

Leicester Local Plan Examination Hearing Action List

Action 17

Implications of the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the Leicester Local Plan and for other Leicestershire authorities

1. Background

The Leicester Local Plan was submitted and is being examined under the September 2023 version of NPPF.

On 30th July 2024 the Government published a Consultation on changes to the December 2023 version of the NPPF: [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system)

Potential transitional arrangements in respect of Plan Making are set out in Annex 1 of the Consultation Draft.

This note reflects the City Council's views in respect of the position in Leicester and Leicestershire and does not necessarily represent the views of partner councils.

2. Implications for 2020-2036 Leicester Local Plan

The NPPF consultation closed on 24th September 2024. As the Government response has not yet been published, it is not possible for the City Council to predict the outcome of the consultation, and it would not be appropriate to offer any modification of the Plan in anticipation of possible Government policy in respect of the new NPPF.

The Council has committed to commence an immediate review of the Plan following adoption. The implications of the revised NPPF (if confirmed) would be fully taken into account and addressed through this Plan review process.

3. Implications for Other Leicestershire Authorities

Any delay to the adoption of the City's Plan would introduce uncertainties over unmet need which would compromise plan making through delayed Local Plan adoption in Leicestershire with consequential impacts on housing delivery, including those pursuing submission under the current NPPF.

Once confirmed, changes to the NPPF could have significant implications for plan making across Leicester and Leicestershire although the extent of this remains uncertain until clarification and final confirmation is made by the Government in respect of (inter alia):

- Timescale for publication of the new NPPF and new Transitional arrangements
- How unmet need provisions within plans prepared under the current NPPF will be dealt with under the new system and through the transitional arrangements.
- The new standard method requirements for housing
- New co-operation requirements, including potential requirements under the draft new paragraph 27
- New requirements in respect of maintaining supply and delivery (new policies 76 to 79)
- New policies in respect of commercial development and infrastructure including public service infrastructure.
- New design policy requirements
- Timescales for the introduction of the new Local plan system as per LURA
- Timescales for the production of- and confirmation of the content and scope of- the new National Development Management Policies and their intended interaction with the Local plan making process

Should the proposed Standard method be confirmed as per the Consultation Draft proposals, the housing need figures in the County would be as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1

| Local Authority Name | Current Method | Proposed Method under 2024 NPPF | 2022 Statement of Common Ground Agreed Position including City Unmet Need |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Blaby | 329 | 559 | 687 |
| Charnwood | 1,115 | 1,012 | 1,189 |
| Harborough | 510 | 706 | 657 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 432 | 689 | 659 |
| Leicester | 2,464 | 1,690 | 1,295 |
| Melton | 192 | 370 | 300 |
| North-West Leicestershire | 357 | 621 | 686 |
| Oadby and Wigston | 198 | 389 | 240 |
| Total | 5,597 | 6,036 | 5,713 |

As the Leicester Local Plan at Examination effectively allocates the final remaining strategic site development opportunities for development ahead of 2036, the city capacity going forward into Plan review will be limited. As anticipated in the Strategic Growth Plan, there will be an increasing unmet need requirement going forwards in City- at the time of SGP approval, the potential City supply figure envisaged beyond 2031 was 550 dpa.

The City Council therefore expects that under the new NPPF, in addition to the new standard method need, partner councils will also need to address evidenced future City unmet need in their Local Plans beyond that identified to 2036 in the 2022 Statement of Common Ground. City capacity will only be able to be fully confirmed and evidenced post adoption of the Plan currently being examined.

Partner Councils are currently considering their options in respect of their Local Plans in the above context, and against their own individual (and differing) circumstances in terms of Plan preparation and 5-year land supply.

The strength of the Strategic planning Partnership in Leicester and Leicestershire means that the councils are well placed to respond to the new NPPF and universal strategic planning process once announced by the Government.

In the meantime, the City Council will seek to support emerging plans and to agree robust amended and updated Statements of Common Ground, both for those Plans which may be progressed under the current NPPF, those under the new NPPF and also those through the new Planning system.

10th October 2024