

Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan: Issues and Options

Neighbourhood Plans

- 1 The 2011 Localism Act has given communities the right to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan. This right is aimed at giving local communities genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. Decisions on planning applications must take account of neighbourhood plans.

The Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan area

- 2 The Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan area comprises the parish of Barrow upon Soar which is situated in Charnwood Borough, Leicestershire. The parish amounts to 1,010 hectares.
- 3 Barrow upon Soar is a large village in northern Leicestershire, in the Soar Valley between Leicester and Loughborough. In 2011 it had a population of around 6,000.

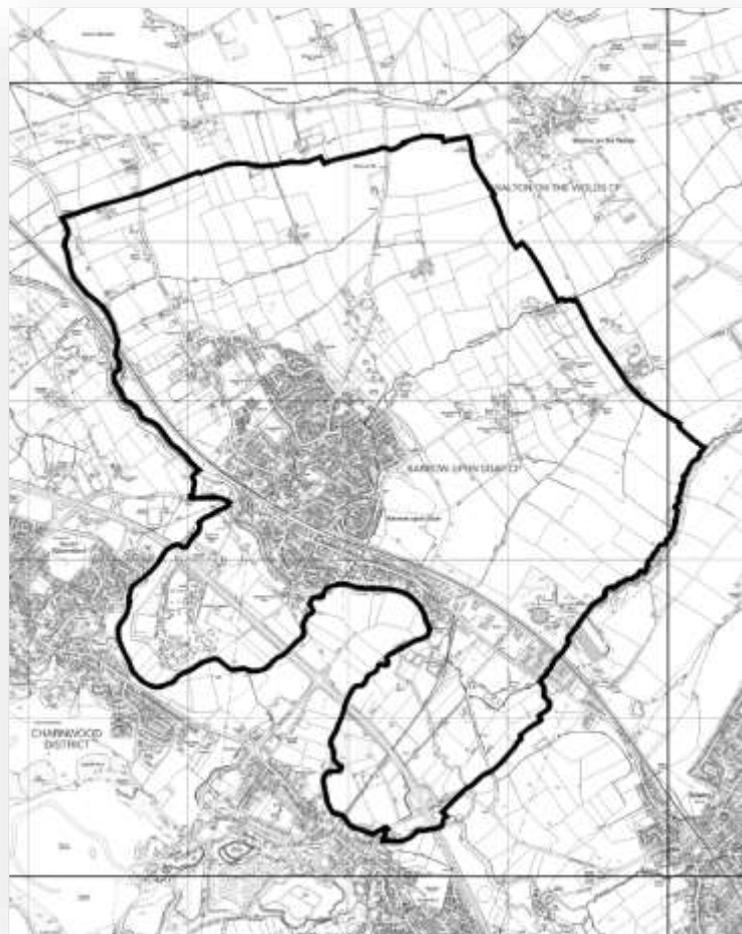


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Area

- 4 Barrow upon Soar was designated as a Neighbourhood Area in February 2014. The Plan is being prepared by Barrow upon Soar Parish Council and the plan covers the period to 2028.

What we have done so far

- 5 Various informal consultation events have been held, including on 31 January 2014 and 30 September 2014. In September 2014, we undertook a questionnaire survey of local households and businesses to identify the key issues that the neighbourhood plan needs to look at. We received over 400 responses.
- 6 346 young people between the ages of 10 and 16 years, who attend the Humphrey Perkins School in Barrow upon Soar also completed a questionnaire. They were asked their opinions of the village currently and their ideas for improvement. They were also asked if they thought they would live or work in Barrow upon Soar when they are old enough to do so.
- 7 Following these surveys, a workshop for parish councillors and key stakeholders was held on 24 March 2015 to look at the principle issues that the Neighbourhood Plan will need to address.
- 8 The feedback from these events and information about the area have helped us prepare this document that sets out the key issues and options for the future development of the area. More details of the household and young people's surveys and the stakeholder event are on our website at:
<http://www.barrowpc.org.uk/>

What happens next?

- 9 In this Issues and Options document we have set out the main challenges and options for the Neighbourhood Plan. A newsletter summarising this document is being circulated to local households.
- 10 We have prepared a questionnaire to accompany this document and we welcome your answers to these questions as they will help us prepare the first (Pre-submission) version of the Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan. All members of each household can complete the questionnaire which should be completed online at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BuSNPQuestionnaire>
- 11 You should complete the questionnaire by 22 January 2016.
- 12 Paper copies of the questionnaire are available from the Parish Office and should be returned to:

Parish Council Office
12 High Street
Barrow upon Soar
Loughborough
LE12 8PY

- 13 The next version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be the subject of consultation with residents and businesses for six weeks and then amended if necessary. The Plan will then be submitted to Charnwood Borough Council for publication and a further six-week public consultation before it is sent to an independent Examiner.
- 14 The Examiner will recommend that the Plan is submitted to a local referendum, or that it is modified to meet the 'Basic Conditions' and then submitted to a referendum, or that the Plan is refused. Charnwood Borough Council will arrange a referendum and, if the Plan is passed by a simple majority of those voting, the Borough Council will adopt it.
- 15 When the Plan is adopted, it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area, alongside the Charnwood Core Strategy. Charnwood Borough Council will continue to be responsible for determining most planning applications, but the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be the basis for those decisions.

Sustainable Development

- 16 Our Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:



Figure 2: Village Sign

- an **economic** role - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a **social** role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built

- environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an **environmental** role - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 17 This Plan, taken as a whole, constitutes our view of what sustainable development in Barrow upon Soar means in practice.

Key Issues

- 18 Local people are proud of the village, on the whole they see it as friendly with a good community spirit. However, one of the principal concerns to have emerged is that many people feel that large-scale development is adversely affecting the character of Barrow upon Soar. New housing, in particular, often fails to reflect the unique character of the village, and has contributed to some key services becoming over-stretched and exacerbated problems associated with traffic. Many local people are worried that Barrow upon Soar is losing its character as a village.
- 19 62% of young people who responded felt that overall Barrow upon Soar was either 'good' or 'great'.

