



The Knighton Neighbourhood Forum established a Working Group to study the plan documents, supported by a professional planning consultant. That Working Group produced the following responses to the plan documents, which were presented to a general meeting of the Forum on 17th October 2017, where they were discussed in detail, minor amendments were proposed, and the response document was approved by the meeting with no dissenting voices.

Key principles

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum welcomes the opportunity to engage in the process of developing the Leicester City Council Local Plan. The Forum would like this to be the start of an ongoing dialogue that ensures there is a consistent approach to the development of both the Leicester City Plan and the Knighton Neighbourhood Plan which will both form part of the Development Plan for the area.

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum recognises that Leicester City Council considers that 2018 is a realistic timetable for adoption of the Local Plan. The Forum will continue to develop the Neighbourhood Plan and will monitor progress on the Leicester Local Plan to determine whether it will be more appropriate to bring forward the Neighbourhood Plan in advance of the City Plan. We are aware of our obligations in avoiding conflict with the City Plan and would intend to work with you as both plans progress.

1. Housing Numbers

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum recognises the challenging housing target within the emerging City Plan. It is unclear at this stage whether the City Council intend to identify a specific requirement for the Knighton Neighbourhood Plan area. The Knighton Neighbourhood Forum is seeking to identify a realistic and deliverable housing target for its Neighbourhood Plan. This will partly be informed by consideration of the sites identified in the City Council's site options paper. However, other reasonable sources of supply will be considered.

Knighton Forum considers that if a Local Plan were to provide housing requirements to inform a Neighbourhood Plan, this needs to be based on a robust assessment of capacity in terms of the availability of suitable, developable and achievable land and

the ability of an area to accommodate further growth in the context of infrastructure and environmental constraints.

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum does not consider that formula-based approach to the calculation of housing need of Knighton is appropriate. Local constraints to development need to be properly assessed on an area by area basis including: the availability of land; access to infrastructure, services and facilities; employment opportunities and; transport choice. A one-size-fits-all, top down, pro-rata apportionment does not suit smaller geographical areas such as the Knighton Neighbourhood Plan area.

2) Housing Sites

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum has considered the sites within the Neighbourhood Plan as identified in the City Council's 'Potential Development Sites' paper. The views of the Knighton Neighbourhood Forum are set out below

i) Knighton Park

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be strongly opposed to the release of all or any part of Knighton Park for built development. The park is a key area of high quality open space that is well used and offers opportunities for recreation and tranquillity. The Forum has produced a baseline study which identifies that the Knighton Forum area is not well-served with public open space. The loss of Knighton Park, in whole or in part, would not be appropriate.

ii) Knighton Spinney

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of Knighton Spinney. The site is an important Local Nature Reserve and designated a Local Wildlife Site. In addition, the City Council recognises that it is a non-designated heritage asset, in the form of a 'Locally listed park and garden'. It is understood that the land may also be protected by legal covenant. The loss of Knighton Spinney would not be appropriate.

iii) Overdale School Playing Fields

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release, in whole or in part, of Overdale School Playing Fields for built development. The playing fields are an important part of a large and popular local school and are important to allow the school to expand if required. They offer opportunities for students to gain important recreation, this has educational and health benefits. The loss of Overdale School Playing Fields would not be appropriate.

iv) Ashclose Spinney

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of Ashclose Spinney. The Spinney makes an important contribution to the local character of the area. The vast majority of the site is within flood zone 3 and therefore unsuitable for residential development. In addition, the area is extensively used by local schools

as an important education resource. Overdale Junior School has a strong ethos of outdoor learning with this area used extensively for outdoor lessons. The loss of Ashclose Spinney would not be appropriate.

v) Land to rear of Meadvale Road

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of land to the rear of Meadvale Road. The vast majority of the site is within flood zone 3 and therefore unsuitable for residential development. In addition, the area has importance for its amenity value, it is well-used and contains mature trees and important wildlife (including sightings of badgers). The loss of Meadvale Road would not be appropriate.

vi) Mary Gee Houses, 101-107 Ratcliffe Road

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would support the identification of Mary Gee Houses for a sympathetic, well-designed residential development. Any redevelopment of the site should include a good mix of houses to meet local needs, including smaller houses for young couples and small families, down-sizing older people and some provision of affordable housing. It is acknowledged that the site could accommodate up to 60 units. Any proposal should preserve or enhance its Conservation Area status.

