing, as well as the addition of rooflights and satellite dishes. External painting, cladding, and rendering of brick elevations, while limited has also had a detrimental effect on the conservation area.
- 8.2 A notable problem is the replacement of timber windows with poorly suited plastic or composite units. Such alterations may now be restricted, through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.
- 8.3 In general, the councils advocate for the refurbishment of historic features, particularly windows and doors, with replacement considered as an option of last resort. Where original features have already been inappropriately altered or lost, any new development should aim to respond meaningfully to the architectural composition, design, and proportionality of the building under consideration, as well as to the wider streetscene within the conservation area. For example, poorly suited uPVC windows should be replaced with alternative windows that are more in keeping with the original building.
- 8.4 Historic England has carried out research which shows that replacing windows with uPVC in an appropriate style is not significantly cheaper than timber equivalents. Moreover, it should also be recognised that property values are generally higher where properties retain their original features. Enhancing the energy efficiency of properties can be delivered in a way that is sympathetic to building character through the repair of windows and/or additional measures, such as secondary glazing or draught proofing.

ACTION G6

Traditional materials

Traditional external materials and finishes will be expected in all new development in the conservation areas.

Each council will seek to encourage the use of traditional, contextual materials through pre-application advice, as well as in information in relevant planning documents and on the councils' websites.

- 8.5 The councils will work with property owners to encourage the use of traditional materials that preserve or enhance the historic environment. The use of 'mock' or synthetic materials will be resisted, as these do not adequately replicate the natural materials in finish, quality and weathering. In addition, such materials are not historically appropriate to the conservation areas. This is especially important to elevations and roof slopes fronting public highway and open public spaces.

9 Boundaries

- 9.1 The loss of original front boundaries is a particular issue within the conservation areas. As noted in the character appraisals, garden walls, railings and hedges make an important contribution to the character of the conservation areas. Where they have been removed the distinction between the public and private domain and the visual edge to highway is weakened or lost to the detriment of the local townscape.

ACTION G7

Boundary Treatments

Each council will seek opportunities to retain existing boundaries and support the reinstatement of traditional front boundaries where they have been lost.

- 9.2 Where front boundaries remain these should be protected. Opportunities should be sought to reinstate historic boundaries where these have been lost or removed.

10 Highways and Footpaths

- 10.1 A number of issues in the Conservation Area relate to accommodating vehicular traffic, as well as measures required for traffic safety, control and calming. Given that the conservation areas were largely developed before cars were invented, there are longstanding issues within them over how car parking and traffic flow can be accommodated within restricted streetscapes.
- 10.2 In certain parts of the conservation areas surfaces are tired and in need of upgrading and where repairs have been carried out to the pathways these have not always been applied in materials to match the existing, resulting in an array of forms that are visually detracting.
- 10.3 The public realm should be carefully designed and improved to provide an uncluttered environment that sustains or enhances the special significance of the conservation areas. The core principles of the *Leicester Street Design Guide* will guide all future development in that administrative area. Its directives on place making, distinctness and creation of healthy and sustainable cities in particular will be a material consideration in all management and planning decisions.
- 10.4 As public realm projects develop, each council will pursue a policy of early engagement with stakeholders to help identify traffic management designs that are sympathetic to the historic environment. Where appropriate, traffic management measures should be integrated into the historic environment effectively by retaining features such as walls, trees, hedges and railings, as well as traditional floorspace materials. Where new features are introduced, the observance of existing design principles and use of local traditional materials should be considered to ensure they are in keeping with the existing townscape and character of the area.
- 10.5 Statutory undertakers are responsible for carrying out the permanent reinstatement of the highway, where they disturb it, with the existing materials. Where existing materials cannot be re-used, new materials should be the closest possible match.

ACTION G8

Highway Works

Utilising national and regional best practice guidance, each Council will seek to ensure that any future highways works will bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

- 10.6 Each council will advocate the principles established by Historic England in *Streets for All: East Midlands*, as well as the two *Manual for Streets* documents to all those involved in highways works.
- 10.9 A detailed audit of the public realm will be undertaken to identify the best way to minimise street clutter and better integrate street furniture in the conservation areas. The street audit should be developed with officers from the local councils and other interested parties to ensure they are accurate and the findings feasible. Proposals to remove street clutter will be actioned within 12 months of the adoption of this document.
- 10.10 Street furniture including bollards, bins, bike stands, electricity cabinets, information panels and other freestanding features within the highway should co-ordinate with each other and tie-in with similar features elsewhere in the area. An appropriate and sensitive colour palette should be chosen to achieve this. All new street furniture should be kept to a minimum and carefully positioned to avoid hindrance to pedestrian and sustainable transport flow.