Countryside

- 20 Local people want to see the countryside surrounding Barrow upon Soar protected for its intrinsic character and beauty, and for nature conservation. The canal and Barrow upon Soar's river heritage are important features of the area.
- 21 The landscape setting to the village is highly regarded- particularly the views on the approach to the village. However, there are some places that local people feel detracts from the character of the area, for example Proctors Park.

Heritage

- 22 Local people want to see Barrow's heritage protected- especially the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area includes a number of Listed Buildings including Holy Trinity Church, Bishop Beveridge House and the Roundhouse.
- 23 The village's limestone beds contain a large number and variety of fossils, consisting mainly of marine shells and fossil fish, which were a great curiosity and of interest to natural historians. There is a fossil trail in the village and the Barrow Kipper is the emblem of the village.

- 24 The Jitties/pathways, stone walls, bridges, canals and locks are important village features, but there are some concerns that some traditional features are being lost- especially the granite walls and traditional doors and windows. While we want to maintain and enhance the individual character of Barrow upon Soar, there is support for the introduction of renewable energy solutions as part of new development schemes.

Green Spaces

- 25 Local people have taken the opportunities to identify, for special protection, green areas of particular significance to them. This local significance could be because of the green area's beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. By designating land as Local Green Space, we will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

- 26 A large number of open spaces have been identified, but the Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for many of them.

Services and facilities

- 27 Local residents have access to a good range of services and facilities. The Village Centre contains a supermarket, newsagent, post office, pharmacy, takeaways, dentist, optician, a library and health centre. The village also has both a primary and secondary school. The village has a number of thriving community groups, places of worship, young people's facilities and sports clubs.
- 28 There is no stand-alone community centre- 28% of residents responding to the survey felt that a dedicated community building was essential and a further 53% thought it was desirable. Some thought that Humphrey Perkins School would be a good location for a new community centre, many preferred a village centre location.
- 29 The Village Centre is vibrant with a mix of independent retailers with few vacant units. Some people would like to see a bank, a public toilet and fewer takeaways. Village centre car parking is seen as a problem by many. There is insufficient off-street parking while on-street parking causes traffic flow problems. Some feel that village centre parking and traffic is such a problem that it encourages residents to travel to large supermarkets in Loughborough. However, not everyone has a problem- 36% of respondents said they quite often or very often had a problem parking.
- 30 One of the greatest concerns raised by local people related to the GP Surgery- residents find it difficult to arrange appointments and there are concerns about GP capacity and the ability of healthcare services to cope with housing growth. There is a limited NHS dental service in the village.
- 31 There were similar concerns about the capacity at Hall Orchard Primary School and the possible loss of allotments to development.

Transport

- 32 Lots of local people took the opportunity to raise concerns about traffic, 47% of survey respondents felt that they were affected by traffic issues in the village at peak times. There were a few common traffic congestion issues:
- Congestion at the bridge over the canal at Bridge Street/Barrow Road;
 - Congestion near schools and nurseries at drop off/ pick up times; and
 - Congestion created by the closure Slash Lane at times of flood.
- 33 There were some concerns about the level of through traffic- especially HGVs, speeding vehicles, and inconsiderate parking. There was not much support for a one-way system, speed humps or other traffic management measures. Some people suggested residents parking zones, improved parking enforcement and a range of other solutions to traffic/parking problems. Some residents pointed out that making it even easier to drive through the village will only increase the amount of traffic.
- 34 Our neighbourhood plan can't be used to enforce speed restrictions, introduce traffic management schemes or apply parking restrictions, but there are some things we may be able to do that can help deal with traffic congestion and car parking problems.
- 35 Residents recognised that the village had good public transport links. Some wanted to see more bus routes, more frequent services and better located bus stops and bus shelters. The train station was also seen as an asset, although not accessible by all, but again people wanted to see more frequent services and a car park. Some saw the cost of public transport as too high, especially compared to the costs of private car travel.
- 36 There was good support for more cycle facilities and safe cycle routes. Some noted that the river/canal towpath could be better used as a cycle route to Loughborough.

Housing

- 37 There was a general feeling that too much housing has been permitted already and that there should be no more housing other than infill development and the redevelopment of brownfield sites. If there was a need to provide for more housing, there is no consensus on where development should take place. In addition to the sites put forward in the consultation document, other locations were suggested.
- 38 People felt that too many recent developments in Barrow upon Soar consisted of standard, 'identikit' homes that typify new developments built by some volume house builders. Some of our housing looks exactly the same as developments elsewhere and could be anywhere in the country. Too often new developments are dominated by the same, identikit designs that bear no resemblance to local character.

39 Residents want to plan for a mix of housing to meet the needs of people living locally, but there was a variety of views on what housing was needed. Some wanted to see smaller, cheaper starter homes although there was a mix of views on the need for affordable housing. Others wanted to see housing to meet the needs of the elderly and there was some support for a retirement community.

Employment

40 Barrow upon Soar has a well-documented industrial past but there are few obvious signs of that today. The main employment area is on the two industrial areas along Sibley Road, but a high percentage of local people now out commute.

41 Our survey also asked for views on employment development. While there was support for small businesses and rural enterprise there was little support for large-scale business development. There were mixed views about tourism development associated with the canal.

Vision

42 In setting out our aims for the Neighbourhood Plan it is vital to consider how the area should be at the end of the plan period. Our plan needs to be aspirational, but realistic:

Figure 3: Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan Vision



Implementation

- 43 There is no point in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which cannot be delivered. To help implement the Barrow upon Soar Neighbourhood Plan we have engaged key stakeholders at an early stage and identified what infrastructure is needed to support the plan.
- 44 Almost all development has some impact on the existing, and the need for new, infrastructure, services and amenities. Sometimes these impacts are detrimental and so it is only fair that new development pays a share of the cost of providing additional infrastructure.
- 45 The Barrow upon Soar Parish Council will receive 25% of any planning levy charged by Charnwood Borough Council on new developments in the area should a charging regime be agreed and this will be used to help implement our proposals.