The Forum considers this to be a sensitive site in an area with a strong character and that important features should be retained. Any development should be of appropriate scale, respond to the local character (not an 'off the peg' solution) and should have an appropriate mix of houses and apartments.

vii) Welford Road Allotments

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of Welford Road Allotments. The allotments are a well-used important recreation and open space facility and form part of a wider wildlife corridor. They offer opportunities for local people to grow food and keep active, this has social and health benefits. The loss of Welford Road Allotments would not be appropriate.

viii) Lamborne Road Green Space

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of Lamborne Road Green Space (also known as Dawson Way Green Space). The open space is a well-used recreation resource and forms part of a wider wildlife corridor. Nearly half of the site is within flood zone 3 making it unsuitable for development. The loss of Lamborne Road Green Space would not be appropriate.

ix) The Lancaster School playing fields

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of Lancaster School playing fields in whole or in part for built development. The playing fields are an important facility for the local school. They offer opportunities for students to gain important recreation, this has educational and health benefits. In addition, more than half of the site is within flood zone 3 making it unsuitable for

development. The playing fields are also part of an important wildlife corridor. The loss of Lancaster School playing fields would not be appropriate.

x) Wash Brook Nature Area

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would be opposed to the release of Wash Brook Nature Area. The site is a designated a Local Wildlife Site. In addition, the majority of the site is within flood zone 3 making it unsuitable for development. The loss of Wash Brook Nature Area would not be appropriate.

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum is mindful that the site options identified by the City Council are not a definitive list. Other small scale development opportunities might be identified, or be identified during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, that could make a valuable contribution towards meeting housing needs.

3) Housing Mix and affordable housing

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would welcome the inclusion of policies in the plan that sought to encourage a 'mix of houses'. The Forum supports reference to a mix in policy DMP2, but this could be expanded. In particular the policy should encourage a mix of house sizes (in terms of bedroom numbers), styles (including bungalows) and affordability. The Knighton area has an ageing population and would welcome the provision of small smaller private dwellings for young families and downsizing older people.

The Local Plan should contain an affordable housing policy which identifies the thresholds for seeking affordable housing and the type of affordable housing sought (social rent / affordable rent, intermediate homes and starter homes).

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would also encourage the City Council to pursue policies that seeks to deliver accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accommodation and specify minimum room sizes.

The Forum supports draft policies DMP2A, DMP3 & DMP4 which seeks to avoid an over-concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMO) and Student accommodation. KNF consider that class C3 flats are preferable to class C4 small HiMOs in meeting local needs in Knighton.

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would encourage continued delivery of purpose-built student accommodation that can meet the important needs of the student population without eroding the character of established residential areas.

4) Design of new development

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum supports draft policies DMP22, DMP27 and DMP28 that seeks to encourage high quality design, prevent backland development and protect amenities of new and existing residents.

5) Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum broadly support draft policy DMP33 which seeks to protect Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other heritage assets from inappropriate development.

The Forum would like to explore opportunities to assess the current extent of the Conservation Areas in the Knighton Neighbourhood Plan area with a view to potentially extending the boundary. The original boundaries are somewhat dated and the passage of time has resulted in more recent developments assuming a character that is worthy of a higher level of protection

6) Wider strategic development

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would like to encourage Leicester City Council to fully consider the implications of growth outside of the Leicester City's administrative area on the Knighton Neighbourhood Plan and wider City area. In particular, the Forum is concerned that increased transport movements resulting from growth outside of the area should be fully considered and that mitigation is put in place along transport corridors in Knighton.

The Local Plan should seek to encourage alternatives to the private car including improved public transport, cycling and walking routes. KNF would support additional segregated pedestrian and cycle lanes and more frequent bus services from Knighton (and beyond) to Leicester City Centre.

i) City Centres

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum requests that the City Council include Local Plan policies which encourage a high quality city centre. In particular, the plan should encourage improvements to the quality of its public spaces and protection of existing high quality buildings.

The Local Plan needs to be responsive to the changing role of the city centre including future changes in retail patterns. In particular, how the city centre might respond to the diminishing role of retailing and growth in leisure activities.

The Local Plan should encourage improvements to public transport including improved frequency and pricing of buses to encourage greater use. This should be coupled with effective parking which is appropriately priced and of high quality.

ii) Local Shops and shopping

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum would wish to see a policy that seeks to encourage the retention of retail uses in defined retail centres within the Knighton Area. Changes of use to non-retail use should only be allowed where it can clearly be demonstrated that the retail use is no longer required.

iii) Private sports facilities

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum wishes to encourage a policy in the Local Plan that protects private sports clubs and other valuable community assets (such as community halls) from redevelopment. These are considered important facilities for the local community.

iv) Open spaces and allotments

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum wishes to encourage a policy in the Local Plan that protects existing areas of open space and allotments. These are considered important facilities for the local community which add to the character of the area and provide essential opportunities for recreation.

v) Air quality

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum wishes to encourage the City Council to undertake extensive air quality analysis to inform the Local Plan. The polluted transport routes along Palmerston Way, Welford Road and London Road need to be properly assessed to understand the implications of growth and mitigation measures introduced where possible. The plan should be accompanied by ongoing monitoring with the reported findings being made publicly available.

vi) Infrastructure

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum wishes to encourage the City Council to ensure that adequate capacity exists in local schools and health facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future populations as a result of growth.

vii) Parking

Response

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum wishes to encourage the City Council to include a policy in the Local Plan that seeks to secure adequate levels of well-designed parking to meet the needs of new development and that allows surface water to drain into the soil.