Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the Pre-Submission Plan

Fosse Villages Community Forum

10th May 2018
Quality information

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Revision History

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<td>Nick Chisholm-Batten</td>
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Prepared for:
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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects arising as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan?

The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan presents a plan for the an area of Blaby District covering the ten parishes of Aston Flamville, Croft, Huncote, Leicester Forest West, Potters Marston, Sapcote, Sharnford, Stony Stanton, Thurlaston and Wigston Parva.

The Fosse Villages were designated as a Neighbourhood Area in January 2016 – replacing an earlier Neighbourhood Area designation approved in 2012 which at that time included Elmesthorpe Parish. The plan covers the period up to 2029 and is prepared in the context of the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013). It sets out a vision for the Fosse Villages area and a range of policies to guide development in attaining this vision. It is currently anticipated that the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Blaby District Council in 2018.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the current Pre-Submission Version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan for consultation, is the second document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (February 2018), which includes information about the Neighbourhood Plan area’s environment and communities.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA framework of objectives against which the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan
- The likely significant environmental effects of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan; and

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The next steps for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA process.

Assessment of alternative approaches for the Neighbourhood Plan

The housing needs for Blaby District have been identified through the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy, and this includes provisional figures for the Fosse Villages. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies that when considering existing commitments and completions as of August 2017, the housing needs (including affordable housing needs) for settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area have largely been met and even exceeded in some areas.

Therefore, the consideration of alternative site allocations for housing development is not considered appropriate in this circumstance. However, the Neighbourhood Plan does make provisions for windfall housing development, and it is considered that there are alternative options available to guide this type of development, with the aim of maximising the potential for sustainable development and efficient use of land and resources. As such, two options are explored for the Neighbourhood Plan to support decision-making on these elements:

- **Option 1:** Support brownfield windfall housing development
- **Option 2:** Use Limits to the Built-up Area and countryside protection policies to guide windfall housing development

The appraisal of these options has identified that Option 2 is considered to generally perform better than Option 1 against the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, land, soil and water resources, population and communities, health and wellbeing and transportation. Whilst the differences between the two options are not considered to be significant, Option 2 generally performs better by containing development within existing settlement areas, and protecting the open countryside surrounding the villages. Whilst Option 1 is likely to lead to similar effects, brownfield development does not necessarily denote an urban or settlement location, and as such this option could lead to housing development in rural brownfield locations, which has the potential for adverse effects in relation to transport, accessibility, landscape and climate change.

Assessment of the current version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

The current Pre-Submission version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan presents 23 planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Utilising the SEA framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier Scoping stage of the SEA, the proposed policies have been assessed within this Environmental Report. The findings of this assessment are presented under the following SEA themes:

- Biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Climate change;
- Landscape and historic environment;
- Land, soil and water resources;
- Population and community;
- Health and wellbeing; and
- Transportation

In the context of the assessment findings, the Neighbourhood Plan provides significant support for local communities in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and is has the potential to lead to long term significant positive effects in terms of the retention and enhancement of community facilities, the protection and enhancement of landscape character and economic vitality.

The policies also support the identities of the settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area through:

- engaging settlement statements that identify the key values for each settlement;
- consolidating village boundaries;
- defining Areas of Separation;
- identifying key assets of importance for heritage; and
identification and protection of; local green spaces; services and facilities; and existing employment opportunities. The use of Limits to the Built-up Area will also provide protection for the rural landscape setting of the Neighbourhood Plan area, by applying countryside protection policies to the land outside of village boundaries.

Plan policies also have the potential to lead to positive effects in relation to the local economy, including through the proposed expansion of employment uses at Croft and support for rural economic development. The proposed employment expansion site at Croft Quarry also has the potential to support green infrastructure enhancements that connect to the River Soar to maximise the potential for multifunctional green infrastructure networks, and the accessibility of this location will be supported in the future through the Neighbourhood Plan safeguarding land south of the site for the future development of a railway station in Croft.

No significant negative effects have been identified through the appraisal; however, it is recognised that there is the potential for minor negative effects through small scale windfall development of fewer than 10 dwellings (which are not subject to contribution requirements under Policies FV1 and FV3) potentially exacerbating traffic and transport issues in the longer term.

In light of the appraisal of the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following recommendations are made:

- Proposals to support economic development in the countryside should seek to minimise the loss of best and most versatile (Grade 1 – 3a - highest quality) agricultural land.
- Policy guidance is expanded to promote sustainable design and construction, which minimises waste and maximises the potential for recycling materials either on or off site.
- Policy FV19 is expanded to require development at the Croft Quarry Cement Area employment expansion site to demonstrate appreciation of the surrounding historic environment through sensitive and responsive design.
- Biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape aims for the Croft Quarry employment allocation site are aligned and explicitly identified through Policy FV19 to maximise the potential for multifunctional green infrastructure networks and significant long term positive effects.

Next steps

This Environmental Report accompanies the Pre-Submission version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan for consultation.

Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Fosse Villages Community Forum, and the Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Blaby District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Blaby Local Plan.

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Blaby District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be ‘made’. Once made, the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Blaby District, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.
1. Introduction

Background

1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Fosse Villages were designated as a Neighbourhood Area in January 2016 – replacing an earlier Neighbourhood Area designation approved in 2012 which at that time included Elmesthorpe Parish. The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013). It is currently anticipated that the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Blaby District Council in 2018.

1.3 Key information relating to the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan is presented in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Responsible Authority</th>
<th>Fosse Villages Community Forum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Plan</td>
<td>Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Neighbourhood planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013). The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>To 2029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area covered by the plan</td>
<td>The Neighbourhood Plan area covers ten parishes in the southern section of the district of Blaby (see Figure 1.1), including Croft, Huncote, Sapcote, Sharnford, Stoney Stanton, Thurlaston, Aston Flamville, Leicester Forest West, Potters Marston and Wigston Parva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of content</td>
<td>The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan contact point</td>
<td>Fosse Villages Community Forum: <a href="https://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/np/contact-us.html">https://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/np/contact-us.html</a></td>
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SEA explained

1.4 The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in by Blaby District Council as requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts. Through this approach, the SEA for
the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.5 The SEA has been prepared in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.\(^2\)

1.6 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

1.7 In line with the SEA Regulations this Environmental Report must essentially answer four questions:

- What is the scope of the SEA?
- What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
  - 'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised for the plan
- What are the appraisal findings at this stage?
  - i.e. in relation to the draft plan
- What happens next?

1.8 These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present 'the information to be provided within the report'. Table 1.2 presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SEA questions.

Structure of this Environmental Report

1.9 This document is the Environmental Report for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations.

1.10 Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

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\(^2\) Directive 2001/42/EC
Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the Environmental Report in order to meet regulatory requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Report question</th>
<th>In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include...&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the plan seeking to achieve?</td>
<td>• An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What is the sustainability ‘context’? | • The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level  
• Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance |
| What’s the scope of the SEA? | • The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan  
• The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected  
• Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance |
| What is the sustainability ‘baseline’? | • Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a ‘framework’ for) assessment |
| What are the key issues & objectives? | • Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the ‘reasonableness’ of the approach)  
• The likely significant effects associated with alternatives  
• Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan. |
| What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point? | • The likely significant effects associated with the Pre-Submission version of the plan  
• The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Pre-Submission version of the plan |
| What are the assessment findings at this stage? | • The next steps for plan making/SEA process. |
| What happens next? | |

<sup>3</sup> NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.
2. Local Plan context and vision for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the Fosse Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013), which sets out the spatial plan for the district up until 2029. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plan to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in Blaby, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

2.2 The provisions of Policy CS1 ‘Strategy for locating new development’ in the Core Strategy states that the district will provide a minimum of 8,740 new dwellings between 2006 and 2020, delivered via 5,750 dwellings in the Principal Urban Area of Leicester and 2,990 dwellings within and adjoining the ‘Larger Central Villages’ of Enderby, Narborough, Whetstone and Countesthorpe. The Policy goes on to state that:

“Lower levels of growth will be allowed in the Rural Centre, Medium Central Villages and Smaller Villages where the scale of development will reflect the settlement’s range of available services and facilities and public transport alternatives.”

2.3 In this context, Policy CS5 ‘Housing Distribution’ proposes the following number of dwellings within the Neighbourhood Plan area, reflected by the settlement hierarchy:

- 320 dwellings within the Rural Centre of Stoney Stanton;
- Combined total of 815 dwellings within the ‘Medium Central Villages’, which includes the settlements of Huncote, Croft and Sapcote (including land at The Limes);
- Combined total of 80 dwellings within the ‘Smaller Villages’, which includes the settlements of Sharnford and Thurlaston; and
- Notwithstanding completions and commitments since the start of 2006, no further housing growth is envisaged in the ‘Hamlets and Very Small Villages’, which includes the settlements of Aston Flamville, Leicester Forest West, Potters Marston and Wigston Parva.

2.4 The Core Strategy also outlines the total number of dwellings which had either been completed or committed by March 2012. To this effect, the required housing numbers for the Neighbourhood Plan area for the rest of the plan period are as follows:

- 17 dwellings within the Rural Centre of Stoney Stanton;
- Combined total of 259 dwellings within the ‘Medium Central Villages’ which includes the settlements of Huncote, Croft and Sapcote; and
- Combined total of 51 dwellings within the ‘Smaller Villages’, which includes the settlements of Sharnford and Thurlaston

2.5 The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan identifies the number of dwellings which had either been completed or committed by March 2017, therefore stating the residual requirements for the rest of the Plan period. To this effect, the housing needs have largely been met or even exceeded, with only an outstanding need for 33 new dwellings in the settlement of Croft. A further site at Croft has since been granted full planning permission for 14 dwellings in August 2017, which alongside several smaller sites which have recently gained permission reduces the outstanding need. The minor residual requirement is expected to be met by windfall development within the Limits to the Built-up Area.

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Vision for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

2.6 The vision for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan, which was developed during earlier stages of the plan development by Fosse Villages Community Forum, is outlined in the ‘Issues and Options’ report which was released in 2017. In this context, the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that, by 2029:

- The individual character of the area’s communities is maintained;
- The rural character of the area has been retained;
- There are good opportunities for local work;
- Development is supported by local infrastructure;
- The impact of traffic on local communities is reduced;
- Important open areas have been protected;
- New homes reflect local housing needs; and
- Local people have a bigger say over how their area develops.

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3. The Scope of the SEA

SEA Scoping Report

3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. These authorities were consulted on the scope of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan SEA in February 2018.

3.2 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:

- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
- The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.

3.3 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in Appendix A.

3.4 Comments received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed, are presented in Table 3.1

### Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation response</th>
<th>How the response was considered and addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment Agency</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Wakefield: Planning Advisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy context</td>
<td>We are content that all the appropriate Policy’s and legislation appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan area have been identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Summary</td>
<td>We are content that the key issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area have been identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SEA objectives and appraisal questions | We welcome and support the objectives and questions which have been put forward within the 3 chapters (relevant to the Environment Agency (Chapter 3: Biodiversity, Chapter 4: Climate Change and Chapter 6: Land, Soil and Water Resources)), with the exception of suggesting the following amendment: Page 21, we suggest that the word ‘higher’ is removed from the 1st assessment question of the 2nd Climate Change Objective, resulting in the following:  
Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change? | Comment noted. The first assessment question of the second climate change objective has been amended to reflect comments received. |

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6 In line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities...[they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing planning and programmes’. 

Prepared for: Fosse Villages Community Forum
Historic England
Emilie Carr, Historic Environment Planning Adviser
Thank you for consulting Historic England regarding the above [Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Report] 19 February 2018. Historic England have no further comment to make on the scoping report
Comment noted.

Natural England
Sean Mahoney, Lead Adviser, Sustainable Development (East Midlands team)
We welcome the SEA Scoping Report for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan and consider that the methodology and baseline information used to inform the report appear to meet the requirement of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and associated guidance
Comment noted.
Although the report is very comprehensive, an annex is provided which covers issues and opportunities which you may find helpful
Comment noted. The annex has been reviewed, and the data sources have been utilised within the Scoping Report where applicable. No amendment required.

Key Sustainability Issues
3.5 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SEA Scoping Report was able to identify a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SEA. These issues are as follows, presented by eight SEA themes.

3.6 Air Quality
- There are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the district of Blaby, all of which are designated for exceedances in the annual mean concentration objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). None of these are in proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Future development in the district increases the risk of air quality issues along the main trunk roads and junctions.
- Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.