Countryside

Landscape

- 46 The local landscape is dominated by the slow-moving River Soar, which flows northwards through the floodplain from Leicester City to the River Trent. The Soar Valley has a flat floodplain with rising valley sides. The landscape is essentially rural in the floodplain where grassland was naturally enriched from silt carried by flood waters. Once active sand and gravel workings are now largely restored as agricultural grazing and wildlife wetlands or recreational water bodies. The valley has been a major transport corridor for a long time, with the Grand Union Canal, Midland Main railway line and the A6 road; and it is also a corridor for electricity pylons.
- 47 Barrow upon Soar lies on the east bank of the River Soar at its confluence with the Fishpool Brook. The gap between the village and Quorn, which lies on the opposite bank of the Soar, is particularly narrow. 98% of local residents who responded to our 2014/15 survey, considered the countryside separating of Barrow upon Soar from surrounding villages to be an important or essential characteristic.
- 48 Much of the area is still farmed, predominantly as grassland, either as hay meadows or as permanent pastures that are cattle - or to a lesser extent horse - grazed. The large and distinctively coloured British Gypsum works on the eastern edge of the parish is prominent in the long distant views along and across the valley.
- 49 Local people value the landscape setting to Barrow upon Soar and the views of the surrounding countryside. Therefore, to prevent the sprawl of development into the countryside and to protect the landscape setting of Barrow upon Soar we have identified Limits to Development. Land outside these Limits to Development will be protected from housing and other development.

Flooding

- 50 Barrow upon Soar has a long history of flood events. Flooding may not be from one watercourse alone; there are a number of interactions, particularly between the River Soar and Grand Union Canal.

51 The primary flood risk is from the River Soar flowing along the western boundary of the built-up area. There is also flood risk from the Fishpool Brook which causes problems for existing householders on Breachfield Road with rear gardens bounded by the brook. Surface water flooding is also a risk and with further development and the creation of impermeable ground surfaces, surface water flooding may become a greater problem.

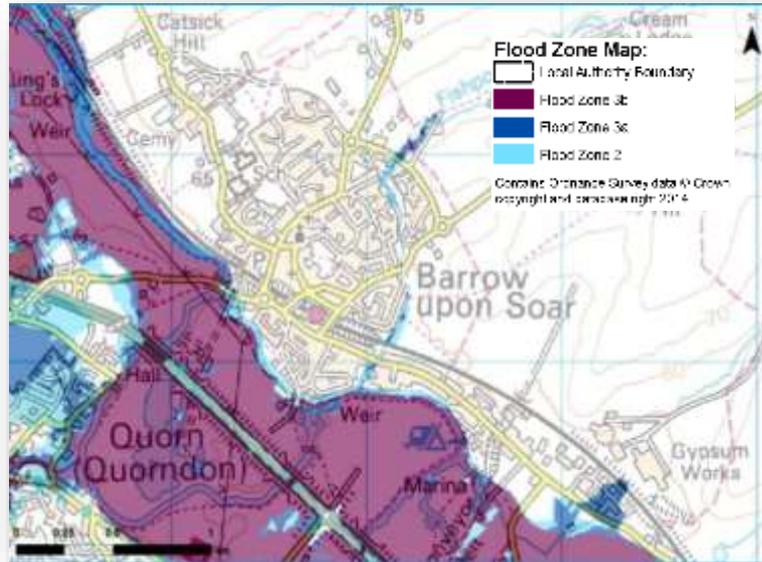


Figure 4: Flood Zone Map

52 The last significant flood was in November 2012 and followed heavy overnight rain. The Soar burst its banks, flooding Proctor's Caravan Park and forcing narrow-boat owners to leave home. Flooding regularly affects Slash Lane and Sibley Road restricting access to the A6 and causing congestion on the remaining available routes.

Geodiversity, Ecology and Biodiversity

Barrow Gravel Pits

53 Barrow Gravel Pits is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and comprises one of the best remaining complexes of open water, grassland, scrub and woodland in Leicestershire possessing a rich flora and fauna representative of flood plain habitats in the English Midlands.

River Soar

54 The whole stretch of the River Soar within Charnwood has been notified as a Local Wildlife Site and functions as a major wildlife corridor across the landscape; it supports key species, such as the otter, and rare aquatic plants such as the grass-wracked pondweed.

55 The river floodplain contains wetland habitats which are of great conservation value although they may appear unsightly. Ditches, old oxbows, small pockets of wet woodland, marshland and ponds sustain a wide range of declining plant and invertebrates species, many of which are highly localised in their distribution and vulnerable to changes in hydrology and management regime.

- 56 The non-native invasive floating pennywort has spread along the River Soar within the Borough and beyond, and has been subject to control programmes by statutory agencies.
- 57 The River Soar is navigable: sections are canalised and have been straightened in places but most of the river, including its bypassed backwaters, gently meanders across the landscape.
- 58 A distinctive feature of the river valley is the twin waterway where the River Soar divides to take boating traffic via the Grand Union Canal into the built up areas of Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Thurmaston, and Birstall, leaving the River Soar to meander through the fields nearby in a parallel course, joining up into navigable sections.

Wildlife Corridors

- 59 A wildlife corridor is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities or structures (such as roads and development). This allows an exchange of individuals between populations, which may help prevent the negative effects of inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity that often occur within isolated populations. Corridors may also help facilitate the re-establishment of populations that have been reduced or eliminated.



Figure 5: Wildlife corridor

- 60 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken between May 2010 and March 2012 during which the following potentially important wildlife corridors were identified:
- Section of the Midland Main Line from the east of Loughborough heading south east until Barrow-upon-Soar. The corridor also includes a short section of the railway spur which leads north (BWC 005).
 - Stretch of the River Soar (not navigable) which links the main river corridor to the north (at Meadow Farm Marina) with the south (at Sibley Road). The corridor runs through pasture fields (BWC 014).
 - Fishpool Brook (PWC 024) flows through a predominately arable and improved grassland valley. The brook is wooded or tree lined for the majority of its route. The brook flows through Barrow upon Soar and into the River Soar.

