

# 4. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe: Issues & Opportunities

## 4.1 Introduction

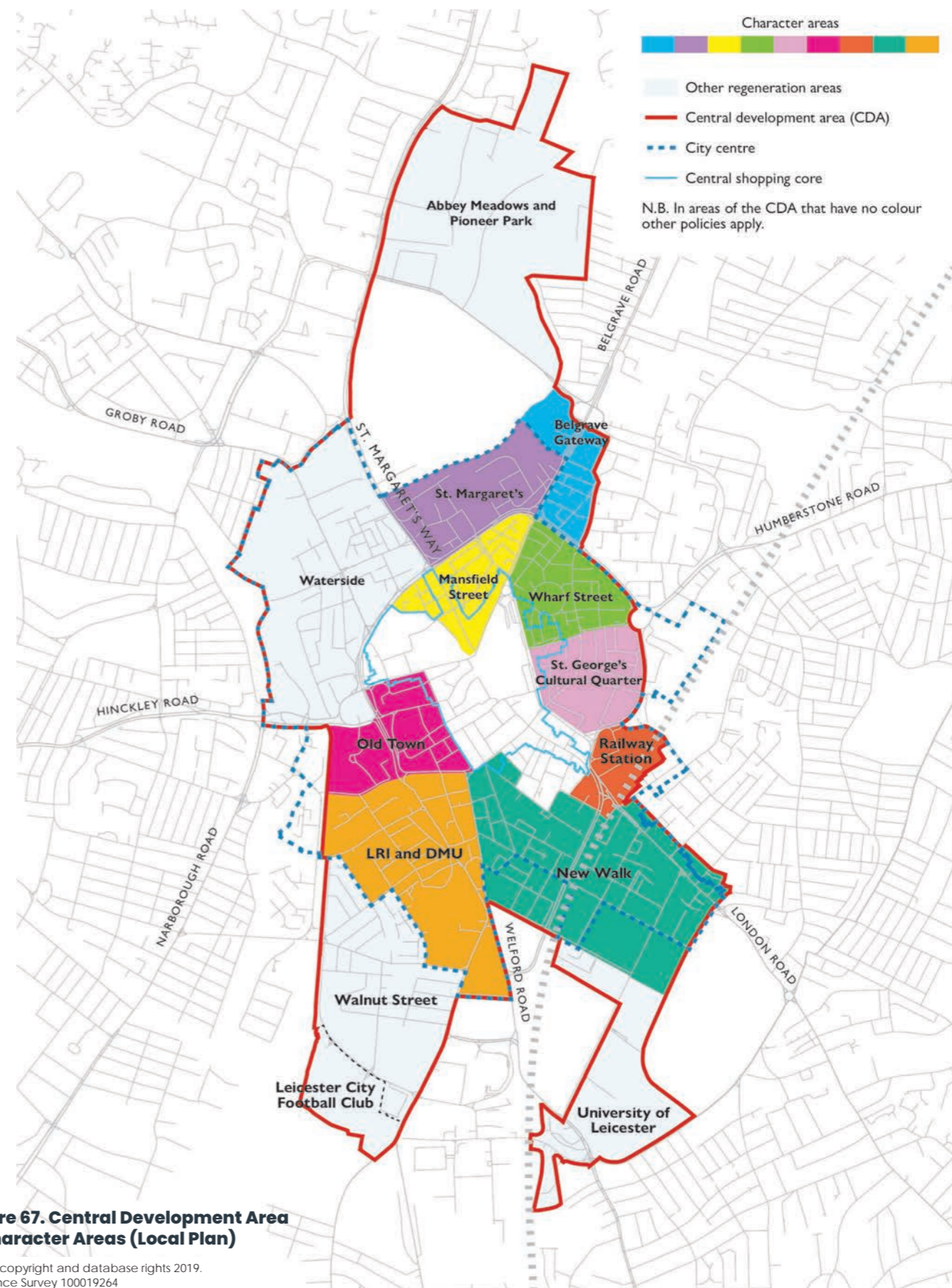
This chapter considers the issues and opportunities for the five Regeneration Areas within the CDA and the CDA Fringe.

The **Regeneration Areas** are:

1. Abbey Meadows and Pioneer Park
2. Waterside
3. Leicester City Football Club
4. University of Leicester
5. Walnut Street Area

The **CDA Fringe** refers to the transition zone between the CDA, an area characterised by a mix of uses and development opportunities, and the predominantly residential neighbourhoods that compose the rest of the city of Leicester. The fringe area is a zone 500m at the immediate surroundings of the CDA, where a mixture of city centre uses meet residential space (see figure 5 in Chapter 1).

