

Glossary of Planning Terms

Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS)

Body funded by Government to help unblock the issues holding up decisions on large planning applications, increase the knowledge and expertise of local authorities in handling such projects, share good practice across the sector and act as a partner to local authorities and independent reviewer of large applications and issues. View their guidance at: [Atlas Planning](#)

Affordable Housing

Housing that is provided for people who are unable to enter 'the housing market' without assistance. Affordable housing can be rented (often called 'social rented') through a Registered Provider (RP) (normally a Housing Association). Other products are referred to as intermediate and can include 'shared ownership' and low cost market housing.

Affordable Housing Viability Assessment (AHVA)

An assessment of the implications of affordable housing on the viability of development schemes. The AHVA broadly indicates the amount of affordable housing that could be provided without undermining viability. Affordable Housing Viability Assessment.

Amenity

A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquility.

Appeal

The process whereby a planning applicant can challenge an adverse decision, including a refusal of permission. Appeals can also be made against the failure of the planning authority to issue a decision within a given time, against conditions attached to permission, against the issue of an enforcement notice and against refusals of listed building and conservation area consent. In England and Wales, appeals are processed by the Planning Inspectorate.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Land falling within classification grades 1, 2 or 3a, based on the physical characteristics of the land and the limits these impose upon its agricultural uses.

Call In

The Secretary of State (Dept of Communities and Local Government) can order that a planning application or Development Plan is taken out of the hands of a local authority for decision by the Secretary of State. This can happen at the request of local people if the local authority appears to be acting against national or regional policy.

Character

A term relating to Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings, but also to the appearance of any rural or urban location in terms of its landscape or the layout of streets and open spaces, often giving places their own distinct identity.

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

'Communities and Local Government' is the Government department with responsibility for planning, housing, urban regeneration and local government. Communities website

Core Strategy (CS)

A part of the Local Development Framework that sets out the vision, spatial strategy and objectives and Core policies for the District. The CS is a key document - all other Local Development Documents should align with the Core Strategy.

Density

In the case of residential development, a measurement of either the number of habitable rooms per hectare or the number of dwellings per hectare.

Departure

A proposed development that is not in accordance with the adopted development plan, but for which the local planning authority proposes to grant planning permission (subject to no intervention from the Government).

Development Control & Development Management

The process whereby a local planning authority receives and considers the merits of a planning application and whether it should be given permission having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations.

District Centres

A group of shops and some service outlets serving part of an urban area and providing a geographic focus for it, separate from the town centre but with more variety than local centres.

English Heritage

Government advisors with responsibility for all aspects of protecting and promoting the historic environment. English Heritage is responsible for advising the government on the listing of historic buildings.

Environment Agency

A government body that aims to prevent or minimise the effects of pollution on the environment and issues permits to monitor and control activities that handle or

produce waste. It also provides up-to-date information on waste management matters and deals with other matters such as water issues including flood protection advice.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and Environmental Statement (ES)

Applicants for certain types of development, usually more significant schemes, are required to submit an "environmental statement" accompanying a planning application. It is a process for assessing environmental implications of development proposals and evaluates the likely environmental impacts of the development, together with an assessment of how the severity of the impacts could be reduced. The assessment seeks to ensure that all decisions are made with the objective of securing sustainable development.

Flood risk assessment (FRA)

A survey designed to assess the potential for flooding in an area (often where there is pressure for development) and ensure that mitigation measures are carefully considered. Flood risk assessments can be either strategic (SFRA) which look at broad areas or site specific.

Greenfield Land or Site

Land (or a defined site) usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.

Habitat survey

A survey carried out to assess the presence of important habitats and species in the District of Blaby. The study looks at areas of interest because of their bio-diversity.
Habitat survey

Highways England

An executive agency of the Department for Transport. The Highways Agency is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network of England.

Housing Market Area

A geographical area based on areas of broadly similar housing based characteristics. Blaby falls within the Housing Market Area of Leicester and Leicestershire.

Infrastructure

Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Intermediate Housing

Housing that is neither Market Housing or Social rented, but is available at a rent / cost falling between the two. Intermediate housing could comprise shared ownership accommodation for example.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

The Lead Local Flood Authority develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area. Local flood risk includes surface runoff, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses (including lakes and ponds).

Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model (LLITM)

A sophisticated transport model that contains a suite of other models which can assess transport impacts and implications (including the impacts of development proposals). The broad model includes a 'land-use model, an environmental model, a public transport model and supply / demand models.

Leicestershire and Leicester Urban Area

See Principal Urban Area

Local Centre

A small group of shops and perhaps limited service outlets of a local nature (for example, a suburban housing estate) serving a small catchment. Sometimes also referred to as a local neighbourhood centre.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Local Development Framework is a 'portfolio' of documents which sets out the spatial planning strategy for the area.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The Local Development Scheme is a document which sets out the Local Planning Authority's programme for the production of Local Development Documents.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)

The Local Planning Authority, in this case Blaby District Council, undertakes the town planning function at the local level (except minerals and waste planning which is undertaken at a County Council level).