- Hedgerows and species-poor grassland verges (PWC 026) running either side of Melton Road as it lead from Paudy Cross Road towards Barrow upon Soar.
- Hedgerows (majority with trees) and species-poor grassland verges running alongside Nottingham Road as it leads into Barrow-upon-Soar (PWC 030).
- Hedgerows running along either side of Nottingham Road as it leads north from Barrow-upon-Soar (PWC 031).
- Stretch of the Midland Main Line from Barrow-upon-Soar to Sileby. Comprises embankments with semi-natural woodland, plantation woodland, tall ruderal and scattered scrub (PWC 067).
- A corridor of plantation woodland to the east of Barrow-upon-Soar, links Melton Road to the Midland Main Line (PWC 068)
- Habitats alongside a conveyor belt running from Mountsorrel quarry to Barrow upon Soar (PWC 116).
- Plantation woodlands and scrubby embankments along the A6 road between the roundabout to the north west of Quorn, and the east of Mountsorrel (PWC 084).

61 Young people were particularly keen to see the creation of more wildlife habitat areas and the recognition, protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors could help achieve that.

Canal

62 Sections of the River Soar were canalised in the late 18th century as the Leicester Navigation, later becoming part of the Grand Union Canal, linking London to the Trent and Mersey Canal. Although now a recreational waterway, characteristic canalside features can be seen in the locks, stone bridges and waterside pubs. The Grand Union Canal with its bridges, canalside cottages, pubs, marinas, boatyards and locks and towing paths are a popular and accessible leisure attraction for boating, fishing and walking.



Figure 6: Grand Union Canal

63 The demand for water-based recreational activity and tourism has led to marinas, caravan parks and sailing. Some of these can be visually intrusive, viewed from a long distance, and clutter the landscape. Caravan parks, with

their white caravans dotted on the rising valley sides, are particularly visible across the floodplain. Proctors, now a caravan site, was built in the 1950s and '60s as a thriving pleasure park which attracted visitors who arrived on special trains.

- 64 In November 2009, led by the then Waterways Trust, a strategy was prepared for the northern section of the waterway corridor. The Strategy provided an assessment of the current position, issues and future opportunities for the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal, and proposed a series of actions based around the themes of a Green Waterway, a Visible Waterway and an Accessible Waterway.
- 65 In 2012 British Waterways and the Waterways Trust merged to form a new charity called the Canal and River Trust. At that point, Leicester City and Leicestershire County Councils took over co-ordination of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership. The Partnership has updated the Strategy and the 2014/15 Action Plan sets out the next steps in realising the strategic vision of the original strategy. The Barrow upon Soar duck race helps promote the use of the waterway corridor and our Neighbourhood Plan can also help support the Strategy objectives by identifying sites within the river/canal corridor, with the potential for significant enhancement.

Heritage

- 66 Barrow upon Soar Heritage Group has published various guides, articles and undertaken many heritage projects over the years. The Group's work is available online at <http://www.barrowuponsoarheritage.org.uk/>
- 67 The origins of Barrow upon Soar are not clear. The first settlers may have been people using the ancient Celtic trackway known as the Great Salt Road of which Paudy Lane to Six Hills was a part. There have also been discoveries of Roman remains and a Roman cemetery adjacent to Sileby Road, indicating a Roman presence in the area.
- 68 The present village may have first developed as a Saxon settlement. At the time of the Battle of Hastings, the manor of Barrow was part of the Saxon King Harold's estates and after the Conquest it was passed by William the Conqueror to his nephew Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, who is recorded as the lord of the manor in the Domesday Survey.
- 69 The early development and prosperity of the village relied on an agricultural economy based on a system of open fields, meadows and common land. The enclosure of the open fields by a 1760 Act of Parliament had a profound effect on the local landscape with small, hedged fields replacing the open fields. Many villagers were forced to look for new employment. Framework knitting, centred mainly on Beveridge Street, had been established in the village during the first half of the 18th century. With growing mechanisation this home working declined and a hosiery factory opened on Sileby Road.
- 70 Barrow stands on a hard blue limestone that has been used for building and agriculture, and there has been a long-standing tradition of limestone quarrying. The limestone beds contain a large number and variety of fossils, consisting mainly of marine shells and fossil fish, which were a great curiosity and of interest to natural historians. There is a fossil trail and sculpture in the village and the Barrow Kipper is the emblem of the village.
- 71 The development of the local lime industry was boosted by the arrival of the Soar Navigation in 1794 which allowed larger quantities of lime to be transported. A major producer of lime was John Ellis who operated a drift mine off Sileby Road. The company diversified into the manufacture of cement in the early 1900s and the manufacture of concrete building blocks and other precast concrete goods. The lime and gypsum works on Sileby Road still survive.
- 72 The physical, social and historical development of Barrow upon Soar was marked by the foundation of a Free Grammar School in 1717 following an endowment from Humphrey Perkins, and the foundation of an Old Men's Hospital and an Old Women's Hospital. The two hospital buildings are still in use today as homes for the vulnerable.

- 73 The rapid growth in the village throughout the 19th century resulted in the improvement and growth of community facilities. A National School, now part of the Hall Orchard Primary School site on Church Street, was set up in 1859. 19th century population growth was a source of dissent and this was reflected in the building of new places of worship- a Wesleyan Chapel on the High Street, a Baptist Chapel on Beveridge Street and a Methodist Chapel on North Street along with a Roman Catholic Church at the head of Church Street.
- 74 The legacy of the village's historic development, its historic street pattern and much of the physical built development that took place in the village from the late 16th century and into the early 20th century, is reflected in the special historic and architectural interest of the present Conservation Area.

Conservation Area

- 75 Barrow upon Soar Conservation Area was designated in January 1976. The boundaries of the Conservation Area generally define the extent of the settlement, as it existed at the end of the 19th century. The Area includes much of the medieval heart of the settlement, focussing on Holy Trinity Church which is Grade II* listed and its neighbouring almshouses and the principal roads through the village: High Street, North Street, Beveridge Street and South Street. The Conservation Area includes a large sweep of land to take in the stretch of the Grand Union Canal from Mill Lane to Barrow Deep Lock. A network of footpaths, known locally as jitties, connects different parts of the centre and provide a safe, traffic-free route for pedestrians.



Figure 7: Holy Trinity Church

- 76 91.4% of residents who completed our 2014/15 survey regarded the Conservation Area as an important or essential characteristic of the village.

Listed Buildings

- 77 There are 25 buildings in Barrow upon Soar listed by Historic England for their special architectural or historic interest. They include the II* listed Church of the Holy Trinity.
- 78 The neighbourhood plan has given local people their chance to give their views on local heritage. In addition to the nationally designated heritage assets the Barrow upon Soar Heritage Group has identified other buildings and structures of local importance.