3.7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located within the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Plan area: Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI, Croft Pasture SSSI, Croft Hill SSSI, and Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI.
- Sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area are within SSSI Impact Risk Zones for the type of development likely to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- A section of the Burbage Common and Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located at the western boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, supporting mature woodland, unimproved grassland and a number of other ecological features such as ponds and streams.
3.8 Climate Change

- There are sections of land surrounding the main watercourses in the Neighbourhood Plan area which are located in Flood Risk Zone 2 and Flood Risk Zone 3.
- The most recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Blaby district identified that there are sections of land within the built-up areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area which are at medium-high risk of surface water flooding.
- Blaby has observed a 12.5% reduction in total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012, however, this is less than the reductions for Leicestershire (17.9%) and England (16.7%)

3.9 Landscape and Historic Environment

- The 2008 Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) identifies that there are six Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) in the Neighbourhood Plan area; Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland; Croft Hill; Normanton Agricultural Parkland; Soar Meadows; Stoney Stanton Rolling Farmland; and Thurlaston Rolling Farmland.
- The LSCA indicates that all of the LCAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are sensitive to change from future development.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment, including 53 nationally designated Listed Buildings, 8 Scheduled Monuments and 3 Conservation Areas.

3.10 Land, Soil and Water Resources

- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a history of heavy industrial use, principally from quarrying activities. There have been seven pollution incidents recorded by the Environment Agency under the EC Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (IPPC).
- An agricultural land classification assessment has been undertaken within certain sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which has identified areas of Grade 2, 3a and 3b agricultural land directly to the north of the built-up area of Sapcote.
- In 2016 the overall water quality status for the water bodies which flow through the Neighbourhood Plan area was either ‘poor’ or ‘moderate’.

3.11 Population and Community

- The population of Blaby increased at a slower rate between the years of 2001 – 2011 in comparison to the regional and national counterparts.
- There are noticeable differences in the population structure of the different parishes of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with a greater proportion of older residents located in the southern parishes compared to the northern parishes. Similar to other areas of the UK, the Neighbourhood Plan area has an ageing population.
- There are nine Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which cover the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area, eight of which are within the top 40% least deprived deciles for the ‘Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)’ category. Nonetheless, there are contrasts between the LSOAs for the ‘barriers to housing and services’ domain and the ‘geographical barriers’ sub-domain IMD categories.

3.12 Health and Wellbeing
82.6% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having ‘very good health’ or ‘good health’, broadly aligning to the total for Blaby (83.3%) but higher than the totals for the East Midlands (80.4%) and England (81.4%).

83.7% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area report that their daily activities are not limited, broadly aligning to the total for Blaby (84.2%) but greater than the totals for the East Midlands (81.4%) and England (82.4%).

The health priorities contained within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) include ‘improving health and wellbeing through the life course’ and ‘improving health and wellbeing for vulnerable populations’.

3.13 Transportation

- The Neighbourhood Plan area is not directly connected to the rail network, with no railway stations located within its boundary. The nearest railway stations to the Neighbourhood Plan area are Narborough (approximately 2km to the north east) and Hinckley (approximately 3km to the south west).
- There is a network of ‘B’ roads passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting residents to neighbouring towns and villages.
- Although the M69 and A47 pass through the Neighbourhood Plan area, the majority of parishes are not directly connected to these key routes.
- Residents in Aston Flamville CP and Sharnford CP have access to the 'Leicestershire Round' footpath: a 163.7km route around the rural areas which surround the city of Leicester.
- There is a network of local footpaths which pass through all of the parishes in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including around key sites for biodiversity and recreation, including Croft Quarry, Croft Hill and Burbage Common and Woods.
- The most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (53.8%), broadly aligning with the total for Blaby (51.5%), but notably greater than the totals for East Midlands (42.2%) and England (36.9%).
- 89.8% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, higher than the totals for Blaby (87%) and significantly higher than the totals for East Midlands (79.9%) and England (74.2%).

SEA Framework

3.14 The issues were then translated into an ‘SEA Framework’. This framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline. The SEA framework for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan is presented below, excluding the Air Quality SEA theme which has been scoped out due to the absence of any significant issues.
Table 3.2: SEA Framework for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEA Objective</th>
<th>Assessment questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will the option/proposal help to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- **Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features**
  - Support the status and integrity of the nationally designated sites of significance within the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary, including Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI, Croft Pasture SSSI, Croft Hill SSSI, and Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI?
  - Support the status of the locally designated sites of significance within and/or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary, including Burbage Common and Woods LNR?
  - Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?
  - Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species?
  - Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?
  - Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks?
  - Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

### Climate Change

- **Reduce the level of contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area**
  - Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel?
  - Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?
  - Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?
  - Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?
  - Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?

- **Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding**
  - Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?
  - Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?
  - Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water run-off (either within the plan area or downstream)?
  - Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area?
  - Increase the resilience of biodiversity to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

### Landscape and Historic Environment

- **Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource, including the historic environment and archaeological assets located within the setting of the Neighbourhood Plan area**
  - Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting?
  - Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the Aston Flamville, Croft and Wigston Parva Conservation Areas and their settings?
  - Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest?
  - Conserve and enhance local diversity and character?
  - Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?
  - Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes?
### Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

#### Prepared for:
Fosse Villages Community Forum

#### AECOM

| Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes | • Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?  
• Support the integrity of the six distinctive LCAs in the Neighbourhood Plan area, in accordance with the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment?  
• Conserve and enhance landscape and townscape features, including the Tree Preservation Orders? |
| --- | --- |
| Land, Soil and Water Resources | • Promote the use of previously developed land?  
• Avoid development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which in the parish may comprise Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land? |
| Ensure the efficient and effective use of land | • Reduce the amount of waste produced?  
• Support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste?  
• Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside?  
• Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction? |
| Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste | • Support improvements to water quality?  
• Minimise water consumption?  
• Protect groundwater resources? |
| Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner | • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities?  
• Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?  
• Minimise fuel poverty?  
• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?  
• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?  
• Support the provision of land for allotments and cemeteries? |
| Population and Community | • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?  
• Support enhancements to the current housing stock?  
• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?  
• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people’s needs?  
• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?  
• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? |
| Cater for existing and future residents’ needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities | • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?  
• Align to the key priorities of the JSNA and the five outcomes outlined in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022)?  
• Provide, and enhance the provision of, community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?  
• Reduce noise pollution? |
| Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community | • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?  
• Support enhancements to the current housing stock?  
• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?  
• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people’s needs?  
• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?  
• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? |
| Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures | • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?  
• Align to the key priorities of the JSNA and the five outcomes outlined in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022)?  
• Provide, and enhance the provision of, community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?  
• Reduce noise pollution? |
| Health and Wellbeing | • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?  
• Support enhancements to the current housing stock?  
• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?  
• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people’s needs?  
• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?  
• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote the use of healthier modes of travel?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transportation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support the goals outlined in the Blaby Transport Strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage a modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate working from home and remote working?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve road safety?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. What has plan-making / SEA involved to this point?

Introduction

4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include:

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternative dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised

4.2 The ‘narrative’ of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this chapter explains how preparation of the current version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by an assessment of alternative options for non-strategic scale development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Overview of plan-making / SEA work undertaken to date

4.3 Plan-making for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan has been underway since 2012. Initial work included a Stakeholder Event and a series of village events (including sessions at local primary schools) to help identify key topics and issues that should be explored through the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed housing provision for each village through to 2029 was identified in 2013 and further consultation was undertaken at this stage.

4.4 The consultations informed the preparation of an ‘Issues and Options Report’ and summary newsletters. The newsletters were delivered to households and businesses in March 2017 and people were encouraged to complete a questionnaire seeking views on the main issues for the Plan area. 772 responses were received and have been used to inform the production of the current (Regulation 14) Pre-Submission Draft Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan

4.5 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of ‘reasonable alternatives’ for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA Regulations are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report (i.e. SEA Report) should present an appraisal of the ‘plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan’.

4.6 As discussed in Section 2.1, the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013)\(^7\), which sets out the spatial plan for the district up until 2029. The Core Strategy identifies the housing needs across Blaby District, which includes the following for the settlements located within the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- 320 dwellings within the Rural Centre of Stoney Stanton;
- Combined total of 815 dwellings within the ‘Medium Central Villages’, which includes the settlements of Huncote, Croft and Sapcote (including land at The Limes);
- Combined total of 80 dwellings within the ‘Smaller Villages’, which includes the settlements of Sharnford and Thurlaston; and
- Notwithstanding completions and commitments since the start of 2006, no further housing growth is envisaged in the ‘Hamlets and Very Small Villages’, which includes the settlements of Aston Flamville, Leicester Forest West, Potters Marston and Wigston Parva.

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\(^7\) Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
The Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan outlines the number of dwellings which had either been completed or committed by March 2017, therefore stating the residual requirements for the rest of the Plan period. To this effect, the housing needs have largely been met or even exceeded, with only an outstanding need for 33 new dwellings in the ‘Medium Central Village’ of Croft. A further site at Croft has since been granted full planning permission for 14 dwellings in August 2017, which alongside several smaller sites which have recently gained planning permission, significantly reduces this outstanding need.

The Neighbourhood Plan does make provisions for windfall housing development, and it is considered that there are options available to guide this type of development to maximise the potential for sustainable development and efficient use of land and resources. As such, two options are explored for the Neighbourhood Plan to support decision-making on these elements:

- **Option 1**: Support brownfield windfall housing development
- **Option 2**: Use Limits to the Built-up Area and countryside protection policies to guide windfall housing development

These two options were subjected to assessment and Table 4.1 below presents the findings of the appraisal. To support the assessment findings, the options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA theme. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the comparative sustainability performance of the two options in relation to each theme considered.

Table 4.1: Appraisal findings for reasonable alternatives assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEA Theme</th>
<th>Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options</th>
<th>Rank of preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</td>
<td>The key sites of biodiversity importance include four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Burbage Common and Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and a network of BAP Priority Habitats. The Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI, and Burbage Common and Woods LNR are located adjacent to Aston Flamville, and three SSSIs are located in the north of Croft. Given that no further development is supported at Aston Flamville, it is unlikely that either option will lead to any effects on the designated areas adjacent. It is recognised that potential brownfield development sites are likely to become available over the Plan period at Croft Quarry following minerals extraction cessation at the site. The brownfield sites are located in close proximity to the designated SSSIs in Croft and promoting development in this brownfield location could lead to negative effects through increased disturbance, noise and light pollution, and increased recreation (particularly given close proximity and potential new direct routes to Croft Hill). Policy mitigation has the potential to reduce the extent of, or alleviate, these effects, including existing Core Strategy policies protecting SSSIs. Potential Neighbourhood Plan policies could require specific mitigation like appropriate buffer zones for development or alternative recreational spaces, but this could be difficult to achieve without allocating the site for development to provide site specific policy mitigation.</td>
<td>2 Opt 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option 1: Support brownfield windfall housing development

Option 2: Use Limits to the Built-up Area and countryside protection policies to guide windfall housing development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climate Change</th>
<th>In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, road transport is the significant contributor to emissions in the area. The extent to which the two options have the potential to support climate change mitigation through facilitating a reduced level of car dependency is therefore a key element. Option 1 supports brownfield development, however this does not necessarily denote an existing urban/settlement area. In this context, Option 2 is likely to encourage development within the main settlements, in closer proximity to existing services, facilities, transport infrastructure and employment opportunities. Given that existing access to sustainable transport modes is relatively poor, the difference between the options with regards to emissions is unlikely to be significant; but Option 2 is considered more positive in this respect. Both options are considered to have the potential to deliver high quality design and green infrastructure improvements to maximise resilience to the effects of climate change. In terms of climate change adaptation, the extent to which the options promote climate change adaptation depends on the specific location, design, layout and scale of development, and the incorporation of features which support climate resilience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Historic Environment</td>
<td>In relation to historic environment constraints, Option 1 could support the reuse of previously developed land to improve heritage settings with the potential for minor long term positive effects. Option 2 will direct development to existing settlements which often contain concentrations of historic assets and a variety of heritage settings. Development is therefore more likely to be located in areas with historic environment constraints. In relation to effects on the landscape and villagescape, Option 1 again has the potential for positive effects by regenerating areas of previously developed land to improve upon landscape settings. However, as identified previously, brownfield land does not necessarily denote an urban/settlement location and as such brownfield housing development could occur outside of existing settlements. Option 2 supports landscape settings by directing development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Option 1: Support brownfield windfall housing development

### Option 2: Use Limits to the Built-up Area and countryside protection policies to guide windfall housing development

| Land, Soil and Water Resources | Option 1 supports development on brownfield land, and Option 2 contains development within existing settlements. As such, neither option is likely to lead to any loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, Option 2 could result in the loss of previously undeveloped land within built-up areas with the potential for minor negative effects. Option 2 will contain settlements to promote the efficient use of land and provides further protection for the countryside (and thus land resources) surrounding existing settlements, which will also indirectly support this SEA theme. Whilst Option 1 supports brownfield development, if no brownfield land is available, then this could provide impetus for small scale greenfield development, and without the containment afforded by the Limits to the Built-up Area this could result in development outside of or adjoining settlements and thus less efficient land use. It is considered that both options have the potential to minimise water consumption as well as incorporate measures such as sustainable drainage systems to minimise potential negative effects on water quality; as the effects on water resources are largely dependent upon location, efficient design, scale and layout. |
| Population and Community | With housing (including affordable housing) needs largely met through existing commitments, neither option is considered to perform better than the other in respect to supporting communities with access to high quality housing. As identified previously, Option 1 supports brownfield development, however, this does not necessarily denote a settlement location. Option 2 on the other hand ensures that development is located within existing settlements supported by access to existing services, facilities, transport infrastructure, local green space and recreational areas, and employment opportunities; supporting local communities. In this respect, Option 2 provides more confidence that development will be located in accessible locations to support new residents. |
| Health and Wellbeing | As identified previously, Option 1 supports brownfield development (and thus improvements to the quality of the built environment); however, this does not necessarily denote an urban/settlement location. Option 2 on the other hand ensures that development is located within existing settlements supported by access to existing services, facilities, transport |