As the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe is a much larger geographical area with a much more varied context, it includes many considerations that were beyond the scope of the nine Character Areas, such as green infrastructure, land uses and flood alleviation.



## 4.2 Topography

Figure 73 shows the topography of the Central Development Area (CDA) and the CDA Fringe. As described in Chapter 3, within the CDA, including the Regeneration Areas, there is very little change in topography with the exception of the very obvious change in the south-east side, which rises up towards Welford Road Cemetery, University of Leicester and Victoria Park.

This elevated position does provide views of the city centre that could be considered to be significant in the Leicester context. Chapter 3 describes the panoramic views from Welford Road Cemetery, the views from London Road and other elevated positions that show the distinctive backdrop of the ridge of Bradgate Park, to the west, in the distance. The historic importance and uniqueness of these views has already been previously outlined. A large proportion of the ridge, at its maximum height, is located within the CDA Fringe and the impact of tall development in this area will be more prominent and visible. A recent example of this is the prominence of the tall development at the University of Leicester Freeman's Common campus from the west along Aylestone Road and the River Soar Corridor.

To the west of the city, the ridge of Fosse Road running north/ south also provides some prominent viewpoints as the rectilinear street and block pattern creates east-west streets that frame views of the city. The east views towards the city from Hinckley Road, Shaftesbury Road and Barclay Street show how tall development in the west of the CDA and CDA Fringe can be highly visible and prominent in long views. The De Montfort University campus, Western Road Code Student Accommodation and the Summit terminate the views from these streets.

Considering the topography of wider Leicester, the flood plain of the River Soar is clearly identifiable with the land rising up to the east and the west, although the ridges to the west are outside the CDA Fringe. Unlike many cities, Leicester is not surrounded by elevated land surrounding a historic core, and therefore skyline views from elevated positions are limited, although they are still experienced in particular locations. The skyline views of the city, which are sometimes just glimpses, occur in particular along radial roads and there are limited views from public open spaces. The Council needs to undertake further work to establish their location, the historical precedents for those skyline views, and assess their importance to Leicester. They may need to be considered when proposing tall development given the buildings, spires and landmarks that can be seen in them. This further work will need to include the CDA Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe.