Archaeology

- 79 Barrow upon Soar is renowned for its marine fossils, plesiosaurs and ichthyosaurs. These date to the Jurassic period, 150-200 million years ago, long before man existed. The Barrow Fossil Trail is a guided village walk featuring specially commissioned sculptures from local art students.
- 80 An Archaeological Alert area has been defined for the village centre and broadly follows the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

Design

- 81 Local people are concerned that too many of the recent developments in Barrow upon Soar have consisted of standard, 'identikit' homes that typify new developments built by some volume house builders. In our survey 96% said that the design and layout of new developments should respect and reflect the characteristics and appearance of the village by incorporating locally distinctive features. However, some of our housing looks exactly the same as developments elsewhere and could be anywhere in the country. Too often new developments are dominated by the same, identikit designs that bear no resemblance to local character. There are also concerns that some traditional features are being lost- especially the granite walls and timber doors and windows.
- 82 We now expect all development to contribute positively to the creation of well-designed buildings and spaces. The Barrow upon Soar Village Design Statement aims to define local character and distinctiveness and looks at how these can be protected and enhanced. The Design Statement is to be revised and integrated into our Neighbourhood Plan to help maintain and enhance the individual character of Barrow upon Soar and create places that work well for both occupants and users, and are built to last.
- 83 The Neighbourhood Plan will help guide the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development to ensure that they are sensitive to the character of the local area. Just because poor design has been allowed in the past doesn't mean that we will allow it to continue. At our stakeholder meeting there were concerns that new developments did not include sufficient car parking.

Green Spaces

84 98.3% of local residents who completed our 2014/15 survey considered the village's open, green spaces to be an important or essential characteristic. Local people also took the opportunity to identify green areas of particular significance to them. This local significance could be because of the green area's beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. By designating land as Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan, we will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

85 Millennium Park and King George V Park are particularly important to local people. Other valued green spaces include the canal and river corridor, the Glebe Allotments, cricket field, Mill Lane Park, Willow Road Parks, the Melton Road/Branston Avenue amenity area, Pigs Close to Mill Lane Park and the Culverts. Young people also highlighted all these spaces as being important to them. Proposed Local Green Spaces are identified on the map below.



Figure 8: Millennium Park

Services and Facilities

- 86 Barrow upon Soar has a good range of services and facilities with a primary school, secondary school, shops, churches, pubs, GP surgery and sports & recreation facilities. In our 2014/15 questionnaire survey, 96% of residents felt that the overall balance between population and facilities was an important or essential characteristic of the village.
- 87 There is a feeling that the some services and facilities need improvement to meet growing demands. There are particular issues about the capacity of the primary school, doctors' surgery and village centre car parking. There are also concerns about the future of the library and the lack of a community centre.

Village Centre

- 88 Nearly all of us depend on the village centre for meeting friends and colleagues, for shopping, entertainment, leisure, culture, public services, worship and transport. The village centre provides jobs and the businesses there depend on its vitality for survival, profits and growth.



Figure 9: Village Centre

- 89 Barrow's centre, focussed on High Street and North Street, helps to address the day-to-day needs of village residents and the immediate area. The village centre contains a supermarket, and other convenience stores, non-retail services such as take-aways, estate agents, a library, opticians, dental surgery and health centre. There is also a newsagent, Post Office and a pharmacy. There are very few vacancies, but the opportunities for expanding the centre are limited. Local people generally feel that the village centre is thriving and meets their day-to-day needs.

Future Challenges

- 90 Our Neighbourhood Plan needs to consider the consumer trends that are likely to impact on our village centre:
- An ageing population: will lead to specific demands for particular services and facilities, as well as an attractive and safe environment in which to shop and socialise.
 - Ever increasing demand for choice: will place village centre operators under pressure to break from traditional business models to satisfy the demand for convenience.
 - The continuing rise of e-commerce: may take trade from traditional retailers, yet mobile technology will be so embedded in people's lives that village centre businesses could embrace and exploit it for their own benefit.
 - The demand for value is here to stay: there will be an increasing demand for good value but high quality goods and services.
 - Leisure time will continue to be important: people's expectations are ever higher, in a world where innumerable options compete for their attention. If our centre is to compete it will need to offer people a viable alternative, where they can shop, eat, work, and play in a unique cultural, social, and exciting environment.

- 91 Town Centre Futures 2020 is a report prepared by Experian in partnership with the Association of Town Centre Managers that looks at ways in which successful centres might react to these challenges and changes. Here are some of the ideas that the Neighbourhood Plan could help to implement:

Ageing population

- Maximising access, whether parking or public transport
- Creating safe and attractive environments for shopping
- Ensuring the provision of important facilities such as toilets and accessibility
- Retaining important public and private services (such as health) within the centre
- Greater opportunities for informal leisure and socialising

Economic uncertainty

- Achieving a favourable balance between budget and premium retailers
- Avoid the clustering of value retailers, bookmakers, bars, and fast-food outlets
- Supporting and fostering local markets, and community participation

Resilience

- Marketing the village centre based on its unique offer
- Discouragement of leakage to competitive centres
- Improvement of the local environment
- Creating animated spaces - bringing theatre, culture, and fun to the centre

- Breaking out of the 9 to 5 shop routine, and boosting the night-time economy

Technology

- Technology offers many opportunities, and successful town centre management and businesses will pay close attention to how they can exploit these. Indeed, rather than replacing the role of town centres, the development of multi-channel retailing may afford a clear opportunity for them to place themselves at the centre of this emerging economy.

Parking

- 92 While some local people would like to see a bank and public conveniences, the main concerns relate to car parking. Following the loss of parking as a result of the redevelopment of the site near the Three Crowns PH, the remaining off-street car parking available is at the Borough Council's High Street car park, the Cooperative Food store and at the Barrow Health Centre.
- 93 The Borough Council's recently resurfaced High Street Car Park has 32 standard and 1 disabled parking space. The Cooperative Store's customer car park has 31 spaces and is free for up to two hours. The central location of the health centre is appreciated by patients for its good public transport links but at busy times the 29 space car park is often full. Jelson are to make a £30,000 contribution to the improvement of the health centre car park as part of the Melton Road development. In our survey 36% of residents said that they had a problem finding somewhere to park.
- 94 The village centre is also accessible to those without access to a car. A lot of young people are able to get to village centre services and facilities by bicycle or by walking.