Option 1: Support brownfield windfall housing development

Option 2: Use Limits to the Built-up Area and countryside protection policies to guide windfall housing development

Overall the effects for each option remain largely uncertain until the precise location, design, layout and scale of development is proposed.
**Option 1:** Support brownfield windfall housing development

**Option 2:** Use Limits to the Built-up Area and countryside protection policies to guide windfall housing development

| Infrastructure, local green space and recreational areas, and employment opportunities to support health and wellbeing. In this respect, Option 2 provides more confidence that development will be located in accessible locations. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As identified previously, Option 1 supports brownfield development, however, this does not necessarily denote an urban/settlement location. Option 2 on the other hand ensures that development is located within existing settlements supported by access to existing services, facilities, transport infrastructure, and employment opportunities. This should support a reduced need to travel, as well as promote access to more sustainable methods of travel with the potential for long term positive effects. In this respect, Option 2 provides more surety that development will be located in accessible locations. However, it should be noted that given the limited existing services, facilities and sustainable transport connections within the settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area, private car usage is likely to continue to be the dominant form of transport, so the effects will not be significant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2 | 1 |

4.10 The Pre-Submission Version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan utilises the approach of designating Limits to the Built-up Area, and applying countryside protection policies to the land outside of these settlement boundaries. Limits to the Built-up Area are identified for the settlements of Croft, Huncote, Sapcote, Sharnford, Stoney Stanton, and Thurlaston.

**Development of Neighbourhood Plan policies**

4.11 To support the implementation of the vision for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan (identified in Section 2.6), the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan proposes 23 policies to guide development in the Plan area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering. The policies are identified in Table 4.2 below, and the next chapter presents the findings of the assessment of these policies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FV1</td>
<td>Road Traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV2</td>
<td>Rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV3</td>
<td>Bus Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV4</td>
<td>Countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV5</td>
<td>Areas of Separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV6</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV7</td>
<td>Local Green Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV8</td>
<td>Features of Local Heritage Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV9</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV10</td>
<td>Housing Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV11</td>
<td>Windfall Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV12</td>
<td>Community Services and Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV13</td>
<td>GP Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV14</td>
<td>Sharnford Allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV15</td>
<td>Stoney Stanton Cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV16</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV17</td>
<td>Housing Mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV18</td>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV19</td>
<td>Croft Quarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV20</td>
<td>Employment Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV21</td>
<td>Rural Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV22</td>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FV23</td>
<td>Aston Firs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current Pre-Submission version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan under the seven SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

Approach to this appraisal

5.2 The appraisal is structured under the seven SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA (the Air Quality theme has been scoped out due to the absence of any significant issues).

5.3 For each theme, ‘significant effects’ of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the assessment as appropriate.

5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.5 There are no European designated sites located within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the national and local context, key sites of biodiversity importance include four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Burbage Common and Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and a network of BAP Priority Habitats.

5.6 No housing allocations are proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan. Employment expansion is proposed for the cement area of Croft Quarry (Policy FV19). The expansion of employment at the cement area is located just east of the Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI and Croft Meadows SSSI and falls within an Impact Risk Zone for the type of development proposed (manufacturing, warehousing and distribution development are considered industrial/commercial processes that can affect the Air Pollution category).

5.7 Higher level policy contained within the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy (Policy CS19) seeks to ensure that new development does not adversely affect a SSSI, requiring avoidance and mitigation measures to minimise any potential risks. The policy should ensure that development does not give rise to any significant negative effects. The policy also recognises the biodiversity and geodiversity potential in previously developed land and seeks to retain and incorporate these interests within new development. In line with this policy, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan presents the opportunity to identify and give greater detail to any potential biodiversity interests in the Croft Quarry employment development site that should be incorporated into future development. This could include the protection of potential areas supporting habitats along the River Soar. This can connect to Green Infrastructure priorities for the sites (see Health and Wellbeing section) to maximise the potential for multifunctional green...
infrastructure networks and long term positive effects. In this respect it is recommended that Policy FV19 is expanded to include an additional level of detail and/or guidance.

5.8 A number of the policies put forward in the Neighbourhood Plan have either a direct or indirect impact upon biodiversity and geodiversity. Policy FV6 capitalises on the opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan to support local areas of significance, and in this respect particular focus is paid to Fosse Meadows Nature Park and local ecological networks; including natural spaces that link the settlements to the wider district and landscape features that support biodiversity. This will help afford these areas, features and/or corridors greater protection in future development, with the potential for long term positive effects. High quality design promoted through Policy FV8, along with the protection of Local Green Spaces (Policy FV7), aspirations to extend the allotments in Sharnford (Policy FV14) and provide a new cemetery (Policy FV15) give indirect support for biodiversity by offering further protection of landscape features and natural spaces, as well as a potential for biodiversity net gain.

5.9 Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan sets a solid basis for the protection and enhancement of ecological networks within the Plan area, supporting the policies of the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy. It is considered that there is the potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to capitalise on opportunities to protect biodiversity interests at Croft Quarry; however no significant negative effects are considered likely as a result of the allocation.

Climate Change

5.10 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport remains a key contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with significant barriers preventing a modal shift such as a lack of public transport infrastructure and services, as well as a lack of suitable walking and cycling routes. As a predominantly rural area, public transport inevitably becomes less viable and most of the settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area do not have the luxury of access to frequent and reliable service provisions.

5.11 Given that the development needs for the Neighbourhood Plan area have been met through existing commitments, it is unlikely that there will be any significant new development to deliver transport improvements. However, the Neighbourhood Plan does still require off-site improvements to the road network to mitigate the effects of new development, and will not support development which could lead to residual or cumulative severe impacts on congestion (Policy FV1). This will support efforts to reduce emissions in the Plan area in the event of further development, with the potential for long term positive effects in relation to climate change mitigation.

5.12 To address the lack of public transport provisions/services, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to locate any new development in areas with good access to frequent bus services (which includes evening and Sunday services), requiring development contributions (in development of over 10 dwellings) where necessary to ensure these standards are met. Currently, the only settlement which meets such standards is Leicester Forest West, which is also considered by the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy as an unsustainable location, not suitable for further development. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore places great weight on any new development of over 10 dwellings to deliver/subsidise significant public transport improvements, and piecemeal development of less than 10 dwellings (not required to contribute to transport improvements) could exacerbate conditions in the longer term.

5.13 The Neighbourhood Plan also safeguards land at Station Road Croft for the development of a railway station (Policy FV2), which in the future could contribute to improving accessibility and support a local modal shift. The Croft Quarry allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan is located in close proximity to this safeguarded area, and as such the accessibility of the employment expansion site here has the potential to improve in the future should a new rail station emerge.

5.14 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be limited in its potential scope for public transport improvements, highlighting the key priorities for traffic and transport in the Neighbourhood Plan area provides transparent aspirations for investment and can support the direction of resources; including the proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy charges.
directed back to the neighbourhood planning level. Policy FV1 supports measures to reduce traffic on the B4114 highlighting the main route causing concern within the Plan area, and is supported by further detail in settlement statements on localised issues and opportunities with the potential for long term positive effects.

5.15 The Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to improve the provision of energy from renewable sources, and although wind energy has not been deemed suitable due to the sensitivities of the landscape and settlement characteristics, solar energy production is supported development (Policy FV22), which can contribute to climate change mitigation in the long term. It is considered that Policy FV9 could be expanded to incorporate support for sustainable design and construction, which minimises waste and maximises potential for recycling of materials on site. This could provide further support for climate change adaptation with the potential for minor long term positive effects.

5.16 In terms of climate change adaptation, the potential employment expansion area at Croft Quarry is located partially within Flood Risk Zone 2 in the southern half of the site, and mitigation measures will be required to ensure that development does not lead to negative effects. The provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy (Policy CS22) will help address potential flood risk issues in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan does not provide an overall policy in relation to flood risk, however, it does, through the settlement statements, identify localised flooding issues.

5.17 Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be relatively limited in its potential to significantly affect this topic, particularly considering the issues identified above around decreasing emissions from the main contributor - traffic and transport, and the minimal level of development that is proposed. There are opportunities however for the Plan to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly by supporting sustainable design and construction methods. Mitigation measures are likely to be required at the Croft Quarry Cement Area employment expansion site to reduce potential flood risk on site.

**Landscape and Historic Environment**

5.18 As a predominantly rural area, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the character of the Neighbourhood Plan area and particularly village identities. The use of village boundaries is employed for the areas of Croft, Huncote, Sapcote, Sharnford, Stoney Stanton and Thurlaston. The use of these boundaries will identify Limits to Development, and designate the land outside of these boundaries as countryside, where countryside protection policies apply. Policy FV4, recognising the countryside’s intrinsic character and beauty, its diversity and wealth of resources or assets, provides protection by limiting development to that which requires a rural location. This will minimise the impact of development on landscape character with the potential for long term positive effects.

5.19 Village identities are further protected through the use of Areas of Separation. Policy CS17 of the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy designates Areas of Separation between Huncote and Narborough, and between Stoney Stanton and Sapcote, which will prevent coalescence with indirect long term positive effects for the landscape in these areas. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to define these boundaries (within its Plan area) and implement this policy tool through Policy FV5. Successful delivery of Policy FV5 will support the potential long term positive effects.

5.20 In regards to the historic environment; designated and non-designated heritage assets, as well as their settings are provided protection through the higher level Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy (Policy CS20). The Neighbourhood Plan process presents an opportunity to enhance support for local level heritage assets (particularly non-designated assets) and the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan does well to capitalise on this potential. This includes policy protection for Features of Local Heritage Interest (Policy FV8), settlement statements that identify the historic character of each village, and the designation of a Local Heritage Area in Sapcote (offering the area protection until Conservation Area status has been designated). The policy protections also provide support for the historic environment by seeking to ensure that
the need for or benefit of development is balanced against the significance of the asset and the extent to which it will be harmed; with the potential for long term positive effects.

5.21 The employment expansion site at Croft does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets and development at the site is considered unlikely to lead to any significant effects on the historic environment and their settings. The Croft Quarry Cement Area site is located in relatively close proximity to the Croft Conservation Area, and Policy FV19 could be expanded to require development to be in-keeping with the local character through sensitive and responsive design, to ensure that development does not lead to any minor negative effects.

5.22 Overall the Neighbourhood Plan, alongside policies in the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy, provides a robust framework for the protection and enhancement of landscape character and the historic environment. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the predominantly rural character of the area, and directs development to existing urban areas within identified village boundaries. It is recommended that Policy FV19 is expanded to ensure that historic settings are protected in development at the Croft Quarry Cement area.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

5.23 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes employment expansion at the cement area at Croft Quarry, and the allocation is dependent upon mineral extraction cessation at Croft Quarry. Development will regenerate areas of previously developed land with the potential for significant long term positive effects in terms of the efficient use of land.

5.24 The use of village boundaries will place Limits to Development. Land outside of these areas will be provided the protection of countryside policies, thus directing development to existing villages and again supporting the efficient use of land. Whilst at present, the employment expansion allocation should not result in the loss of any best and most versatile agricultural land, it would be prudent to extend the Rural Economy Policy (Policy FV21) to ensure that where employment development is supported in the countryside, the loss of best and most versatile (the highest quality) agricultural land is not.

5.25 The River Soar runs south of the Croft Quarry employment site allocation, and the Environment Agency\(^2\) identifies that in 2016 the overall chemical quality of the water body was ‘good’, and the ecological quality was ‘moderate’ with the Objective to achieve ‘good’ quality status by 2027. The Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy provides protection for the quality of water bodies. Policy CS22 requires development to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience, including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to protect the quality of receiving water courses. This should ensure that development does not lead to any significant effects. The allocated site is not located in an area protected or safeguarded for drinking water.

5.26 Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain and enhance, where appropriate, the existing network of locally important green spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area through Policies FV6 and FV7. Whilst these policies do not specifically relate to land, soil and water resources, the policy measures will positively help to promote and protect these resources, including through the promotion of high quality green infrastructure networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the protection and enhancement of key landscape features.

5.27 Overall, the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan and higher level Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy, are considered to support the efficient use of land where possible and protect the quality of water resources in the Plan area. It is recommended that Policy FV21 includes protection for best and most versatile agricultural land given the support for rural employment development.