Figure 68. Merlin Wharf from Bosworth Street



Figure 69. The Summit from Barclay Street



Figure 70. Western Road Code Student Accommodation from Shaftesbury Road

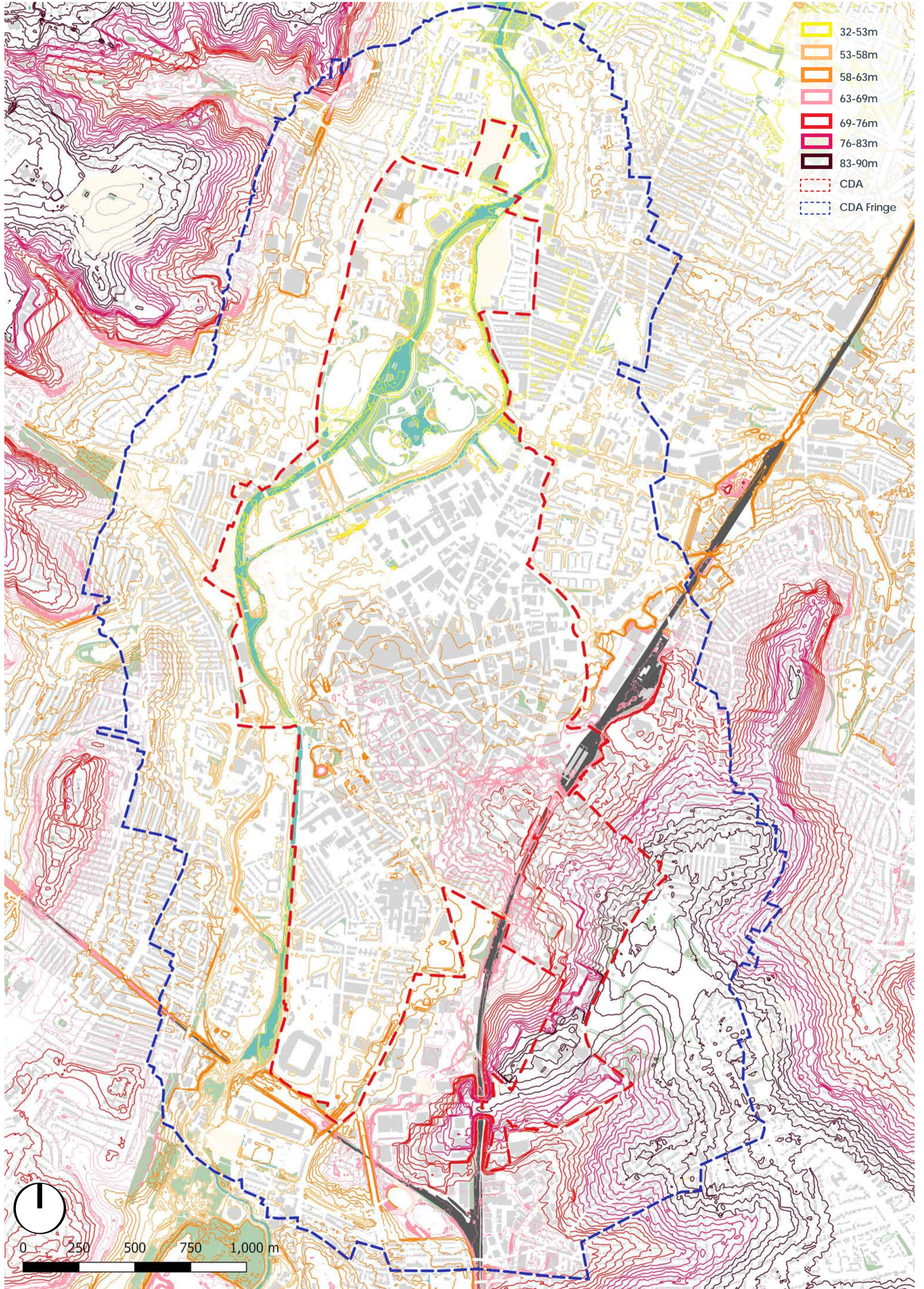


Figure 71. University of Leicester from Putney Road



Figure 72. Vijay Patel Building from Victoria Park

Figure 73. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Topography



### 4.3 Connections, Links & Transport Hubs

Figure 78 illustrates how well-served and well-connected the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe are. It shows;

- Leicester Railway Station
- St. Margaret's and Haymarket Bus Stations
- Main Bus Routes, along key radial routes into the city centre
- Existing and proposed cycle corridors, as part of Connecting Leicester which will provide off carriageway cycle infrastructure
- National Cycle Route Network
- Walking Isochrones (areas of equal travel time) from Main Transport Hubs.

Of the Regeneration Areas within the CDA it is the Waterside area that benefits from close proximity to the city centre and it is within a 10 minutes walking distance from the main bus stations and 15 minutes walking distance from the railway station. The south of Abbey Meadows is also within a 10 minutes walking distance from St. Margaret's bus station.

The Walnut Street area, LCFC area and the University of Leicester are within a 20 minutes walking distance to the railway station. There is a large area to the east of the railway station, in the CDA Fringe, that is within a 10 minutes walking distance to the railway station.

Therefore, there are some areas within the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe which are well-located, within a walking distance of the main transport hubs.

For the rest of the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe there is an extensive network of radial travel corridors, which importantly promote active travel options, including cycle corridors and priority bus routes.

Leicester has a network of major sustainable travel corridors, under continual improvement and a walkable and compact city centre. Opportunities for increased densities and promoting growth along these corridors are recognised.