Barrow Health Centre

- 95 The health centre was purpose built in 1980 around which time the practice list of 5,500 was broadly comparable to the population. The current population of Barrow upon Soar is circa 6,000 but the practice list is around 8,800.
- 96 The premises are the same size now as it was then but there have been adaptations in response to a rising population, with developer contributions being used for refurbishment in 2011, bringing into use rooms vacated by district nurses, health visitors and school nurses pursuant to NHS re-organisation.
- 97 The practice boundary has been redrawn to curtail pressure and patients are no longer accepted from outside the boundary. The health centre is operating at 70% over-capacity. There is no prospect of NHS funded capital

investment at present. At our stakeholder meeting it was suggested that the Health Centre could re-locate.

- 98 Many people responding to our survey raised complaints about the service, including difficulties in making appointments. The practice advise that strenuous efforts are being made to recruit one or two more doctors over the next 12 months. Furthermore, medical student teaching has now ceased which has led to improved appointment availability. Adding patients to the current practice list will cause deterioration in the services offered.

Hall Orchard C of E Primary School

- 99 Hall Orchard C of E Primary School is situated on Church Street in the village centre. There are three main buildings and two double classrooms in mobile accommodation. The Victorian building has two classrooms, computer base room and pre-school. The 1995 extension connects all the school buildings and has three classrooms, cloakrooms, and toilets. The administration block leads to our 1970 Orchard building. This houses eight class bases, the main hall, large stepped studio, cookery area and library. Outside there are two large play areas, and school field. In addition the foundation classes have their own secure play area.
- 100 Hall Orchard is the largest primary school in Leicestershire with 447 pupils on the school roll. A phased programme of works is already in place to accommodate the current number of planning applications that have been granted but works have not yet started. The school cannot be extended to accommodate further housing growth.
- 101 In our 2014/15 survey, 105 residents expressed concern about traffic congestion near schools and nurseries at drop off/pick up times. This was confirmed at our Stakeholder event which raised concerns about inadequate staff parking too.

Humphrey Perkins School

- 102 The Humphrey Perkins School is a mixed, 11 to 16 comprehensive high school with academy status which was founded as a Free Grammar School in 1717. There is a school role of 836 Over many months pupils, parents and teachers have expressed a strong desire for Humphrey Perkins School to have a sixth form so that pupils can go on to study A-Levels. The Governors are also very supportive of Humphreys returning to being an 11-18 school as it was for many years. The school can be adapted to cope with additional growth.

Community Partnership Library

- 103 Barrow upon Soar has a small library in the centre of the village which provides a limited range of services for the local community. Last year,

Leicestershire County Council decided that the village library will have to be run by volunteers or face closure. Barrow upon Soar Community Association (BuSCA) therefore took over the management of the local library from 27 July 2015.



Figure 10: Barrow upon Soar library now run by the community

Community Centre

- 104 There is a good range of clubs, societies and social organisations in the village. Some of these use the facilities at Humphrey Perkins School. The school has extensive facilities which are available for private hire on week day evenings and weekends. However, the facilities are used by the school during term-time and are also too large and expensive for many community groups.
- 105 Although the village also has a number of small rooms that are available to hire on an hourly basis, they are under considerable pressure. As a result some groups are unable to find a permanent home and have left the village due to the lack of suitable space (table tennis, archery, ballroom dance) and there is no suitable space for other activities such as a day-care centre, soft-play area or youth centre. Other clubs and societies have long waiting lists.
- 106 In our 2014/15 questionnaire survey, 28% of residents said that a dedicated community building was essential and a further 53% said it was desirable. Since then, BuSCA have had further discussions about the possible location of a new Community Centre. While a new Community Centre has local support there are concerns that it could reduce the use of existing facilities, like church halls, and affect their viability.
- 107 Of the young people who completed our questionnaire, 19% said it was essential for Barrow upon Soar to have a dedicated youth centre. About 40% thought that a youth centre was desirable but not essential and a similar number thought that there was no need.

Allotments

108 There is one allotment site in the village where there is a waiting list. Glebe Allotments, Nottingham Road are owned by the Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance. Part of this large allotment area have been put forward as a potential housing site and that has raised fears for their future. There were also concerns about the limited car parking that was available.



Figure 11: Glebe Allotments

109 There would seem to be sufficient allotment provision but residents in the south of the village live a long way from either of the above two sites. A community orchard is to be provided in the main area of open space in the south and west of the proposed Melton Road housing site.

Sport and Recreation

110 There are several playgrounds in the village, all containing different equipment. The playgrounds are to be found on Mill Lane, Willow Road, and King George V sports field off Beaumont Road. Children's play provision is generally of a good standard and enhanced facilities for children and young people will be provided from new development.

111 Barrow Town Football Club was formed in 1904 as Barrow Old Boys and play at Riverside Park, in Quorn parish. The ground has undergone several improvements in recent years, most notably the addition of floodlighting for both the main pitch and training area, a new clubhouse and changing rooms, a 50 seat grandstand, covered standing paddock and new dugouts. The recent amalgamation of all junior, youth and senior teams makes Barrow Town one of the largest football clubs in Leicestershire and now caters for soccer from under eight to senior level. Barrow now has a girls football team for 5-12 year olds.

112 Barrow and Burton Cricket Club has a membership that spans from Under 10's Kwik Cricketers to the senior side who play at the Nottingham Road Cricket Ground.

- 113 Barrow Runners are a running club that takes members from all over the area and meets regularly in the village. Other sports clubs and facilities include canoeing and paddlesports Club, keep-fit classes, martial arts and tennis.

Barrow on Soar Churches

- 114 Holy Trinity is a Grade II* listed 12th century church in the centre of the village with a seating capacity of approximately 300 people. Barrow upon Soar Methodist Church is also located near the centre of the village, beyond the cross roads at the end of High Street.