Population and Community

5.28 The Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS5 ‘Housing Distribution’ identifies the following number of dwellings to be delivered within the Neighbourhood Plan area:

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320 dwellings within the Rural Centre of Stoney Stanton;

Combined total of 815 dwellings within the ‘Medium Central Villages’ - within the Neighbourhood Plan area this includes the settlements of Huncote, Croft and Sapcote;

Combined total of 80 dwellings within the ‘Smaller Villages’ – within the Neighbourhood Plan area this includes Sharnford and Thurlaston; and

Notwithstanding completions and commitments since the start of 2006, no further housing growth is envisaged in the ‘Hamlets and Very Small Villages’. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area this includes the settlements of Aston Flamville, Leicester Forest West, Potters Marston and Wigston Parva.

5.29 The Neighbourhood Plan outlines the total number of dwellings built and committed as of 31 March 2017, therefore stating the residual requirement for the rest of the Plan period. The majority of the settlements have delivered over and above the identified housing needs as of March 2017, with only around 33 dwellings still required in the ‘Medium Central Village’ of Croft. The Croft Settlement Statement identifies that full planning permission was granted in August 2017 for a further 14 new dwellings on the former school playing fields site (17/0323/FUL) and several smaller sites also have permission. As a result, the housing needs of Croft have largely been met, and any residual requirement is expected to be met by development within the Limits to the Built-up Area under Policy FV11. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for housing development, and this is not considered likely to lead to any significant negative effects.

5.30 The Settlement Statement identifies that the former Croft Quarry offices and car park could provide a brownfield redevelopment opportunity to meet any further housing needs, but does not propose this site as an allocation. The identification of the site as an opportunity to accommodate further development over and above identified needs can support communities in the longer term with the potential for long term positive effects.

5.31 The Neighbourhood Plan promotes a mix of housing to suit local needs through Policy FV17. The settlement statements within the Neighbourhood Plan identify affordable housing needs in each of the settlements where development is expected (Stoney Stanton, Huncote, Croft, Sapcote, Sharnford, and Thurlaston). The statements demonstrate that the affordable housing needs have largely been met at these settlements, with significant developments in Huncote, and 80 more affordable dwellings with planning permission in Sapcote. One scheme at Stoney Stanton has not progressed due to lack of funding, however, it is anticipated that the needs will still be met at the identified site. Policy FV18 provides flexibility for delivery of affordable housing, supporting affordable housing on rural exception sites and land adjoining the Limits to Development. This will maximise the potential for delivery and the associated long term positive effects for communities.

5.32 The Neighbourhood Plan identifies that the number of new dwellings that have been committed in Sapcote exceeds that which is allocated to Stoney Stanton, despite Stoney Stanton being identified as a Rural Centre (higher) in the settlement hierarchy. The Neighbourhood Plan does not promote any further development within Sapcote and is unlikely to exacerbate these effects on village identities.

5.33 As identified in the Landscape and Historic Environment appraisal above, village identities are protected through both the use of Areas of Separation, and village boundaries. Policy CS17 of the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy designates Areas of Separation between Huncote and Narborough, and between Stoney Stanton and Sapcote, which will prevent coalescence with long term positive effects for these communities. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to define these boundaries (within its Plan area) and implement this policy tool through Policy FV5. Successful delivery of Policy FV5 will support the potential long term positive effects for communities and community identity. Village boundaries are also identified for the areas of Croft, Huncote, Sapcote, Sharnford, Stoney Stanton and Thurlaston. The use of these boundaries will identify limits to development, and designate the land outside of these boundaries as countryside, where countryside protection policies apply. This will support village identities by reducing the possibility for sprawl.
5.34 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect existing community facilities, with Policy FV12 identifying a long list of assets that are sought to be retained. Development that could result in the loss of any of the identified services and facilities will not be supported unless they are no longer viable, no longer needed by the local community, are not required for any other community use, or, are being replaced by equivalent or better provisions. This will help preclude any loss of the key services and facilities which support the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including primary schools, post offices, GP/medical centres, public houses, libraries, recreation grounds, local retail / convenience stores, and the Poachers Bistro and Rural Garden Centre in Thurlaston. The Neighbourhood Plan further seeks to enhance provisions within the Plan area, with Policy FV14 supporting the extension of Parson’s Lane allotments at Sharnford and Policy FV15 supporting the development of a new cemetery at Stoney Stanton. The provision of new or improved facilities to meet identified local needs has the potential for long term positive effects for communities.

5.35 It is recognised through early consultation that there are local concerns about healthcare provision within the Plan area, and access to facilities is exacerbated by poor bus services, housing growth, an ageing population, and the capacity of existing GP practices to expand. As such, a key issue for local residents is ensuring that new development contributes to improving health facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan through Policy FV13 seeks to direct contributions towards improving the Stoney Stanton practice, the expansion of remote surgeries and/or improved bus services. Given that the majority of development is already committed, it is unlikely that there will be significant improvements in existing facilities, however, windfall development and the Croft Quarry employment expansion allocation has the potential to support minor improvements with the potential for minor long term positive effects.

5.36 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the economic vitality of the Plan area, including the rural economy with the potential for minor long term positive effects. Policy FV20 safeguards existing employment areas, allowing only for development of employment uses (Use Class B), and the expansion of existing businesses. Policy FV21 supports the growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in the Countryside, through both the conversion of existing buildings and the development of new well-designed buildings where: it is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings, does not generate significant additional traffic, and has safe and suitable access to the site. Minor employment expansion is also planned at the Croft Quarry Cement Area site, with the potential for long term positive effects.

5.37 Overall, the housing needs within the Plan area have largely been met through existing commitments. Affordable housing has been delivered alongside market housing in most of the villages, in line with the identified needs, and the Neighbourhood Plan further promotes an appropriate mix of housing according to differing needs. The Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to protect and enhance community service and facility provisions (including the delivery of new provisions), and supports economic vitality through safeguarding existing employment sites and proposing a location for employment expansion. It is considered overall that the Neighbourhood Plan supports long term positive effects in terms of access to housing, access to community services and facilities and economic vitality.

**Health and Wellbeing**

5.38 The priorities contained within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) align to ‘improving health and wellbeing through the life course’ and ‘improving health and wellbeing for vulnerable populations’. In relation to the quality of life and the wellbeing of local residents, there is a strong focus through the Neighbourhood Plan policies on protecting the existing social and community facilities. Specifically, Policy FV12 states that the loss of community services and facilities will only be permitted if they are no longer viable, needed, or are to be replaced with services and facilities of an equal or higher quality. This is supported by policies which seek to enhance provisions (Policies FV13, FV14 and FV15) with the potential for long term positive effects on health and wellbeing. Policy FV17 seeks to deliver a mix of housing, paying particular attention to meeting the needs of older households and smaller, low-cost homes, in developments of over 10 dwellings. This will support health by meeting the needs of residents through the life course, with the potential for minor long term positive effects.
5.39 It is recognised through early consultation that there are local concerns about healthcare provision within the Plan area, and access to facilities is exacerbated by poor bus services, housing growth, an ageing population, and the capacity of existing GP practices to expand. As such, a key issue for local residents is ensuring that new development contributes to improving facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan through Policy FV13 seeks to direct contributions towards improving the Stoney Stanton practice, the expansion of remote surgeries and/or improved bus services. Given that the majority of development is already committed it is unlikely that there will be significant improvements in existing facilities, however windfall development and the Croft Quarry allocation has the potential to support minor improvements with the potential for minor long term positive effects.

5.40 The Neighbourhood Plan identifies numerous Local Green Spaces across the Plan area, and designates these spaces through Policy FV7 to afford them protection against development. The protection and enhancement of Local Green Spaces, as a key part of green infrastructure networks, can support healthy and active lifestyles and lead to long term positive effects on health and wellbeing.

5.41 Policy CS14 of the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy seeks to improve access to the River Soar. The proposed Croft Quarry employment expansion site lies in close proximity to the River Soar running south of the site. A local green corridor links Croft and Narborough into the Sub-Regional and wider Green Infrastructure network and broadly follows the line of the River Soar. The Croft Settlement Statement identifies the potential for development at the Croft Quarry site to enhance this ecological corridor, particularly through the creation of new links or the improvement of existing routes and networks. This has the potential to link with biodiversity enhancement aims for the site, to deliver multifunctional green infrastructure networks, and long term positive effects. It is recommended that Policy FV19 is expanded to support these potential enhancements.

5.42 Overall the policies contained within the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan seek to protect and enhance assets which positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of local residents. To further augment the policies it is recommended that biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape aims for the Croft Quarry employment allocation site are aligned and explicitly identified to maximise the potential for multifunctional green infrastructure networks and significant long term positive effects.

**Transportation**

5.43 Road transport remains a key issue in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with significant barriers preventing a modal shift such as a lack of public transport infrastructure and services, as well as a lack of suitable walking and cycling routes. As identified previously in the Climate Change section, in a predominantly rural area, public transport inevitably becomes less viable and most of the settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area do not have good access to frequent and reliable service provisions.

5.44 Given that the majority of the development needs for the Neighbourhood Plan area have been met through existing commitments, it is unlikely that new development facilitated through the Neighbourhood Plan will deliver significant transport improvements. However, the Neighbourhood Plan does still seek to deliver off-site improvements to the road network to mitigate the effects of new development, and will not support development which could lead to residual or cumulative severe impacts on congestion (Policy FV1).

5.45 To address the lack of public transport provisions/services, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to locate any new development in areas with good access to frequent bus services (which includes evening and Sunday services), requiring development contributions where necessary to ensure these standards are met. Currently the only location which meets such standards is Leicester Forest West, which is identified within the Blaby Local Plan Core Strategy as an unsustainable location where no further development is proposed. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore places great weight on any new development of over 10 dwellings to deliver/subsidise significant public transport improvements. This could affect viability, however Policy FV16 identifies flexibility in the approach to ensure that the requirements of the Plan do not render development undeliverable, and given that the majority of housing needs have been met.
through existing commitments, it is unlikely to give rise to any significant effects. Piecemeal windfall development of less than 10 dwellings (which are not required by Policy to contribute to transport improvements) could however exacerbate these issues in the longer term.

5.46 Given the small scale of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan (one employment expansion site) it is unlikely that there will be any significant improvements to walking and cycling routes.

5.47 The Neighbourhood Plan safeguards land at Station Road Croft for the development of a railway station (Policy FV2), which could contribute to improving accessibility and support a local modal shift in the longer term. The Croft Quarry employment expansion allocation is located in close proximity to this safeguarded area, and as such, the accessibility of the site has the potential to improve in the future.

5.48 Overall, it is considered that there is limited scope to affect the existing issues relating to transport, particularly in relation to promoting a modal shift. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that development does not exacerbate these effects, particularly through the appropriate location of new development, however; there is still likely to be minor negative effects through incremental windfall development that is not subject to the contributions expected under Policies FV1 and FV3.

Conclusions at this current stage

5.49 It is recognised that the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan provides significant support for local communities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In this context Neighbourhood Plan policies support communities and village identities through: settlement statements; village boundaries; defining the Areas of Separation; local heritage identification; and the identification and protection of local green spaces. The Neighbourhood Plan is considered likely to lead to long term significant positive effects in terms of: the retention and enhancement of community facilities; the protection and enhancement of the landscape; and economic vitality.

5.50 It is also recognised that the Neighbourhood Plan is relatively limited in the potential to provide change through new development, as housing needs have largely been met through existing commitments. Small scale windfall development of less than 10 dwellings may exacerbate existing issues in relation to traffic and transport, and climate change.

5.51 The proposed allocation is positive in terms of employment, and will contribute to improvements in community service and facility provisions. The allocation will also regenerate previously developed land with the potential for long term positive effects in relation to the efficient use of land. It is also recognised that the accessibility of the Croft Quarry site could improve in the future, as land has been safeguarded for the future development of a railway station in Croft.

5.52 No significant negative effects have been identified through the appraisal, however it is recognised that there is the potential for minor negative effects through; development at risk of flooding at the Croft Quarry cement area employment expansion allocation, and small scale windfall development of less than 10 dwellings exacerbating traffic and transport issues in the longer term.

5.53 A number of recommendations have been made throughout the appraisal, summarised below:

- Proposals to support economic development in the countryside should seek to minimise the loss of best and most versatile (Grade 1 – 3a - highest quality) agricultural land.
- Policy guidance is expanded to promote sustainable design and construction, which minimises waste and maximises the potential for recycling materials either on or off site.
- Policy FV19 is expanded to require development at the Croft Quarry Cement Area employment expansion site to demonstrate appreciation of the surrounding historic environment through sensitive and responsive design.
Biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape aims for the Croft Quarry employment allocation site are aligned and explicitly identified through Policy FV19 to maximise the potential for multifunctional green infrastructure networks and significant long term positive effects.
6. Next Steps

6.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the Pre-Submission version of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan for consultation.

6.2 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Fosse Villages Community Forum, and the Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Blaby District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

6.3 At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Blaby Local Plan.

6.4 If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Blaby District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be ‘made’. Once made, the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Blaby District, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.
Appendix A
Context Review and Baseline

Air Quality

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- ‘Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan’.

- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

Published in January 2018 by the UK Government, ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ sets out a number of goals and policies in order to help the natural world regain and retain good health. In this context, Goal 1 ‘Clean air’ and the policies contained within ‘Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste’ within the 25 year plan directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.

In terms of the local context, Baby District Council is required to monitor air quality across the county under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), report regularly to Defra and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Adopted in December 2013, the AQAP for the district of Blaby outlines a variety of measures for improving air quality in the designated AQMAs within the district (later discussed), in addition to setting out the following district-wide actions for implementation:

- Blaby District Council to continue partnership work between environmental health and planning teams to ensure that development doesn’t impact on future air quality, and where possible improves air quality; and
- Blaby District Council to work more closely with the Highways Agency and Leicestershire County Council on transport issues, as to improve air quality.

At the local level, Policy CS10 ‘Transport Infrastructure’ within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) indirectly relates to the Air Quality SEA theme.

Summary of Current Baseline

As of December 2016 there are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the district of Blaby, all of which are designated for exceedances in the annual mean concentration objective of 40µg/m3 for nitrogen dioxide (NO2):

• AQMA1: A5460 Narborough Road, South;
• AQMA2: M1 corridor in Enderby and Narborough;
• AQMA3: M1 corridor between Thorpe Astley and Kirby Muxloe; and
• AQMA4B: Enderby Road, Whetstone.

AQMA4A ‘St John’s, Enderby’ and AQMA5 ‘Branting Hill, near to the A46’ were revoked in 2012 and 2016, respectively. None of the four remaining AQMAs within the district are within the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Nonetheless, the 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)\(^{13}\) states that as the district grows, there is an increasing risk of air quality issues along the main trunk roads and junctions.

In this context, the 2016 ASR outlines that a detailed assessment was undertaken along sections of five additional roads in the district which were identified as possible areas of exceedance of air quality objectives, including ‘B4114, Shamford’ and ‘Hinckley Road, Sapcote’, both of which are within the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, the results from the diffusion tubes located along these roads were below the NO\(_2\) objectives, with no significant issues identified.

**Summary of Future Baseline**

Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist within the Neighbourhood Plan area, new employment and or housing provision within the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential for adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO\(_2\), particularly along the main routes through the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Implementation of the aims and objectives contained within the AQAP for the AQMAs in the wider district, along with the policies in the Local Transport Plan (discussed in Chapter 9), present opportunities to continue to improve air quality within both the Neighbourhood Plan area and Blaby.

Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.

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last accessed [30/01/18]
Biodiversity

Context Review

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy\textsuperscript{14} was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to ‘halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020’.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the ‘preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks’ and the ‘protection and recovery of priority species’. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. ‘a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities’).
- Plan positively for ‘green infrastructure’ as part of planning for ‘ecological networks’.
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

Goal 3 ‘Thriving plants and wildlife’ and the policies contained within Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’ and Chapter 5 ‘Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans’ within the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ directly relates to the Biodiversity SEA theme.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)\textsuperscript{15} sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK’s failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

Reflecting the commitments within the Natural Environment White Paper and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, ‘Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services’ aims to ‘halt


overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.\(^\text{16}\)

At the local level, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Biodiversity SEA theme:

- Policy CS14: Green Infrastructure; and
- Policy CS19: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;

**Summary of Current Baseline**

**Internationally designated sites**

There are no European protected sites for biodiversity located within or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

**Nationally Designated Sites**

Located at the border of Aston Flamville Civil Parish (CP) (western section of the Neighbourhood Plan area), the ‘Burbage Wood and Aston Firs’\(^\text{17}\) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was notified in July 1983 and covers an area of approximately 51ha. The citation for the SSSI states that "the site comprises one of the best remaining examples of ash-oak-maple woodland in Leicestershire and is representative of semi-natural woodland developed in the clays of eastern England". Based on the most recent condition assessments undertaken in 2010 and 2011, 100% of the SSSI is classified as ‘unfavourable-recovering’.

Located within Croft CP (north eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area), the ‘Croft Pasture’\(^\text{18}\) SSSI was notified in July 1983 and covers an area of approximately 6ha. The citation for the SSSI states that "the site includes unusual examples of acidic mixed grassland which has affinities with the breckland grasses of eastern England". Based on the most recent condition assessment undertaken in 2010, 100% of the SSSI is classified as ‘favourable’.

Also located within Croft CP, the ‘Croft Hill’\(^\text{19}\) SSSI was notified in March 1994 and covers an area of approximately 2ha. The citation for the SSSI states that “Croft Hill supports a nationally rare vegetation type of short, tussocky grasses in a rather open sward. The site is the largest known area of this grassland type in Leicestershire”. Based on the most recent condition assessment undertaken in 2008, 100% of the SSSI is classified as ‘favourable’. However, the reintroduction of grazing cattle was noted to be reducing the height of the sward.

Located within proximity to the ‘Croft Pasture’ and ‘Croft Hill’ SSSIs, the ‘Croft and Huncote Quarry’\(^\text{20}\) SSSI was notified in May 1986 and covers an area of approximately 35ha. The citation for the SSSI states that “the quarries at Croft and Huncote are important in exposing tonalitic rocks of Ordovician age together with attendant zeolite mineralisation, and much younger manganese mineralisation of Triassic age”. Based on the most recent condition assessment undertaken in 2016, 100% of the SSSI is classified as ‘favourable’.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, including residential, rural-residential and rural non-residential. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In this context, land which immediately surrounds the three SSSIs in Croft CP and land to the south and west of the three SSSIs in Croft CP is located within a SSSI IRZ for the type of development likely to be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

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\(^{17}\) Natural England (no date): ‘Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI’, [online] available to access via: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1003526> last accessed [30/01/18]


\(^{19}\) Natural England (no date): ‘Croft Hill SSSI’, [online] available to access via: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s2000077> last accessed [30/01/18]

Additionally, all planning applications within approximately 50m of the ‘Burbage Wood and Aston Firs’ SSSI must also be assessed.

**Locally Designated Sites**

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) may be established by Local Authorities in consultation with English Nature under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and support locally significant habitats and species as well as being valuable amenity spaces. In this context, a section of the ‘Burbage Common and Woods’ LNR is located adjacent to the western boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The LNR is the largest in Leicestershire, covering an area of approximately 80ha. Managed by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, the LNR comprises mature woodland, unimproved grassland and a number of other ecological features such as ponds and streams, with records of 540 species, some of which are contained in the annexes of the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Additionally, there are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats located within and/or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

**Summary of Future Baseline**

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.

The Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised both within the Neighbourhood Plan area and in the surrounding areas.

**Climate Change**

**Context Review**

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years, see below:

i. Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;

ii. Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;

iii. Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;

iv. Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;

v. Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and

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vi. New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

Along with policies contained in Chapter 1 ‘Using and managing land sustainably’ and Chapter 6 ‘Protecting and improving the global environment’, Goal 4 ‘A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought’ and Goal 7 ‘Mitigating and adapting to climate change’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ directly relates to the Climate Change SEA theme.

The UK Climate Change Act\(^\text{23}\) was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- **2050 Target.** The Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.

- **Carbon Budgets.** The Act requires the Government to set legally binding ‘carbon budgets’. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK’s long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.

- **The Committee on Climate Change** was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **The National Adaptation Programme** requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same. For more detail, visit the UK adaptation policy page\(^\text{24}\).

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- **Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a ‘core planning principle’.**

- **There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions,** including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008\(^\text{25}\). Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
  
  i. Planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;

  ii. Actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;

  iii. Setting local requirements for building’s sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy;

  iv. Positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and

  v. Encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in GHG emissions and reduce congestion.

- **Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding,** with development ‘not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding’. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.

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\(^{25}\) The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO\(_2\) emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.
Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

The Flood and Water Management Act\textsuperscript{26} highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)\textsuperscript{27}

Further guidance is provided in the document ‘Planning for SuDS’.\textsuperscript{28} This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of ‘contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure’.

At the local level, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Climate Change SEA theme:

- Policy CS14: Green Infrastructure;
- Policy CS21: Climate Change; and
- Policy CS22: Flood Risk Management

Summary of Current Baseline

\textit{Contribution to climate change}

In relation to GHG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that Blaby has had a consistently lower per capita emissions total in comparison to the national trends and for Leicestershire and England between 2005 and 2012 (see Table 1). Blaby has also seen a 12.5\% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012, less than the reductions for Leicestershire (17.9\%) and England (16.7\%).

\textsuperscript{27} N.B. The provision of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.
## Table 1: Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita, 2005-2012

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**Potential effects of climate change**

The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the East Midlands by 2050 under a medium emissions scenario are to be as follows:

- Central estimates of increase in winter mean temperature of 2.2°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.5°C; and
- Central estimates of change in winter mean precipitation of 14% and summer mean precipitation of -16%.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area. These include:

- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads

**Flood Risk**

As shown in Figure 1 below, the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Risk Zone 1, showing that there is a <0.1% chance (1 in 1000) of fluvial flooding in any given year. The areas at greatest risk of fluvial flooding in the Neighbourhood Plan area includes land which surrounds the main watercourses which flow through its boundaries: including the River Soar, Soar Brook, Thurlaston Brook and Feeding Brook.

Land which is located in Flood Risk Zone 2 has a 0.1%-1% chance of flooding in any given year. Comparatively, land which is located in Flood Risk Zone 3 has a >1% chance of flooding each year.

Completed in October 2014, the most recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was jointly commissioned by Blaby District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth District Council, and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. Within the SFRA, mapping of the surface water flood risks were created using the updated Flood Maps for Surface Water (UFMfSW) which were published online by the Environment Agency in December 2013. Figures 2 – 6 below show the surface water flood risk within

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30 The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/> last accessed [23/01/18]
the Neighbourhood Plan area, taken from Appendix F of the SFRA$^{33}$. The flood risk is separated into the following categories:

- High: an area which has a chance of flooding greater than 1 in 30 (3.3%) each year (represented by the areas shaded in green in the figures below);
- Medium: an area which has a chance of flooding between 1 in 100 (1%) and 1 in 30 (3.3%) each year (represented by the areas shaded in pink in the figures below); and
- Low: an area which has a chance of flooding between 1 in 1000 (0.1%) and 1 in 100 (1%) each year (represented by the areas shaded in blue in the figures below).

**Figure 2: Surface Water Flooding Risk within Leicester Forest West CP**

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Figure 3: Surface Water Flood Risk within Thurlaston CP and Huncote CP

Figure 4: Surface Water Flood Risk within Potters Marston CP, Croft CP and Sapcote CP
Figure 5: Surface Water Flood Risk within Stoney Stanton CP

Figure 6: Surface Water Flood Risk within Wigston Parva CP, Sharnford CP and Aston Flamville CP
Summary of Future Baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change, with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is a discrete geographic area where multiple and interlinked sources of flood risk causes flooding in one or more local flood risk zones during severe weather, impacting people, property and/or local infrastructure. Blaby District Council may wish to designate their own CDAs (in the absence of any designations from the Environment Agency) within the Neighbourhood Plan area within the future, for reasons such as surface water capacity issues.

In terms of climate change contribution, GhG emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of GhG emissions.

Landscape and Historic Environment

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, taking account of ‘the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits’ of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a ‘positive strategy’ for the ‘conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Develop ‘robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics’.
- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt ‘proactive strategies’ to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

Additionally, the National Planning Policy Guidance states that Neighbourhood Plans should include enough information, where relevant, “about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale” and “about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions”.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’, Goal 6 ‘Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment’ of the Government’s “A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment” directly relates to the Landscape and Historic Environment SEA theme.

The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

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At the local level, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Landscape and Historic Environment SEA theme:

- Policy CS2: Design of new development;
- Policy CS17: Areas of Separation
- Policy CS18: Countryside; and
- Policy CS20: Historic Environment and Culture.

Summary of Current Baseline

Landscape

National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character. The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within NCA Profile 94: ‘Leicestershire Vales’\(^{36}\), defined as a large, relatively open, uniform landscape composed of low-lying clay vales interrupted by a range of river valleys. Its sense of place comes less from its overall landform and more from its visually dominant settlements and views towards surrounding higher ground.

The Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy categorises the district into a number of areas with ‘distinctive characteristics’, with the northern section of district more urban in character and the southern section of the district more rural in character. In this context, the Neighbourhood Plan area is classified as the ‘Blaby South Community Forum Area’, and is located in the southern section of the district.

Completed in May 2008, the ‘Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA)’\(^{37}\) has divided the district into fifteen detailed landscape character areas (LCAs). The following six LCAs are located wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with some of their key characteristics and sensitivities summarised below.\(^{38}\)

The ‘Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland’ LCA is located in the south western section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the settlements of Aston Flamville and Wigston Parva. The LCA is characterised by rolling farmland with wide expansive views, prominent mature hedgerows on ridges and crests of hills and numerous blocks of prominent woodland. The built form is predominantly scattered farms with small villages or hamlets which are often located on high ground and well integrated into the landscape. The location of the villages on higher ground makes them potentially prominent and sensitive to change. As such, the LSCA states that any new development would need to respect a skyline that is dominated by scattered hedgerow trees with little urban development evident.