ACTION G10

Street clutter audit

An audit of the public realm to identify the best way to minimise street clutter and better integrate street furniture in the conservation areas will be undertaken. An Action Plan for reducing street clutter will be prepared and taken forward with the relevant highways authorities.

- 10.11 The highway on Braunstone Lane and Main Street has a significant impact on the setting of the conservation areas. Requests will be made to Leicestershire County Council, as the relevant Highway Authority, should any aesthetic improvements be identified.

11 Green infrastructure

- 11.1 Blaby and Leicester's green infrastructure network helps to support wildlife and delivers multiple environmental and health benefits. This includes improving air and water quality, storing carbon, providing opportunities for biodiversity net gain, facilitating urban cooling, and providing spaces for people to enjoy for leisure and recreation.
- 11.2 To help support local ambition to deliver an overall environmental net gain, each council will expect new development to achieve biodiversity net gain and improvements to the existing green infrastructure, wherever appropriate.

ACTION G11

Green Infrastructure

Each council will ensure biodiversity value is preserved or enhanced when considering development proposals in the area.

12 Trees and Green Spaces

- 12.1 There are many trees within the conservation areas which make an important contribution to the character of the local environment. These are located on public and private land, in open public spaces and private gardens. Every effort should be made to retain these trees in a healthy condition.
- 12.2 The value that trees make to the overall composition of conservation areas is acknowledged by the additional controls on tree works following conservation area designation. Mature trees in the Conservation Area are protected by the statutory designation of the areas, subject to management in line with each council's procedures.
- 12.3 Trees which are subject to preservation orders have been identified in each conservation area character appraisal and are marked on publicly accessible mapping through each council's website.

ACTION G12

Trees

There is a presumption in favour of retaining trees which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Each council will monitor trees in conservation areas that have notable amenity value. Where appropriate, opportunities for additional tree planting will be explored.

- 12.4 Where trees are lost through death, disease, highway works or other development, they should be replaced with suitable substitutes wherever feasible. Opportunities for more tree planting and enhanced green infrastructure will be explored by the each council, in line with the principles and aspirations of their respective Green Infrastructure Strategy. New green infrastructure will be carefully considered in the context of the existing character of the area and views into, within and out of the conservation areas.

- 12.5 The conservation areas includes areas of green space that are managed by the District Council and City Council. A collaborative approach to management should be undertaken between the relevant departments to ensure that opportunities to enhance the conservation aspects of these spaces are maximised.

ACTION G13

Open Spaces

Each council will seek opportunities to protect and enhance the open and historic character of each conservation area's open green spaces.

- 12.6 Specific enhancement opportunities for some of these spaces are presented in the City Council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#).

13 New Development

- 13.1 There are limited opportunities for larger scale infill development within the conservation areas, but sensitive enhancement schemes that sustain or enhance the local distinctiveness may come forward which can help to improve the quality of the local environment.
- 13.2 If the special interest of the conservation areas is to be protected in the future, development should only be allowed where it will fit in with the existing historic form of development; where it does not impinge on the setting of historic buildings; and where it does not result in the loss of important green open space.

14 Grant Funding

- 14.1 Leicester City Council will streamline the available funding into areas and buildings considered to be at risk or of considerable enhancement potential.
- 14.2 Each Council will also seek to support and assist, where practicable, groups or individuals seeking grant funding from alternative sources to carry out necessary works to historic buildings within the conservation areas.
- 14.3 Properties within the administrative boundary of Leicester City Council are eligible for the Historic Building Grant fund for the repair of original architectural features or the restoration of missing features. Details of this can be found on the City Council's website.

15 Local Community

- 15.1 Each council recognises that emphasis needs to be given to involving the local community in decisions about both the designation and the management of conservation areas. What is valued by the community may add a new perspective to what is considered as ‘special’ and worthy of preservation by the local authority. Local communities have a vital role to play in the development and implementation of management plans for proposals to succeed.

ACTION G14

Community Groups

Each council should work actively with local community groups and elected councillors to improve the management and monitoring of each Conservation Area.

- 15.2 There are a range of existing community groups operating in the conservation areas whose local knowledge should be prioritised in the ongoing management of the area and provide opportunities for more proactive processes for enhancement and enforcement. The latter issue could potentially involve heritage wardens, who help to monitor change in the conservation areas.