Figure 12: Barrow upon Soar Baptist Church

- 115 Barrow on Soar Baptist Church on Beveridge Street has a large congregation and many people are from outside the village. St Gregory's Catholic Church holds services at the Bishop Beveridge Club, South Street.

Transport

Road

- 116 The Soar valley has been a major transport corridor since Roman times and probably before. Through the years, improvements in communications have altered its character and the need to build on raised embankments to cope with the regular flooding of the valley has compounded the visual impact in the landscape.
- 117 Roads have long been the principal means of communication in the Borough and the north-south route between Loughborough and Leicester along the west bank of the Soar became increasingly important from the medieval period onwards. The road was turnpiked in 1726, became the A6 and continued to be the major north-south route, passing through the villages of Quorn, Mountsorrel and Rothley, until the 1990s.
- 118 The current A6 major road corridor, which bypasses the villages, was constructed in the early 1990s. It is built on embankments and stilts, and dominates the flat landscape in terms of visibility, traffic movement and noise. Although the A6 bypass has offered great relief to the villages in reducing the through traffic, it splits the valley down the middle and has created a major barrier across the landscape.
- 119 Traffic entering and leaving Barrow upon Soar via the A6 concentrates onto the historic Barrow Road Bridge, a listed building. This is single lane and signal controlled. It is considered already at capacity at peak times and additional traffic will make this problem worse. There is no easy way to improve the bridge. As part of Jelson's Melton Road development there are proposals to improve the traffic flow at the Barrow Road Bridge by implementing traffic management measures that will include the repositioning of the traffic lights and stop-lines and the installation of Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) technology.
- 120 The alternative route to and from the A6 via Slash Lane to the east of the village is regularly inundated by flooding by the River Soar. This also applies occasionally to Mountsorrel Lane. These closures cause widespread congestion on the remaining available routes and can affect bus service as traffic travelling from Sileby is diverted through Barrow when Slash Lane and Mountsorrel are not passable. As part of Jelson's Melton Road development an advanced warning scheme is to be implemented to warn drivers of flooding on Slash Lane but this does not address the root cause of the difficulty.

- 121 The expansion of Barrow upon Soar is constrained without public investment in the necessary works. 47% of residents said that they were affected by traffic flow issues in and out of the village at peak times.
- 122 Within the village, many people have raised concerns about congestion in the High Street and North Street. This is often caused by bus stops and on-street parking on the narrow village centre streets which were not designed for modern traffic. Cotes Road is also busy as a result of 'rat-running' along Cotes Road to access Loughborough.

Rail

- 123 Barrow upon Soar railway is located on the Midland Main Line between Leicester and Loughborough. The station was demolished following its closure in 1968 but a new station was opened a little to the southeast of the original site in 1994 as part of phase one of the Ivanhoe Line. The station is served by Monday to Saturday (there is no Sunday service) by East Midlands Trains, who operate local services from Leicester to Nottingham and Lincoln via Loughborough and Newark.



Figure 13: Barrow upon Soar Railway Station

- 124 The train station suffers from the lack of car parking or drop-off facilities; it is only accessible by a large number of steps and unsuitable for people with mobility problems. The station is unmanned with an isolated platform with little in the way of shelter. There is no parking provision at the station leading to on-street parking problems. Annual rail passenger usage has increased significantly over recent years - from 45,241 in 2004/05 to 89,374 in 2013/14.
- 125 Our 2014/15 questionnaire survey shows that residents would like to see a Sunday rail service and more regular services in the evening. There are calls for better train arrival and departure information and the provision of access for people with disabilities.

Bus

- 126 The village is served by the Kinchbus 2 route linking the village to Cossington, Quorn, Leicester, Birstall, Sileby and Loughborough. This is a 30min Monday to Saturday daytime service and buses run hourly during the evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays. 27 Roberts Coaches also operates its hourly no27 service linking the village to Loughborough, Walton, Seagrave and Thurmaston Shopping Centre Monday to Saturday daytime.



Figure 14: Kinchbus 2 service

- 127 Our survey shows that people would like to see more frequent and cheaper bus services. Some would like to see the bus stops being better located and improved bus shelters and service information. There are suggestions for a bus service to Loughborough University and more direct services to Leicester.

Walking and Cycling

- 128 Barrow upon Soar is relatively compact, so many homes are within a 15 minute walk of the village centre. The village centre is criss-crossed with jitties, the old term for little pedestrian footpaths running between roads, and the Heritage Group have published a guided walk as part of a collection of local guided walks.



Figure 15: Shooting Close Lane

- 129 The public footpath crossing the Melton Road site west to east is to be retained as part of Jelson's Melton road

development. The route from Breachfield Road across to the south east extremity of the site, where the bridlepath crossing is closed will also be protected. There will be some footpath/ cycleway improvements that will include a bridge across the Fishpool Brook that will link the Melton Road development to Breachfield Road.

- 130 Local people are particularly keen to see improvements for cyclists- off-road cycleways, a cycle link to the Sustrans route 6 into Leicester, cycle parking etc. There are concerns about cycle safety on the links to Mountsorrel and Quorn.
- 131 There are good opportunities in Barrow upon Soar to make walking, cycling and public transport use more attractive as alternatives to the car. This is something that our young people also support.

- 136 Having considered market conditions, there is no evidence to suggest that a higher level of housing development should take place in Barrow upon Soar than that required by the Core Strategy. Growth is not required to help support the viability of local services and facilities- indeed, we know that the Primary School and Health Centre can't cope with more development. Furthermore the canal bridge is already at capacity at peak times and additional traffic will make this problem worse. Early consultation with local residents and businesses shows little support for housing growth.
- 137 The presumption is that our Neighbourhood Plan should not plan for further significant housing development. However, ongoing community consultation could be used to explore whether local people are prepared to support more housing if it helped deliver a new, multi-use community centre and/or homes that met specific needs e.g. older persons housing.

Meeting Local Housing Needs

- 138 We want to plan for a mix of housing to meet the needs of people living locally. While evidence is not readily available at the local level, using data from the 2011 Census we know that the Household Lifestage profile for Barrow upon Soar is similar to Charnwood district as a whole. However, unlike the Borough, Barrow upon Soar does not have a large student population. Only 23% of young people said that they were likely to look for a home of their own in the village once they were old enough.