Figure 74. St Margaret's Bus Station



Figure 75. Leicester Railway Station

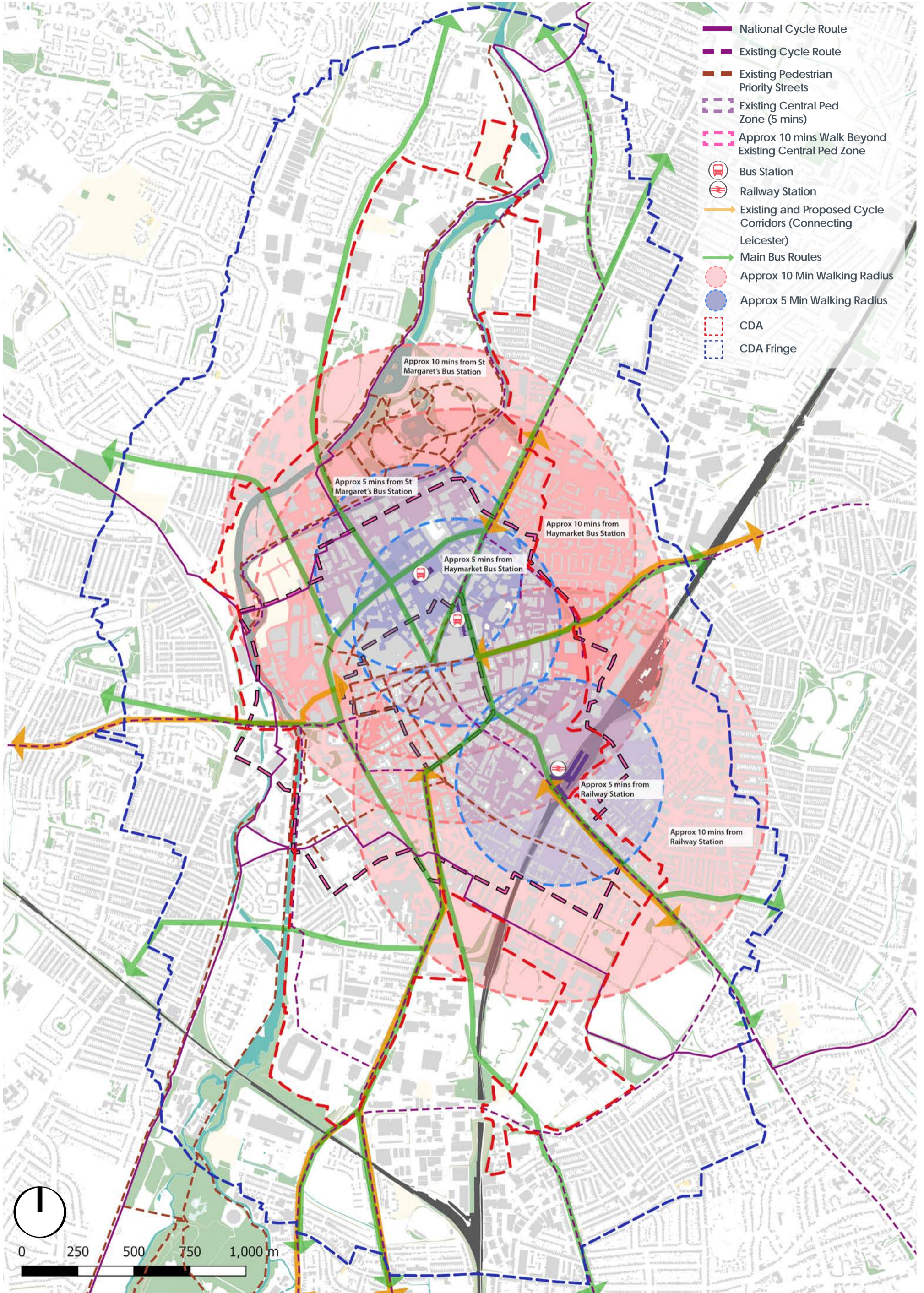


Figure 76. London Road Cycling Infrastructure



Figure 77. Bus Priority Lanes

Figure 78. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Connections, Links & Transport Hubs



## 4.4 Land Uses

Figure 83 shows the land uses for the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe.

A range of land uses have been mapped to understand patterns of land use distribution for the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe, in particular, large areas of a single land use. Additionally, there are land uses within this area that are highly unlikely to be developed or redeveloped and be appropriate for residential uses. As described in Chapter 2, most of the recent tall development in the city has been for purpose-built student accommodation and private rental sector markets and so any potential sites for tall development will need to be appropriate for that use.

Land uses that have been identified as highly unlikely to be developed/ redeveloped include;

- Education - schools and colleges
- Leisure - including large sports stadia, community sports grounds and leisure centres
- Employment areas - large areas and concentrated employment uses
- Retail Parks - for example St. George's and Freeman's Common and which also include leisure uses. Also, large individual supermarkets with large footprints.
- Office areas - large areas and concentrated office uses
- Utilities and storage
- Community Infrastructure including allotments, health facilities, libraries, places of worship, play areas and parks.