The ‘Croft Hill’ LCA is located in the north eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the settlements of Croft and Huncote. The LCA is characterised by a varied mix of land uses, with pockets of farmland often isolated by quarrying activities. The villages are generally located on rising topography set within wooded vegetation, with expansive panoramic views across the district available from high ground. Additionally, numerous watercourses flow through the LCA, which is indicated by the strips of linear vegetation and woodland. The LSCA states that any change in the landscape has the potential to restore the connectivity between farmland which has become fragmented through quarrying activities. Any changes should also provide improved links between public open spaces and the wider countryside to restore coherence in the landscape and offer recreational routes.

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\(^{38}\) Blaby District Council (2008): Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment: Appendix 7 – Landscape Character Areas’ [online] available to download via: <http://www.blaby.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-plans-policies/environment-and-planning/local-plan/evidence/?_sm_au_=iVV1vF46fFDNRq7n> last accessed [30/01/18]
The ‘Normanton Agricultural Parkland’ LCA is located in the north western section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, bounded by the settlement of Thurlaston. The LCA has a strong rolling landform containing substantial rectilinear blocks of woodland, scattered farms, a number of large country houses with associated estate and farmland buildings, and tall vegetation and trees adjoining roadsides. The LCA is a well maintained, formally managed landscape in good condition. The LSCA states that any future development would need to respect and enhance the rural landscape with little built form, appearing as occasional imposing single dwellings, farm buildings or small collections of cottages which form important components of views.

The ‘Soar Meadows’ LCA is located in the south eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, bounded by the settlement of Sharnford. Numerous meandering watercourses flow through the central part of the LCA, including the wide gentle valley of the River Soar. The LCA also contains a mosaic of ponds and scrapes, wetland meadow and woodland, large areas of open spaces including the ‘Fosse Meadows Nature Reserve’, lush vegetation associated with wetland conditions and linear belts of woodlands along river corridors. The LSCA states that any future development within the LCA will need to respect its remote rural enclosed character. Buildings should remain relatively inconspicuous and infrequent within the landscape and the mosaic of wetland habitats should be protected and enhanced, where possible.

The ‘Stoney Stanton Rolling Farmland’ LCA covers the central section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the settlements of Stoney Stanton and Sapcote. The settlements of Croft and Sharnford are located along its fringes. The LCA is characterised by gently rolling topography which has been influenced by small streams, and is predominantly arable farmland. Few hedgerows and trees and low lying hedgerows create an open character, however there are localised blocks of woodland located around the settlements. Numerous waterbodies used for recreation have formed as a result of former quarrying activities. The LSCA states that development along the fringes of the villages has the potential to improve their appearance within the landscape. However, any changes would need to ensure that villages do not become more prominent in views. Within the LCA, it is also important to reinforce village identities and ensure that settlement coalescence is prevented.

The ‘Thurlaston Rolling Farmland’ LCA covers parts of the northern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the settlement of Thurlaston. The LCA is characterised by its gently rolling landform, the long open views and wide vistas, the simple land use pattern (primarily arable farming) and the pockets of ridge and furrow. Transport corridors and communications are visually and audibly prominent. The LSCA states that the LCA’s open nature, long views and limited vegetation with minimal visual intrusion from the built form are important features. Therefore, the LCA is sensitive to future changes. Future development should ensure that buildings remain fairly inconspicuous and the rising village fringes of Thurlaston are retained, with the church a prominent feature.

Implemented by local planning authorities, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are designated to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of their amenity value. When considering ‘amenity; the local planning authority will likely take into consideration the following criteria:

- Visibility: the extent to which the trees or woodlands can be seen by the public; and
- Individual, collective and wider impact: considering the importance of the trees or woodlands in relation to their cultural or historic value, contribution to and relationship with the landscape and/or their contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

In this context, Blaby District Council has allocated a number of TPOs within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Individual trees are represented by a point and groups of trees are represented by a polygon or a line.

**Historic Environment**

The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment, recognised through the diversity of designated features including statutory listed buildings and scheduled monuments. Additionally, the Aston Flamville Conservation Area, Croft Conservation Area and Wigston Parva Conservation Area are also located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, designated for their special architectural and historic interest. Further details on all of these historic features are presented below.

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Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms. The Neighbourhood Plan area contains no Grade I, two Grade II* and fifty-one Grade II listed buildings, which are also protected through the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

The Grade II* listed buildings are as follows:

- Church of St Michael (Stoney Stanton); and
- Church of All Saints (Thurlaston)

Scheduled monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England, there are eight scheduled monuments in the Neighbourhood Plan area, listed below:

- Roman Town at High Cross, Also in Warwickshire;
- Iron Age enclosure;
- Bowl Barrow at Wigston Parva;
- Crop mark of a bowl barrow at Wigston Parva;
- Sapcote castle and moat;
- Moated site at New Hall, Thurlaston;
- Dovecote 85m north of Potters Marston Hall; and
- High Cross 60m north-west of Highcross House.

Conservation Areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest. Conservation area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area’s special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character—mentioned within the ‘Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management’ advice note by Historic England. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the Conservation Area, and can be developed into a management plan. As of September 2017, there are three conservation areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- The Aston Flamville Conservation Area covers the entirety of the built-up area of the settlement and contains five Grade II listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter. Appendix 1 of the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment states that the enclosed land and mature trees provide an important visual entrance to the village.
- Designated in September 2016, the Croft Conservation Area covers the north western section of the built up area of the settlement, around Hill Street and Station Road. The Conservation Area contains for Grade II listed buildings, including the Church of St Michael and All Saints. The River Soar passes through its boundaries.
- The Wigston Parva Conservation Area covers the entirety of the built-up area of the settlement and contains seven Grade II listed buildings, including the Church of St Mary. Appendix 1 of the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment states that the village has a strong historic pattern, with houses grouped around an enclosed village green which is the main feature.

No conservation appraisals and/or management plans have been prepared for the three conservation areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

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43 Blaby District Council (2017): ‘Conservation Areas’ [online] available to access via: <http://www.blaby.gov.uk/resident/planning-and-building/permission/conservation-areas/> last accessed [30/01/18]
It should be noted that not all of the area’s historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by local communities. The Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage Gateway provides access to the Historic Environmental Record, which includes data for all historical buildings, sites and object types located and/or found within the Neighbourhood Plan area\textsuperscript{44}.

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I, Grade II and Grade II\textsuperscript{*} listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be ‘at risk’. According to the 2017 Heritage at Risk Register for the East Midlands\textsuperscript{45} none of the heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Plan are at risk. However, it is important to recognise that the Heritage at Risk Registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any Grade II listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan are at risk.

Summary of Future Baseline

New development areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets; for example through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings.

Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the village and better reveal assets’ cultural heritage significance.

New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and areas with an important visual amenity value.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

Context Review

The EU’s Soil Thematic Strategy\textsuperscript{46} presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra’s intention is to establish a ‘framework for integrated catchment management’ across England. The Environment Agency is establishing ‘Significant Water Management Issues’ and recently presented second River Basin Management Plans to ministers. The plans seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by ‘priority’ and ‘priority hazardous’ substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

\textsuperscript{44} Heritage Gateway (2017): ‘Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environmental Record’, [online] available to access via: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&clcid=94&id=4752> last accessed [30/01/18]


Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
- Prevent new or existing development from being ‘adversely affected’ by the presence of ‘unacceptable levels’ of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate ‘despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate’.
- Encourage the effective use of land through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, ‘provided that this is not of high environmental value’. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to ‘set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances’.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.
- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 1 ‘Using and managing land sustainably’ and Chapter 4 ‘Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste’, Goal 2 ‘Clean and plentiful water’, Goal 5 ‘Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently’ and Goal 8 ‘Minimising waste’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ directly relates to the land, soil and water resources SEA theme.

Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England47, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper48, which sets out the Government’s vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England49 recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

At the local level, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Land, Soil and Water Resources SEA theme:

- Policy CS23: Waste; and
- Policy CS24: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

**Summary of Current Baseline**

**Land Quality**

The Neighbourhood Plan area has a history of heavy industrial use, principally from quarrying activities. There have been seven pollution incidents recorded by the Environment Agency under the EC Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (IPPC)50:

- Location: Boundary between Stoney Stanton CP and Sapcote CP; Date: 29th January 2016; Pollutant: Inert materials and waste; Impacts: Significant impacts to land and minor impacts to water;
- Location: Boundary between Stoney Stanton CP and Sapcote CP; Date: 7th July 2005; Pollutant: General biodegradable materials and wastes; Impacts: Significant impacts to air and minor impacts to land;
- Location: Boundary of Potters Marston CP and Thurlaston CP; Date: 8th October 2004; Pollutants: Specific waste materials, oils and fuels; Impacts: Significant impacts to land;

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Strategic Environmental Assessment for the
Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

Prepared for: Fosse Villages Community Forum
AECOM

- Location: Huncote CP; Date: 21st February 2003; Pollutant: Atmospheric pollutants and effects; Impacts: Significant impact to air;
- Location: Huncote CP; Date: 22nd October 2005; Pollutant: Agricultural materials and wastes; Impacts: Significant impacts to water;
- Location: Huncote CP; Date: 29th November 2007; Pollutants: Inert materials and wastes, and general biodegradable materials and wastes; Impacts: Significant impacts to land, minor impacts to air and water; and
- Location: Huncote CP; Date: 17th December 2014; Pollutant: Specific waste materials; Impacts: Significant impacts to land.

Quality of Agricultural Land

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus ‘non-agricultural’ and ‘urban’), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the ‘best and most versatile’ land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has been undertaken within certain sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Grade 2, 3a and 3b agricultural land directly to the north of the built-up area of Sapcote, adjacent to the B581 (Broughton Road), Stoney Cove and Granitethorpe Quarry (disused).

There is a need to avoid loss of higher quality (‘best and most versatile’) agricultural land. In this respect, all undeveloped land in the Fosse Villages is either ‘Grade 3 (good to moderate quality)’ or ‘Grade 4 (poor quality)’, according to the nationally available ‘Provisional Agricultural Land Quality’ national dataset. It is important to note however, that the national dataset is of very low resolution, and it is not an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Watercourses

The main watercourses flowing through the Neighbourhood Plan area include the River Soar, Soar Brook, Thurlaston Brook and Feeding Brook.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within the ‘Soar’ catchment area. In regards to water quality, in 2016 the overall water quality for the water bodies within the ‘Soar’ catchment area which flow through the Neighbourhood Plan area were as follows:

- Thurlaston Brook Catchment (trib of Soar): poor overall water quality, aiming to achieve ‘good’ status by 2027;
- Soar from Soar Brook to Thurlaston Brook: moderate overall water quality, aiming to achieve ‘good’ status by 2027; and
- Soar Brook from Source to Soar: poor overall water quality, aiming to achieve ‘good’ status by 2027;

Summary of Future Baseline

Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates.

In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. All of the waterbodies within the Neighbourhood Plan area require improvement to meet ‘good’ overall water quality classifications by 2027. Water quality has the potential to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and future physical modifications to waterbodies.

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52 Environment Agency (ca 2016): “Thurlaston Brook Catchment (trib of Soar)”, [online] available to access via: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB104028046940> last accessed [31/01/18]
53 Environment Agency (ca 2016): “Soar from Soar Brook to Thurlaston Brook”, [online] available to access via: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB104028042620> last accessed [31/01/18]
54 Environment Agency (ca 2016): “Soar Brook from Source to Soar”, [online] available to access via: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB104028042590> last accessed [31/01/18]
Population and Community

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To ‘boost significantly the supply of housing’, local planning authorities should meet the ‘full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing’ in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.

- With a view to creating ‘sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities’ authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.

- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.

- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.

- The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’.

- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities

- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

- Ensuring that there is a ‘sufficient choice of school places’ is of ‘great importance’ and there is a need to take a ‘proactive, positive and collaborative approach’ to bringing forward ‘development that will widen choice in education’.

The ‘Ready for Ageing?’ report, published by the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change warns that society is underprepared for an ageing population. The report states that ‘longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises’. The report recognises that the supply of specialist housing for the older generation is insufficient for the demand. There is a need for central and local Government, housing associations, and house builders to ensure that these housing needs are better addressed, giving as much priority to promoting an adequate market of social housing for the older generation as is given to the younger generation.

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

Policies contained in Chapter 1 ‘Using and managing land sustainably’ and Chapter 4 ‘Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ directly relates to the population and community SEA theme.

At the local level, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Population and Community SEA theme:

- Policy CS1: Strategy for locating new development;
- Policy CS2: Design of new development;
- Policy CS3: Sustainable Urban Extension;
- Policy CS4: Strategic Employment Site;
- Policy CS5: Housing distribution
- Policy CS6: Employment;
- Policy CS7: Affordable Housing;
- Policy CS8: Mix of Housing;
- Policy CS9: Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers;
- Policy CS11: Infrastructure, services and facilities to support growth;
- Policy CS12: Planning obligations and developer contributions; and
- Policy CS13: Retailing and other town centre uses.