16 Enforcement Strategy

- 16.1 Monitoring and enforcement are important to the success of any management plan. Ensuring that permitted works have been executed as approved and that any unauthorised works are investigated and dealt with appropriately is important in maintaining the character and special significance of conservation areas. Part of this work is pro-active monitoring of the area to identify any breaches and to gather baseline evidence which can be used as evidence in any action.
- 16.2 Changes in the appearance and condition of the conservation areas should be monitored regularly by the Council to ensure that enforcement action can be taken promptly to deal with problems as they arise. A dated photographic record of the area should be regularly updated to ensure that there is the requisite level of evidence available to the Council. Street elevations would need to be photographed at least once every four years to ensure that enforcement action can be taken forward.
- 16.3 Where works have been done without the relevant permission(s), the Council will investigate if these breaches harm the amenity and significance of the local environment. If harm is found to have been caused, action will be taken. Where appropriate, the Council will pursue the use of additional enforcement powers

to tackle issues within the Conservation Area, including Section 215 Notices, Urgent Works Notices, Planning and Listed Building Enforcement Notices and Building Preservation Notices.

ACTION G15

Enforcement and Monitoring

Each council will take steps to deal with the unauthorised development where it causes harm to the character and appearance of each conservation area. A record of the conservation areas should be regularly maintained to ensure that enforcement action can be successfully taken forward.

17 Article 4 Directions

- 17.1 Minor development, such as domestic alterations and extensions, can normally be carried out without planning permission under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO).
- 17.2 Article 4 of the GPDO gives local planning authorities the power to restrict these 'permitted development rights', including where they have the potential to undermine protection for the historic environment. Using the provisions of Article 4 of the GPDO brings certain types of development under the control of a local planning authority, which allows them to be considered on a case-by-case basis through planning applications.
- 17.3 Designation of a conservation area restricts certain permitted development rights but many works, such as replacing front doors and windows, remains outside the control of the local planning authority.
- 17.4 To help protect the character and appearance of the conservation areas, both are consulting on proposals to potentially introduce focussed Article 4 Directions for non-listed properties in the areas. This would mean most external works to properties within the conservation areas will require planning permission including:
- Removal, alteration or installation of windows and doors;
 - Extensions or additions including porches;
 - Roof alterations such as dormer windows, rooflights and changing the roofing materials or removal or alteration of a chimney;
 - Painting the exterior of the property;
 - Paving over a front garden;
 - Removal of existing and installation of new boundary treatments.

ACTION G16

Article 4 Direction

Each council will explore the potential for a new Article 4 Direction to restrict external alterations for relevant properties within each Braunstone Village Conservation Area.

If made, each council will monitor the properties affected and provide adequate levels of publicity to ensure its successful application.

18 Links with Braunstone Park

- 18.1 As set out in the accompanying appraisal, the land which comprises the conservation area was formerly part of the wider Braunstone Estate. While there is some visibility between the park and the former village, the two were largely severed with the development of the housing estate in the 1930s.

ACTION G17

Links with Braunstone Park

Leicester City Council will explore opportunities to create a more direct pedestrian route between the conservation areas and Braunstone Park and improve signage in both areas.

- 18.2 There is now no direct route between the park and church, which is regrettable given their historic association. There is an opportunity to create a more direct link between the park and village through footpath improvement and better wayfinding, place marking and interpretation.

19 Monitoring

- 19.1 To assess the effectiveness of measures included in the Conservation Area Management Plan it is important that effective monitoring measures are put in place by the two local authorities. The Historic Environment Team at Leicester City Council will do a bi-annual inspection of the two conservation areas and detail actions for remedying identified issues. In addition, the following procedures will take place.

- 19.2 Document updates

In line with best practice guidance from Historic England, the two local authorities will review the two Conservation Area Character Appraisal

documents every five years and where necessary, update the documents. This process will help to monitor change and ensure that the documents remain an accurate representation of the area in question. The councils will also review the Conservation Area Management Plan every five years.

19.3 Local Communities

The input of other stakeholders, such as local history groups, residents' associations and ward councillors, in helping to monitor the management of the conservation areas will be welcomed.

Bibliography

English Historic Towns Forum. 1998. Conservation Area Management: A Practical Guide.

Historic England. 2016. Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management.

Historic England. 2018. Streets For All: East Midlands.

Department for Communities and Local Government & Department for Transport. 2007. Manual for Streets.

Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation. 2010. Manual for Streets 2: Wider Applications of the Principles.