Given the scale of the study area, it is only the larger sites or areas that have these specific concentration of land uses, identified as 'constrained' and incorporated within the Constraints Plan in Chapter 5.

Major projects and initiatives of non-residential development, to be delivered on larger sites, which have secured planning approval have also been considered and been identified as constrained.



**Figure 79. Dock, Pioneer Park**



**Figure 80. Novotel, Leicester Waterside**

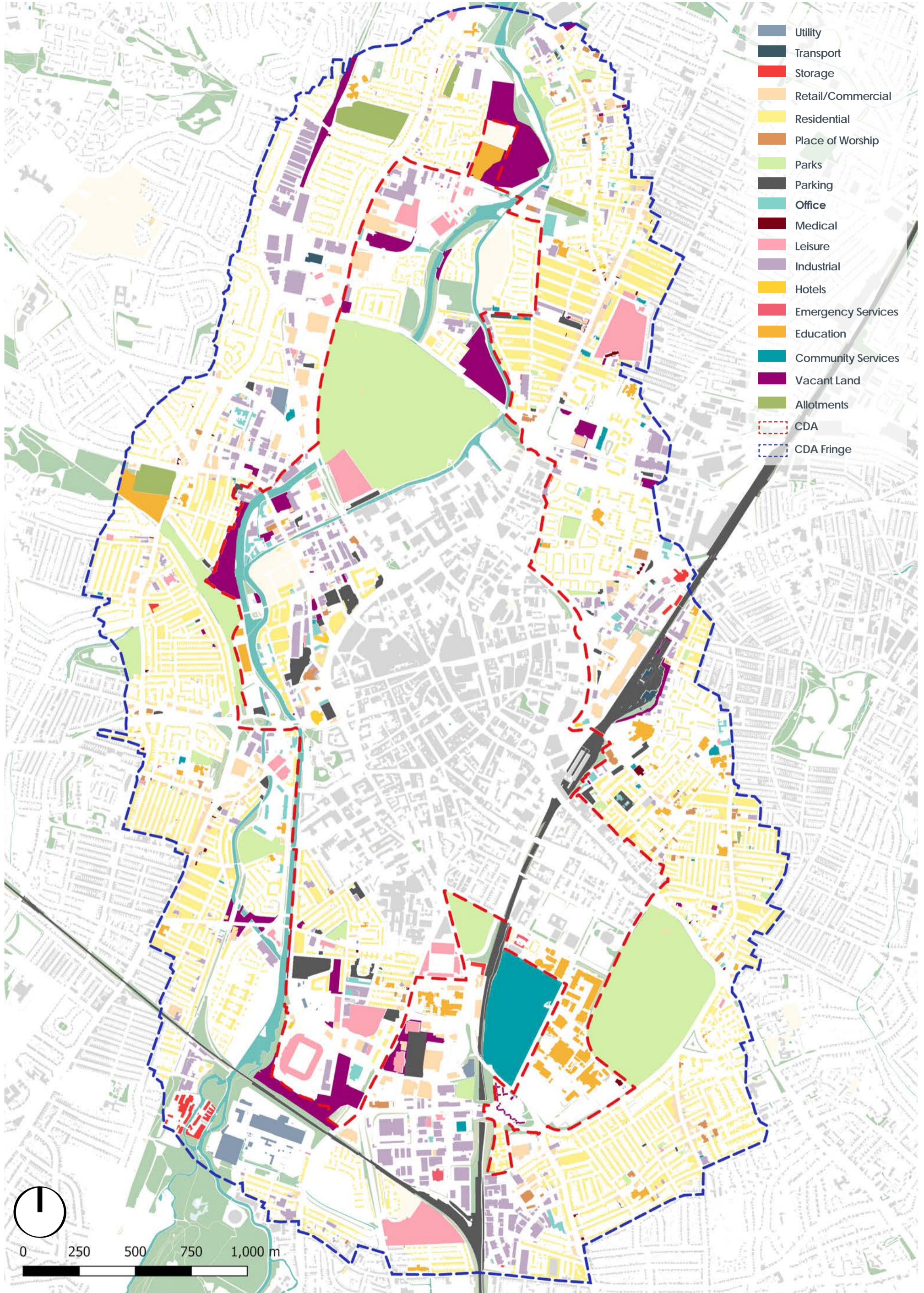


**Figure 81. Ellis Meadows**



**Figure 82. Leicester Electricity Sports Cricket Club**

Figure 83. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Land Uses



## 4.5 Building Heights

### Existing Building Heights

Figure 84 shows the heights of individual buildings. As stated in chapter 3, looking at how the various building heights are developed within the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe, different height categories can be identified. While evaluating heights in the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe, a common methodology/categorisation to the Character Areas was followed, enabling comparisons between Chapters 3 & 4 and setting the foundations for a coherent, proposed framework (Chapter 5). Figure 84 illustrates that buildings/ built structures between 0 and 9 metres (broadly equivalent to up to 3 residential storeys) reflect the predominant height of development within the Fringe, whereas within the Regeneration Areas greater variations are visible.