Material Consideration

A matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are large scale developments (relating to energy, transport, water, or waste) which require a type of consent known as "development consent". A Development Consent Order (DCO) automatically removes the need to obtain several separate consents, including planning permission and is designed to be a much quicker process than applying for these separately. The DCO process is dealt with by the National Infrastructure Planning Unit with the Local Authority as a consultee

Natural England

Natural England is the Government's statutory adviser on landscape in England, with responsibility for landscape designations such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts.

Open Space

All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife.

Outline Planning Application

An application for planning permission which does not include full details of the proposal, usually only sufficient detail to identify the principles of the proposal; details not submitted at this stage are called 'reserved matters'. Details of the reserved matters are then submitted to the Council at a later stage.

Planning Inspectorate (PINS)

The Planning Inspectorate is an agency of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government whose role it is to independently consider Planning and Environmental matters. It is responsible for the consideration of planning appeals and the examination of the Development Plan Documents including the Core Strategy.

Planning Obligations and Agreements

Legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken. For example, the provision of highways. Sometimes called "Section 106" agreements.

Principal Urban Area

The Leicester and Leicestershire Principal Urban Area is defined in the Regional Plan. This comprises the built-up areas of Leicester Forest East, Glen Parva, Braunstone, Kirby Muxloe and Glenfield within the District of Blaby. See also Principle Urban Area of Leicester.

Public Open Space

Urban space, designated by a council, where public access may or may not be formally established, but which fulfils or can fulfil a recreational or non-recreational role (for example, amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural usages).

Public Inquiry

A type of "Appeal" (see above for definition). An inquiry is the most formal of the appeal procedures, because it usually involves larger or more complicated appeals. These are often cases where expert evidence is presented, and witnesses are cross-examined (questioned).

An inquiry may last for several days, or even weeks. It is not a court of law, but the proceedings will often seem to be quite similar and the applicants and the local planning authority usually have legal representatives.

Public Right of Way

A public right of way is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.

Reserved Matters

A planning permission usually outline, may specifically reserve for later consideration some matters not relating to the principles of the proposed development. Matters reserved at outline stage can include access, appearance, layout, scale and landscaping.

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)

A 'nationally important' archaeological site or historic building, listed by English Heritage and given protection against unauthorised change.

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Responsible for the overall strategic direction of the Mistry for Housing, Communities and Local Government which is the Government department with responsibility for planning, housing, urban regeneration and local government.

Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) or Site of Biological Interest (SBI)

Locally important sites of nature conservation adopted by local authorities for planning purposes.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features (basically, plants, animals, and natural features relating to the Earth's structure).

Sites and Monuments Record

List, description, and assessment of all known ancient monuments and sites of archaeological interest in an area including a map of each site.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

A statement enabling communities to know when they will be involved in the preparation of planning applications and the Local Development Framework. It will outline how the Local Planning Authority will engage communities in the planning process.

The Blaby District SCI was submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2005.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

An assessment of housing supply potential within the District of Blaby. The latest version of the SHLAA is dated March 2010 and will be updated as part of the AMR process. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

An assessment of housing need and demand based on a Housing Market Area. The SHMA defines the type of housing (including size, tenure and affordability) that are required to meet local needs. Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Sustainability Appraisal involves an assessment of the social, economic and environmental implications of the plans and policies in the LDF to ensure that all decisions are made with the objective of sustainable development in mind. The SA incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Sustainable Development

A widely used definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Transport assessment (TA)

A document that considers the transport impacts and implications of a proposed development and identifies measures to solve transport problems that may arise as a result of development.

Travel Plan (sometimes called a 'green travel' or 'commuter' plan)

A travel plan aims to promote sustainable travel choices (for example, cycling) as an alternative to single occupancy car journeys that may impact negatively on the environment, congestion and road safety. Travel plans can be required when granting planning permission for new developments.

Urban Capacity Study (UCS)

A study which assesses the amount of future residential development, from a range of sources, which is capable of being accommodated within the urban area. Urban Capacity Study.

Viability Assessment

A test to assess the ability of a development project to meet its costs including planning obligations, while ensuring an appropriate Site Value for the landowner and return to the developer in delivering that project.

Written Representations

This is where comments are made formally in writing to the local planning authority or the Planning Inspectorate on applications, appeals or planning policy documents.

Disclaimer

The Glossary is neither a statement of law nor an interpretation of the law, and its status is only an introductory guide to planning issues and should not be used as a source for statutory definitions.