Summary of Current Baseline

There are ten parishes located within the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan area. The population total for Fosse Villages (i.e. the Neighbourhood Plan area) shown in Table 2 below is a summation of the totals for the seven parishes in the Neighbourhood Plan area for which data from the 2011 Census is available. Data is not available for the hamlets of Leicester Forest West, Potters Marston and Wigston Parva; however, it is important to note that the total population for these three parishes represents approximately 0.8% of the total population of the Neighbourhood Plan area (approximately 100 residents). As such, the Census data for the Neighbourhood Plan area which is presented in the rest of this chapter, the ‘Health and Wellbeing’ chapter and the ‘Transportation’ chapter of this scoping report uses the best available data at the time of its preparation.

Population

Table 2: Population growth 2001-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Fosse Villages</th>
<th>Blaby</th>
<th>East Midlands</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90,252</td>
<td>4,172,174</td>
<td>49,138,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11,633</td>
<td>93,915</td>
<td>4,533,222</td>
<td>53,012,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Change 2001-2011</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>+4.1%</td>
<td>+8.7%</td>
<td>+7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, the population of the district of Blaby increased at a slower percentage between 2001 and 2011 in contrast to the increases observed for the East Midlands and England. Approximately 12.4% of the population of Blaby live within the boundary of the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan area.

Age Structure

Table 3: Age Structure (2011)

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56 ONS (no date): Census 2011: Population Density 2011 (Table QS102EW); Population Density 2001 (Table UV002)
Generally, there are a higher proportion of residents within the 60+ age category in the Neighbourhood Plan area (27.5%) in comparison to the totals for Blaby (24.7%), the East Midlands (23.5%) and England (22.3%), as shown in Table 3. A similar proportion of residents are within the working age categories (25-44 and 45-59) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (45.4%) in comparison to the averages for the East Midlands (45.9%) and England (46.9%). The total percentage of younger residents (0-15 and 16-24) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (27.1%) is lower than the totals for Blaby (29.0%), the East Midlands (30.6%) and England (30.8%).

As shown in Table 4 below, there are noticeable variations in the age structure between the parishes. The population of the three parishes located in the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area (Aston Flamville, Sapcote and Sharnford) contain a greater proportion of older residents (60+). Comparatively, the population of the three parishes located in the northern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area (Huncote, Stoney Stanton and Thurlaston) contain a greater proportion of residents in the younger age and working age categories (0-24 and 25-59).

Table 4: Age Structure (2011) of the eight parishes in the Neighbourhood Plan area for which Census data is available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Younger Age Categories (0-24) Percentage Total</th>
<th>Working Age Categories (25-59) Percentage Total</th>
<th>Older Age Categories (60+) Percentage Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aston Flamville</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croft</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huncote</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapcote</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharnford</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Stanton</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurlaston</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Household Deprivation**

Census statistics measure deprivation across four ‘dimensions’ of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment**: Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education**: No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.

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57 ONS (no date): Census 2011: Age Structure 2011 (Table KS102EW)
• **Health and Disability**: Any person in the household that has generally ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ health, or has a long term health problem.

• **Housing**: The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

**Table 5: Relative household deprivation dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fosse Villages</th>
<th>Blaby</th>
<th>East Midlands</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household not deprived</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprived in 1 dimension</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprived in 2 dimensions</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprived in 3 dimensions</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprived in 4 dimensions</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the information presented in Table 5, fewer households are deprived within the Neighbourhood Plan area (50.1%) compared with the East Midlands (57.2%) and England (57.5%). However, the total for the Neighbourhood Plan area is broadly similar to the total for the district of Blaby (50.2%). Out of the 50.1% of households which are deprived in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the majority are deprived in either one or two dimensions, similar to the regional and national trends.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation**

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

• **Income**: The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).

• **Employment**: The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.

• **Education, Skills and Training**: The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.

• **Health Deprivation and Disability**: The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.

• **Crime**: The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

• **Barriers to Housing and Services**: The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
  1. ‘Geographical Barriers’: relating to the physical proximity of local services
  2. ‘Wider Barriers’: relating to access to housing, such as affordability.

• **Living Environment**: The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
  3. ‘Indoors Living Environment’ measures the quality of housing.
  4. ‘Outdoors Living Environment’ measures air quality and road traffic accidents.

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58 ONS (no date): Census 2011: ‘Households by Deprivation Dimensions 2011 (Table QS119EW)
Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:

- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index**: The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprivred families.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index**: The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales (see Table 6).

There are nine LSOAs that cover the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Analysis of the data presented in Table 6 below reveals the following inferences:

**General Trends**

E01025645: Blaby 003E covers the entirety of Thurlaston civil parish (CP), Leicester Forest West CP and the northern half of Huncote CP, located in the north western section of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Other than the crime domain (top 50% most deprived decile), barriers to housing and services domain (top 40% most deprived decile), and the geographical barriers sub-domain (top 20% most deprived decile), the LSOA is within the top 40% least deprived deciles for the remaining twelve IMD categories. Overall, the LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England.

E01025620: Blaby 010C covers the southern half of Croft CP and contains the majority of the urbanised areas of the parish. Located in the north eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the LSOA is one of the top 40% least deprived in England. Other than the education, skills and training domain (top 50% most deprived decile), income deprivation affecting children index (top 50% most deprived decile), adult skills sub-domain (top 50% most deprived decile) and outdoors sub-domain (top 50% most deprived decile), the LSOA is within the top 50% least deprived deciles for the remaining ten IMD categories. Notably, the LSOA is within the top 10% least deprived deciles for the barriers to housing and services domain and the wider barriers sub-domain.

E01025621: Blaby 010D covers the entirety of Potters Marston CP and the northern half of Croft CP. Located in the central section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the LSOA is one of the top 40% least deprived in England. There are notable contrasts between the IMD categories. The LSOA is within the top 40% most deprived deciles for the education, skills and training domain, the barriers to housing and services domain, children and young people sub-domain, geographical barriers sub-domain and the indoors sub-domain. Comparatively, the LSOA is within the top 20% least deprived deciles for the income domain, employment domain, income deprivation affecting older people index, and the wider barriers sub-domain.

E01025644: Blaby 010E covers the southern half of Huncote CP, located in the north western section of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England. Notably, the LSOA is not within the top 40% most deprived deciles for any of the IMD categories. The LSOA is within the top 10% least deprived decile for the barriers to housing and services domain, living environment domain and the wider barriers sub-domain.

E01025661: Blaby 012A covers the western half of Stoney Stanton CP and contains the majority of the urbanised area of the parish. Located in the central section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the LSOA is one of the top 20% least deprived in England. Other than the income deprivation affecting children index (top 50% least deprived decile) and the geographical barriers sub-domain (top 50% most deprived decile), the LSOA is within the top 40% least deprived deciles for the remaining thirteen IMD categories.

E01025662: Blaby 012B covers the majority of Sapcote CP and is predominantly rural in character. Located in the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the LSOA is one of the top 50% most deprived in England. Other than the barriers to housing and services domain (top 20% least deprived decile), the living environment domain (top 50% least deprived decile), wider barriers sub-
domain (20% least deprived decile) and the outdoors sub-domain (top 40% least deprived), the LSOA is within the top 50% most deprived deciles for the remaining eleven IMD categories, shown below in Table 7.5.

E01025663: Blaby 012C covers the eastern half of Stoney Stanton CP and is predominantly rural in character. Located in the central section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England. Other than the children and young people sub-domain (top 50% most deprived decile), the LSOA is within the top 50% least deprived deciles for the remaining fourteen IMD categories, including the top 10% least deprived decile within the barriers to housing and services domain and the wider barriers sub-domain.

E01025664: Blaby 012D covers the entirety of Wigston Parva CP, Sharnford CP and Aston Flamville CP and borders the southern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Other than the crime domain (top 30% most deprived decile), the barriers to housing and services domain (top 40% most deprived decile), the geographical barriers sub-domain (top 20% most deprived) and the indoors sub-domain (top 50% most deprived decile), the LSOA is within the top 50% least deprived deciles for the remaining eleven IMD categories. Overall, the LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England.

E01025665: Blaby 012E covers the majority of the urbanised area of Sapcote CP, and is located in the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Notably, the LSOA is not within the top 50% most deprived deciles for any of the IMD categories. The LSOA is within the top 10% least deprived decile for the barriers to housing and services domain, wider barriers sub-domain and the outdoors sub-domain. Overall, the LSOA is one the top 10% least deprived in England.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSOA</th>
<th>Overall IMD</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Education, Skills and Training</th>
<th>Health, Disability</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Barriers to Housing and Services</th>
<th>Living Environment</th>
<th>Income Deprivation Affecting Children</th>
<th>Income Deprivation Affecting People</th>
<th>Children and Young People Sub-domain</th>
<th>Adult Skills Sub-domain</th>
<th>Geographical Barriers Sub-domain</th>
<th>Wider Barriers Sub-domain</th>
<th>Indoors Sub-domain</th>
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<td>Blaby 010D</td>
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<td>Decile</td>
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### Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan

Prepared for: Fosse Villages Community Forum

AECOM

| LSOA       | Overall IMD | Income | Employment | Education, Skills and Training | Health Deprivation and Disability | Crime | Barriers to Housing and Services | Living Environment | Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index | Income Deprivation Affecting Older People | Children and Young People Sub-domain | Adult Skills Sub-domain | Geographical Barriers Sub-domain | Wider Barriers Sub-domain | Indoors Sub-domain | Outdoors Sub-domain |
|------------|-------------|--------|------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| **Blaby 010E** |
| **Rank**   | 26,206      | 22,419 | 21,455     | 14,017                         | 21,632                          | 27,487| 31,557                          | 30,850            | 20,003                                      | 26,649                                  | 13,538                                      | 13,914                              | 19,420                              | 31,933                             | 27,858                | 28,772               |
| **Decile** | (8)         | (7)    | (7)        | (5)                            | (7)                             | (9)  | (10)                            | (10)              | (7)                                         | (9)                                     | (5)                                          | (5)                                  | (6)                                  | (10)                                | (9)                      | (9)                  |

| **E01025661: Blaby 012A** |
| **Decile** | (9)         | (7)    | (9)        | (7)                            | (9)                             | (8)  | (9)                             | (10)              | (6)                                         | (7)                                     | (7)                                          | (7)                                  | (5)                                  | (10)                                | (9)                      | (8)                  |

| **E01025662: Blaby 012B** |
| **Rank**   | 13,831      | 10,094 | 10,501     | 11,968                         | 14,985                          | 14,290| 29,073                          | 17,382            | 10,615                                      | 10,277                                  | 10,506                                      | 13,378                              | 16,187                              | 28,177                             | 14,003                | 20,583               |

| **E01025663:** |
| LSOA        | Overall IMD | Income | Employment | Education, Skills and Training | Health Deprivation and Disability | Crime | Barriers to Housing and Services | Living Environment | Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index | Income Deprivation Affecting Older People | Children and Young People Sub-domain | Adult Skills Sub-domain | Geographical Barriers Sub-domain | Wider Barriers Sub-domain | Indoors Sub-domain | Outdoors Sub-domain |
|------------|-------------|--------|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Blaby 012C |             |        |            |                               |                                  |       |                               |                     |                                |                                |                                |                            |                  |                        |                        |                 |                  |
| Rank       | 25,540      | 22,270 | 21,801     | 17,960                        | 22,024                           | 18,348| 31,510                        | 26,070              | 20,256                         | 23,563                         | 14,749                         | 20,588                     | 18,951                       | 32,466                | 22,325            | 25,289            |
| E01025664: |             |        |            |                               |                                  |       |                               |                     |                                |                                |                                |                            |                  |                        |                        |                 |                  |
| Blaby 012D |             |        |            |                               |                                  |       |                               |                     |                                |                                |                                |                            |                  |                        |                        |                 |                  |
| Rank       | 23,346      | 27,742 | 21,848     | 21,647                        | 28,402                           | 8,428 | 11,458                        | 20,086              | 30,308                         | 25,251                         | 19,289                         | 3,520                       | 32,477                       | 15,782               | 24,189            |
| Decile     | (8)         | (9)    | (7)        | (7)                           | (9)                              | (3)   | (4)                           | (7)                 | (10)                           | (8)                            | (7)                            | (6)                         | (2)                           | (10)                   | (5)              | (8)              |
| E01025664: |             |        |            |                               |                                  |       |                               |                     |                                |                                |                                |                            |                  |                        |                        |                 |                  |
| Blaby 012E |             |        |            |                               |                                  |       |                               |                     |                                |                                |                                |                            |                  |                        |                        |                 |                  |
| Rank       | 29,799      | 25,440 | 26,284     | 21,066                        | 26,463                           | 25,168| 31,945                        | 27,393              | 19,777                         | 28,883                         | 16,827                         | 24,554                      | 20,545                        | 32,437                | 21,753            | 30,993            |
| Decile     | (10)        | (8)    | (9)        | (7)                           | (9)                              | (8)   | (10)                          | (9)                 | (7)                            | (9)                            | (6)                            | (8)                         | (7)                           | (10)                   | (7)              | (10)             |
Similarities between the LSOAs

Poor performance (top 50% most deprived deciles)

- Four LSOAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are located within the top 50% most deprived deciles for the education, skills and training domain, including: E01025620: Blaby 010C, E01025621: Blaby 010D, E01025644: Blaby 010E and E01025662: Blaby 012B.
- Four LSOAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are located within the top 50% most deprived deciles for the crime domain, including: E01025645: Blaby 003E, E01025621: Blaby 010D, E01025662: Blaby 012B and E01025664: Blaby 012D.

