

## **KNIGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

### **LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSULTATION - EMERGING OPTIONS FOR THE NEW LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN**



### **HAVE YOUR SAY!**

#### **Background**

Leicester City Council has launched its second Consultation in respect of its proposed new Local Plan. The new Plan will set out policies that will be applied in deciding what development will be permitted in the City during the life of the new Plan, up to 2032.

Details of the initial Consultation, and our response, can be found on the Forum website, [www.knightonforum.org.uk](http://www.knightonforum.org.uk). You can also find links to the new Consultation documents, particularly documents entitled *Emerging Options* and *Draft Development Management Policies*. The Consultation ends on 31 October 2017.

This note identifies the main issues that we think are vital for Knighton. But the documentation is long and detailed. Look at the documents on our Website, or go to <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sec/local-plan/> and follow the links to the four Consultation documents. If you are not a web-user and need more detail beyond this note, please let us know.

#### **Does the Local Plan apply only to Knighton.**

No. It's a plan for all the City. But many City-wide policies will impact on us – including those on transport, air quality, housing development, shopping, facilities, and employment.

Obviously we are all interested in how our City develops over the next 25 years or so. But, equally importantly, our Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent and compliant with the Local Plan. So, it's important that the new Local Plan reflects the issues and policy approaches that are important for Knighton.

#### **Is this the last chance to have our say?**

No, but having our say now is important. The results of this consultation will lead to the City Council developing draft policies. So, this is our opportunity to influence the City Council before it makes choices that may, later, be difficult to change.

#### **So, what are the main issues?**

The Consultation focuses on how the future needs of the City are to be met, particularly for homes and jobs.

*Housing* The documents identify the need for additional housing development within the City to meet an estimated population growth of approximately 10% during the plan period. This growth, says the Plan, cannot all be met within the Central Regeneration Area, and may

require “hard choices” to be made. The Consultation recognises that not all necessary development can be achieved on “brownfield sites” and invites us to consider where there are “underused open spaces that could be used to provide houses [or jobs].” That’s why the documents identify every significant green space in the City (including in Knighton) to be considered as possible development sites. We should be very clear in our responses as to what ought to be protected, and where any new housing or employment might occur.

The documentation also raises a number of detailed housing policy questions to which we will wish to respond. Amongst these are the following: the mix of different types of residential property (starter homes, affordable housing, retirement housing sheltered housing, houses in multiple occupation), conversion and subdivision of large properties, student accommodation, the size and space standards for new residential accommodation.

*Employment* Provision of land in the City for business use needs to be made. Few would disagree with that, but how might that affect Knighton? Where would it be, of what type, and what transport or access issues might it raise?

*Retail* The documents highlight two basic alternatives. One is greater out-of-town development, the other is future development within a vibrant City Centre. Many might prefer the latter, but either option has implications for the arterial routes that pass through Knighton. And we mustn’t forget the neighbourhood and local shopping areas that exist, or don’t exist, within Knighton.

*Transport and Air Quality* The Consultation documents recognise that sustainable and efficient transport links are vital. They accept that “there will need to be a step change in patronage on buses and also numbers of people cycling and walking”. Air quality action plans will need to be identified and implemented.

*The Green Environment* We’ve noted above the possible challenges to some open spaces. But the Consultation recognises that green wedges, green open spaces and sports facilities (particularly pitches for popular sports need to be protected and enhanced. Perhaps that shows the type of policy conflict that the Local Plan will have to resolve.

### **Particular issues for Knighton.**

It’s clear that a huge number of questions arise. But let’s try and identify a few for people to consider and react to.

- The documents identify open spaces which could be developed. Yes, Knighton Park is included, if only for the sake of completeness. That’s not likely to happen, but should warn us not to be complacent and take things for granted. But what about the school playing fields at Overdale and Lancaster Boys? Do you agree that that type of proposal should be very firmly resisted? What about the small park in Knighton Village? Or the playing fields on Welford Road?

- Are there any of our green spaces that we think are serious candidates for development?
- What other sites might be suitable locations for development?
- One site already identified as a potential development site is that of Mary Gee Houses, the student flats between Knighton Drive and Ratcliffe Road. If that site was to be developed, what would be appropriate? What type of housing? Social and affordable? Starter homes? Retirement houses and flats for downsizers? Sheltered accommodation for the elderly and infirm? Student accommodation? Or most likely a mix? The detailed answer at this stage is less important than an identification of our approach.
- The detailed Development Policy document raises a range of issues that are important for Knighton. How should we react to any proposals to subdivide some of the large houses in our area? Or to houses in multiple occupation? What about demolition of large properties on suitable sites for blocks of flats? And what standards would we wish the City Council to adopt – is it time to adopt minimum space standards?
- Do we agree with the alteration of the status of the Meadvale Road shopping parade to the status of a “neighbourhood Parade” - a new planning status that gives less protection than afforded to other shopping centres? Will we need to develop local policies to protect this and other areas?
- The context of the consultation and new Local Plan is significant development both within the City and in the adjacent areas such as Oadby and Wigston, and Blaby. This means that the impact of development on our roads and environment is an issue that is crucial for Knighton. We will need in our responses to reflect that and argue for approaches that minimise traffic use, and which encourage walking, cycling and use of efficient and affordable public transport.

### **How can I have my say?**

You can respond as an individual through the City Council’s Consultations webpage, or simply write to the Council. But there will be an opportunity for you to feed in your views and reactions through the Forum, with a full-scale meeting in October.

We’d like to hear from you. Let us know what your views are. And keep an eye on our website. If you’d like to get involved in formulating our response, again, get in touch. You can email us at [info@knightonforum.org.uk](mailto:info@knightonforum.org.uk) or contact us through our website at [www.knightonforum.org.uk](http://www.knightonforum.org.uk).

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