

County Council – East Gartree Division (May 2003)

Adoption of Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Structure Plan

The Structure Plan is an overarching document produced regularly by the Three Councils. The last Plan will expire in 2006. The new Structure Plan is for the period 1996 to 2016 and provides a strategic planning framework for development and use of land consistent with national and regional policy. Structure Plans guide the more detailed policies and proposals of Local Plans and decisions on planning applications. They provide the overall guidance for a broad range of planning matters including the siting and density of housing developments, designation of green belts and wedges, transport (e.g. bypasses, buses, rail, parking, airports), environment (e.g. historical, biodiversity, culture, geology), resource management (e.g. waste, minerals), employment, shopping, leisure and tourism.

This particular Structure Plan has been out for consultation (on deposit) for some time and no more modifications are expected so it could be formally adopted in the Autumn. A major feature of this Plan is the creation of an area of land around Leicester City which has been called the Central Leicestershire Policy Area (CLPA) and is based on travel to work patterns. The CLPA comprises the whole of Leicester and Oadby and Wigston and parts of the Districts of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough and Hinckley and Bosworth. Within the Harborough District the CLPA will include Great Glen, Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt. The aim is to reduce the amount of housing development outside the area and to balance housing and employment development within its boundaries.

Based on Government targets, the Three Councils estimated 59,100 new homes will be required to meet the needs of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland between 1996 and 2016. This total will be shared between Leicester (15,000), Rutland (2,350) and the seven Leicestershire District Councils (41,750). There should be a range of housing types so that people will have a suitable and affordable home. Central Government has demanded increases in the total so the final numbers will be slightly higher.

In practice, Harborough District will need to confirm about 9,000 new houses between 1996 and 2016; some 3,750 houses will need to be built within the CLPA with 5,250 outside in the remainder of the District.

Clearly, once the housing numbers for Harborough district are confirmed, the physical locations will be under the control of the District Council so long as they keep to the overall planned overall numbers. Whether Harborough District Council choose to add some developments onto existing villages, to look at possible new settlements or allow natural growth across the District will become apparent when they start to consider revising their Local Plan to take account of the new guidance.

I am confident that our newly elected District Councillors will join me in wishing to improve facilities in the East Gartree area so each new development will have to be considered on its merits or otherwise. I feel sure the next few years are going to be busy ones and I will keep readers updated with Structure Plan changes as they arise.