Good performance (top 50% least deprived deciles)

- Other than E01025662: Blaby 012B, the remaining eight LSOAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the top 40% least deprived deciles for the ‘Overall IMD’ category.

Contrasts between the LSOAs

E01025645: Blaby 003E, E01025621: Blaby 010D and E01025664: Blaby 012D are all located within the top 40% most deprived deciles for the barriers to housing and services domain. Comparatively, the remaining five LSOAs in the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the top 20% least deprived deciles for the same IMD category.

E01025620: Blaby 010C and E01025665: Blaby 012E are both located within the top 40% least deprived decile within for the geographical barriers sub-domain. Comparatively, E01025645: Blaby 003E, E01025621: Blaby 010D and E01025664: Blaby 012D are within the top 20% least deprived deciles for the same IMD category.

Housing Tenure

Figure 7: ‘Tenure by Household’

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, 79.6% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area either own their home outright or with a mortgage, compared to 67.2% for the East Midlands and 63.3% for England. There are fewer residents within socially rented accommodation and privately rented accommodation in the Neighbourhood Plan area in comparison to the regional and national totals shown in Figure 7.

ONS (no date): Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)
**Education**

Figure 8: ‘Highest Level of Qualification’

Based on the 2011 census data, there are 22.2% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with no qualifications, equalling the total for Blaby (22.2%), lower than the total for the East Midlands (24.7%) and higher than the total for England (20.7%). The percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with a Level 4 qualification or above (26.9%) broadly aligns with the total for England (27.4%) but is higher than the totals for Blaby (24.9%) and the East Midlands (23.6%). Generally, the total percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with either Level 1, 2, 3 qualifications aligns with the regional and national trends.

**Employment**

Figure 9: ‘Occupation of usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment’

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61 ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest Level of Qualification 2011 (Table QS501EW)
62 ONS (no date): Census 2011: ‘Occupation 2011’ (Table KS608EW)
In regards to employment within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the following three occupation categories support the most residents:

- Professional occupations (17.2%);
- Associate, professional and technical occupations (13.5%); and
- Skilled trades occupations (13.1%)

Overall, 43.8% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are employed in one of the above three occupation categories, higher than the totals for Blaby (42.0%), the East Midlands (38.6%) and England (41.6%).

Comparatively, a smaller percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area are employed in ‘elementary occupations’, ‘sales and customer service occupations’ and ‘caring, leisure and other service occupations’ in comparison to the regional and national trends.

Summary of Future Baseline

The population of Blaby increased at a slower rate between the years 2001-2011 in comparison to the regional and national counterparts. Similar to other areas of the UK, the Neighbourhood Plan area has an ageing population. This will place pressures on the existing services and facilities in addition to raising concerns over the suitability of housing for local requirements.

There are noticeable differences in the population structure of the different parishes of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with a greater proportion of older residents located in the southern parishes compared to the northern parishes. As the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area continues to rise and age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community and economy of certain parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Overall levels of deprivation in the Neighbourhood Plan area are likely to remain low, particularly due to the high levels of income, quality of living environment and employment. The two areas for concern in the Neighbourhood Plan area are the ‘geographical barriers’ and ‘barriers to housing and services’, with notable disparities between parishes. The suitability of housing for local requirements depends in part on the successful implementation of policies outlined the Blaby District Local Plan.

Health and Wellbeing

Context Review

Key messages from the NPPF include:

- The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’.
- A core planning principle is to ‘take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all’.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities’
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

The policies contained in Chapter 3 ‘Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ directly relates to the health and wellbeing SEA theme.
In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives\(^{63}\) (‘The Marmot Review’) investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that that there is: “overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

At the regional level, the most recently completed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)\(^{64}\) for Leicestershire was finalised in 2015. The priorities contained within the JSNA align to ‘improving health and wellbeing through the life course’ and ‘improving health and wellbeing for vulnerable populations’, and are underpinned by the core principles of reducing inequalities, focusing on prevention, using evidence, sustainability and dignity. The results of the JSNA have been incorporated into the 2017-2022 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy\(^{65}\) (JHWS) for Leicestershire, which sets out the following vision for the lifetime of the strategy:

“We will improve health outcomes for the local population, manage future demand on services and create a strong and sustainable health and care system by making the best use of available resources”

The following five outcomes need to be achieved in order to realise the vision of the JHWS:

- The people of Leicestershire are enabled to take control of their own health and wellbeing;
- The gap between health outcomes for different people and places has reduced;
- Children and young people in Leicestershire are safe and living in families where they can achieve their full potential and have good health and wellbeing;
- People plan ahead to stay healthy and age well and older people feel they have a good quality of life; and
- People give equal priority to their mental health and wellbeing and can access the right support throughout their life course.

Additionally, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Health and Wellbeing SEA theme:

- Policy CS14: Green Infrastructure;
- Policy CS15: Open Space, Sport and Recreation; and
- Policy CS16: Green Wedges.


\(^{65}\) Leicestershire County Council (2017); ‘Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy’, [online] available to access via: <http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s124188/JHWS%20App%20A.pdf> last accessed [30/01/18]
Summary of Current Baseline

Health Indicators and Deprivation

Figure 10: ‘General Health’

Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment as discussed in the previous section on Population and Community. As highlighted in Figure 10, 82.6% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having ‘very good health’ or ‘good health’, broadly aligning to the total for Blaby (83.3%) but higher than the totals for the East Midlands (80.4%) and England (81.4%). Comparatively, the total percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area who report either ‘bad health’ or ‘very bad health’ (4.1%) is lower than regional total (5.6%) and national total (5.4%) but aligns with the total for the district (4.2%).

Based on the 2011 census data, the total number of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area who report that their activities are limited ‘a lot’ is lower than the totals for the East Midlands and England, as shown in Table 7. Overall, 83.8% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan are report that their activities are not limited, broadly aligning to the total for Blaby (84.2%) but greater than the totals for the East Midlands (81.4%) and England (82.4%).

Table 7: Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities limited</th>
<th>Fosse Villages</th>
<th>Blaby</th>
<th>East Midlands</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘a lot’</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘a little’</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘not limited’</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ONS (no date): Census 2011: ‘General Health 2011’ (Table QS302EW)
ONS (no date): Census 2011: ‘Long-term Health Problem or Disability 2011’ (Table QS303EW)
Summary of Future Baseline

Health and well-being levels within the Neighbourhood Plan area are excellent, with a high percentage of residents reporting as having ‘good’ or ‘very good’ health, and a low percentage of residents whose activities are limited in some way.

However, a growing and ageing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area might place future pressures on health services in the area. Similarly, ongoing cuts to community services have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing over the long term.

In addition to the priority areas identified within the JSNA, obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

Transportation

Context Review

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

At the local level, each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. Adopted in 2011, the Local Transport Plan (LTP3) strategy for Leicestershire sets out the vision for transport to 2026 and includes a framework for how Leicestershire County Council will manage and develop the county’s transport system. In this context, the vision of the LTP3 is for “Leicestershire to be recognised as a place that has, with the help of its residents and businesses, a first class transport system that enables economic and social travel in ways that improve people’s health, safety and prosperity, as well as their environment and their quality of life”. In order to achieve this vision, the LTP3 outlines the following six strategic transport goals:

- Goal 1: A transport system that supports a prosperous economy that provides successfully for population growth;
- Goal 2: An efficient, resilient and sustainable transport system that is well managed and maintained;
- Goal 3: A transport system that helps to reduce the carbon footprint of Leicestershire;
- Goal 4: An accessible and integrated transport system that helps promote equality of opportunity for all our residents;
- Goal 5: A transport system that improves the safety, health and security of our residents; and
- Goal 6: A transport system that helps to improve the quality of life for our residents and make Leicestershire a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

Additionally, at the local level, the following policies within the Blaby District Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) directly relates to the Population and Community SEA theme:

- Policy CS2: Design of new development;
- Policy CS10: Transport Infrastructure; and
- Policy CS24: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
Summary of Current Baseline

Rail Network

The Neighbourhood Plan area is not directly connected to the rail network, with no stations located within its boundary. The nearest railway stations to the Neighbourhood Plan area are Narborough (approximately 2km to the north east of Croft CP and Huncote CP) and Hinckley (approximately 3km to the south west of Aston Flamville CP).

Both stations are calling points on the service between Birmingham New Street and Leicester, with hourly services to both destinations.

Bus Network

In regards to the bus network, as of December 2017 the principal routes through the Neighbourhood Plan area are as follows:

- Service: 48/X48: Leicester-Hinckley-Nuneaton-Bedworth-Coventry; Operator: Stagecoach; Frequency: every 20 minutes during Monday-Saturday (daytime); Passing through Leicester Forest West;
- Service 158: Leicester-Hinckley-Nuneaton; Operator: Arriva; Frequency: every 20 minutes during Monday-Saturday (daytime); Passing through Leicester Forest West;
- Service X55: Leicester-Fosse Park-Hinckley; Operator: Hinckley Bus; Frequency: infrequent between Monday-Saturday; Passing through Thurlaston, Stoney Stanton, Sapcote, Sharnford and Aston Flamville; and
- Service X84: Leicester-Fosse Park-Broughton Alley-Lutterworth-Rugby; Operator: Hinckley Bus; Frequency: hourly service between Monday-Saturday (daytime).

Road Network

In relation to the road network, the M69 is the principal route through the Neighbourhood Plan area, passing through Aston Flamville CP, Sapcote CP, Stoney Stanton CP, Potters Marston CP, Thurlaston CP and Huncote CP. The M69 connects residents to the M1 at Leicester (approximately 5km to the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area) and to the M6 at Coventry (approximately 10km to the south west of the Neighbourhood Plan area). Although the M69 passes through a number of parishes in the Neighbourhood Plan area, it is only directly accessible from Aston Flamville CP and Sapcote CP.

Other than the ‘A47’, which passes through Leicester Forest West CP, there are no other ‘A’ roads passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, there is a network of ‘B’ roads passing through the central and southern sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area: including:

- B4414: Passes through Wigston Parva CP, Sharnford CP, Sapcote CP and Stoney Stanton CP before passing along the eastern boundary of Croft CP and extending northwards towards Narborough and Leicester;
- B4469: extends westwards from the B4414 and passes through Sapcote CP before reaching the neighbouring settlement of Hinckley; and
- B581 extends westwards from the B4414 and passes through Stoney Stanton CP before reaching the neighbouring settlement of Earl Shilton.

There is a network of country roads and lanes which pass through Thurlaston CP, Huncote CP and Potters Marston CP.

Cycle and Footpath Network

As of January 2018, there are no National Cycle Network routes passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area. In regards to footpaths, the ‘Leicestershire Round’ is a 163.7km circular route which

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passes through the rural areas surrounding the city of Leicester, including through Aston Flamville CP and Sharnford CP. There is a network of local footpaths which pass through all of the parishes in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including around key sites for biodiversity and recreation, including Croft Quarry and Croft Hill.

Availability of Cars and Vans

Figure 11: Car and van ownership

Based on the 2011 census data, 89.6% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, higher than the totals for Blaby (87.0%) and significantly higher than the totals for the East Midlands (79.9%) and England (74.2%).

Travel to Work

Figure 12: ‘Method of Travel to Work’


70 ONS (no date): ‘Car or Van Availability 2011’, (Table QS416EW)

71 ONS (no date): Census 2011: ‘Method of Travel to Work 2011’ (Table QS701EW)
As shown in Figure 1, the most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (53.6%), broadly aligning with the total for Blaby (51.5%), but notably greater than the totals for the East Midlands (42.2%) and England (36.9%). Only 6.0% of the working population in the Neighbourhood Plan area choose to walk, take the train or catch a bus, coach or minibus to work. This is lower than the totals for Blaby (8.9%), the East Midlands (11.9%) and England (15.0%).

**Summary of Future Baseline**

New development has the potential to increase traffic and cause congestion within the Neighbourhood Plan area, principally along the key routes.

Additionally, public transport use has the potential to remain low compared with private car use; likely to be due to the infrequent nature of the bus services provided within the area and the absence of a train station within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by the Blaby District Local Plan and the LTP3, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car.