- Historic England

<https://historicengland.org.uk/>

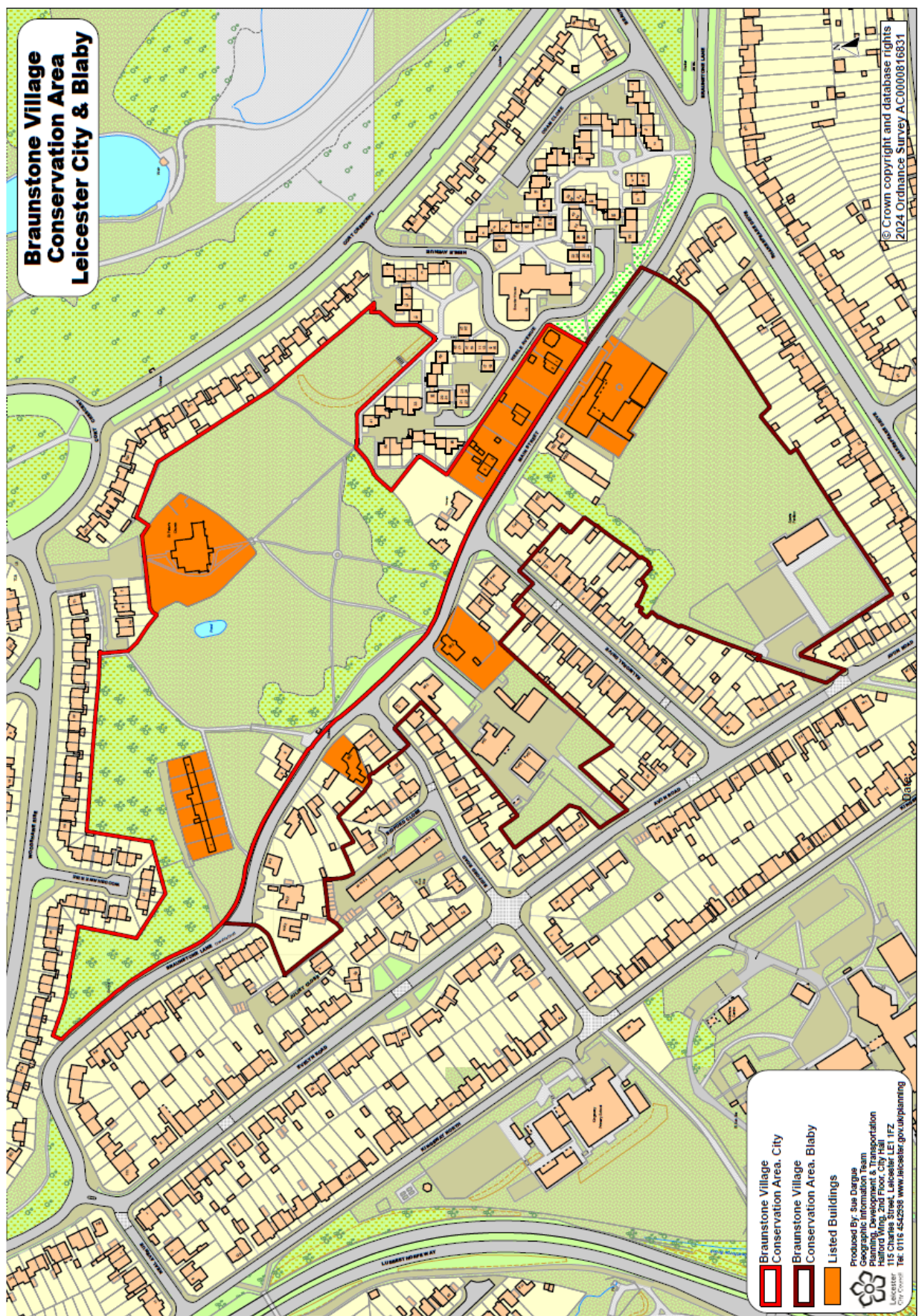
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

<http://www.spab.org.uk>

- Historic Environment Record

<https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/>

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Proposed Article 4 Direction within Blaby District Council administrative boundary:

The proposed Article 4(1) Direction for 228, 230, 230a, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250, 256, 268, 270, 272, 274, 276, 278 Braunstone Lane is as follows:

The Direction restricts permitted development rights as set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 with regards to:

Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse comprised within the following classes of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – enlargement, improvement, or other alteration;
- Class C – alterations to the roof;
- Class D – the erection or construction of a porch outside any door;
- Class F – hard surfaces incidental to the use of a house.

Minor development comprised within the following classes of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – Erection of fences and gates;
- Class C – the painting of the exterior of any building or work.

Appendix 3

Proposed Article 4 Direction within Leicester City Council administrative boundary:

The proposed Article 4(1) Direction for St Peters Vicarage, Main Street and 7-9 Main Street is as follows:

The Direction restricts permitted development rights as set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 with regards to:

Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse comprised within the following classes of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – enlargement, improvement, or other alteration;
- Class C – alterations to the roof;
- Class D – the erection or construction of a porch outside any door;
- Class F – hard surfaces incidental to the use of a house.

Minor development comprised within the following classes of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – Erection of fences and gates;
- Class C – the painting of the exterior of any building or work.

This page is intentionally left blank