Older Households

- 139 Provision of market housing units which cater for older households is a key supply gap which urgently needs to be addressed. While 'land hungry' bungalows are not attractive for developers, it is important that efforts are made within new developments to provide for older households.
- 140 The majority of older residents are owner-occupiers and so are most likely to require market solutions to housing problems. Based on household projections, demand from this age group is expected to increase substantially over coming years. Homes built to meet the needs of older people will not place additional pressure on school capacity.
- 141 Meeting the needs of an ageing population can include bungalows - but it can also mean retirement housing, 'extra care' housing which offers on-site support, and homes designed with older people in mind offering for example, step-free access, downstairs bathrooms, or wider halls and doorways.

Affordable Housing

- 142 Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the

market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable homes also have to remain affordable for future eligible households and should help meet the housing needs of the village.

- 143 The Strancliffe Gardens will provide about 24 affordable homes, the David Wilson Homes and Miller Homes development about 21 and the Jelson development around 90 more. On any new sites of 10 or more dwellings, the Charnwood Local Plan (Core Strategy) requires 30% to be affordable.

Employment

Economic Activity

144 The 2011 Census shows that of the 4,374 parish residents aged 16 to 74, 3,186 were economically active. Of these 59% were in full-time employment and 20% were in part-time jobs. In March 2015, the claimant count in Barrow and Sibley west ward was 0.6%.

145 A particularly high proportion of working residents were employed in education - 474 people or 16% compared with 14% in Charnwood and 10% in the East Midlands. 22% of workers were employed in professional occupations- there were 222 teaching and education professionals. Relatively few people (7%) were employed in elementary occupations such as cleaning, sales and security. In Charnwood and the East Midlands, the figures were 11% and 13% respectively.

146 Of the 3,033 working residents, 6% worked mainly from home but 75% travelled by car or van. Only 3% commuted by train even though the village has a railway station.

147 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have released Travel to Work Flows based on the 2011 Census that show where people commute to work. 210 people lived and worked in Barrow upon Soar but many workers commute, particularly to Leicester and Loughborough. 280 residents worked in north-east Loughborough. 131 residents of Sibley travelled to jobs in Barrow upon Soar.

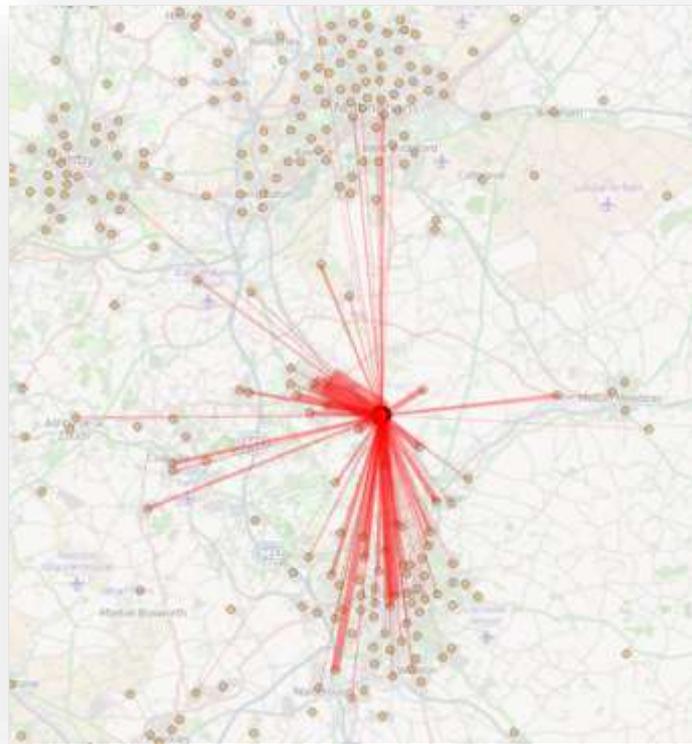


Figure 17: 2011 Census Travel to Work form Barrow upon Soar

148 Our young people's survey showed that only 14% were likely to look for a job in Barrow upon Soar when they were older. A significant proportion- 44%

said that it was unlikely that they would seek work in the village. The remainder did not know.

Business

- 149 Industry has been a major driver for Barrow upon Soar's growth. However, there has been a steady decline of traditional industries located within the village, from which most of the shoe-making, textiles, and engineering manufacturing has disappeared. Some of the factory sites have been redeveloped in the late 20th century for small housing estates. Over the period 1991 to 2010, some 0.85 hectares of employment land has been lost in this way. The main employment areas in Barrow upon Soar are now located on Sileby Road.



Figure 18: Business on Sileby Road

- 150 Mountsorrel Quarry is a granite quarry operated by Lafarge Tarmac and located between the villages of Mountsorrel and Quorn. The quarry supplies granite to construction projects across Leicestershire, as well as the wider midlands and east of England. The quarry is an important to the local economy and currently employs 149 people, 90 per cent of whom live within a 10 mile radius of the site. Approximately 60 - 70 per cent of the aggregate produced at Mountsorrel - about three million tonnes - is transferred by covered conveyor to be supplied by rail through the sidings at Barrow upon Soar.
- 151 The British Gypsum works, which came into operation in 1992, is a large plaster production plant occupying a 23 hectare site and including a new gypsum mine. There are about ? employees at the site.
- 152 Two modern industrial estates (Sileby Road and Hayhill) offer a range of premises, including good quality/modern industrial units. They sit north and south of Barrow Railhead, a rail freight depot for Lafarge. Neither the Hayhill Industrial Estate nor the British Gypsum works are entirely within the parish.
- 153 12 suites of 13-33 sqm are available at the recently refurbished 'Room to Work' at 35-37 High Street although individual suites could be combined to accommodate larger occupiers.

154 The Charnwood Core Strategy requires the Service Centres (Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston) to provide for approximately 7 ha of employment land between 2011 and 2028. None of this is already provided for although Charnwood Borough Council has suggested that more new employment land is appropriate at Mountsorrel and Anstey than Barrow upon Soar, but some employment development in the village could help replace jobs that have been lost and improve sustainability. All provision should be for a mix of offices and small industrial units, including starter and grow-on units which seem to be better suited to the needs of Barrow upon Soar.