Buildings/ built structures between 21 and 24 metres (broadly equivalent to 8 residential storeys), although not perceived as tall, fall within a transition zone between what is and is not tall. Such buildings will need to be considered with care. Furthermore, any buildings/ built structures above 24 metres (broadly equivalent to above 8 residential storeys) are considered as 'tall' and any above 45 metres (broadly equivalent to above 15 residential storeys) as 'super tall'. These height categories reflect the draft conclusions of the Regulation 18 Tall Development in Leicester Evidence Document (February 2020).

Another category that has been identified, while evaluating the various, existing building heights, refers to the 'tall in context' buildings/ built structures. This category includes buildings/ built structures of any height that are significantly taller than those within their surroundings. For example an 18 metres building (broadly equivalent to 6 residential storeys) is not considered tall, however when placed within a context of 6 metres buildings (broadly equivalent to 2 residential storeys), it is perceived as 'tall in context'. This category is crucial, especially when considering upcoming development within the Fringe, a mainly low-rise area.

There are nineteen developments (both existing and recently constructed), which have elements of above 24 metres in the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe. Clusters are identifiable in the Waterside area, particularly along Bath Lane and Vaughan Way and in the Walnut Street area. In the CDA Fringe there is a cluster of four residential towers to the east of the railway station in Highfields. Goscote House is currently shown, however, has now been reduced to lower ground floors and will be soon demolished. There are only three developments, excluding Goscote House, within the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe that have elements that exceed 45 metres (broadly equivalent to 15 residential storeys). These are the Summit, Merlin Wharf and Gordon House. Chapter 3 outlines the tallest buildings in Leicester, including the Summit and Merlin Wharf.

A noticeable pattern, regarding the distribution of tall development above 24 metres, is that on the west side of the CDA Fringe, only one development, the Code Student accommodation to Western Road, is to the west of the River Soar. The west of the CDA Fringe is generally low in scale and only to the east of the River, towards the city centre, a step change in scale is experienced.

We have identified only one location within the CDA Fringe, where development can be described as 'tall in context' and is not above 24 metres, but is relatively taller than its surroundings. This is the Code Student accommodation to Upperton Road.

The general height of development within the Regeneration Areas is higher, particularly in the Waterside and Walnut Street areas, both of which are within the CDA. The general height of the CDA Fringe is below 9 metres (broadly 3 residential storeys) and between 9 metres and 21 metres (3 to 7 residential storeys). Figure 85 illustrates development of all use classes with heights below 9 metres and the extent of residential neighbourhoods, often characterised by homes of 2 to 3 storeys (below 9 metres), where tall development is unlikely to align with national and local planning frameworks given the predominant scale and urban grain of the context.

### Prevailing/ Ambient Building Heights

A tall development can be defined as 'a building which is significantly higher than the buildings in the surrounding area'. In any given context it is important to consider the scale and character of the surroundings where tall development is being considered. Often the height of the surrounding context is referred to as the 'ambient' or 'prevailing' building height.

Mapped building heights can provide some useful patterns. However, calculating the ambient building height provides additional understanding of height in relation to the unique context of the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe. The ambient height was calculated using the methodology outlined in Appendix 1.

Figure 86 shows the calculated, ambient height of the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe, supporting the aforementioned observations for the existing building heights (figure 86). The ambient height has been calculated to be 9.397 metres (approximately 3 residential storeys) for the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe. This calculation includes the Waterside and Walnut Street areas which are within the CDA. These are generally higher in scale, so you would expect the ambient height of the CDA Fringe only to be lower.

The ambient height of the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe is 5.45 metres lower than the overall ambient height of the Character Areas (14.85 metres - see Chapter 3). This is broadly equivalent to 2 residential storeys.



Figure 84. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Existing Building Heights

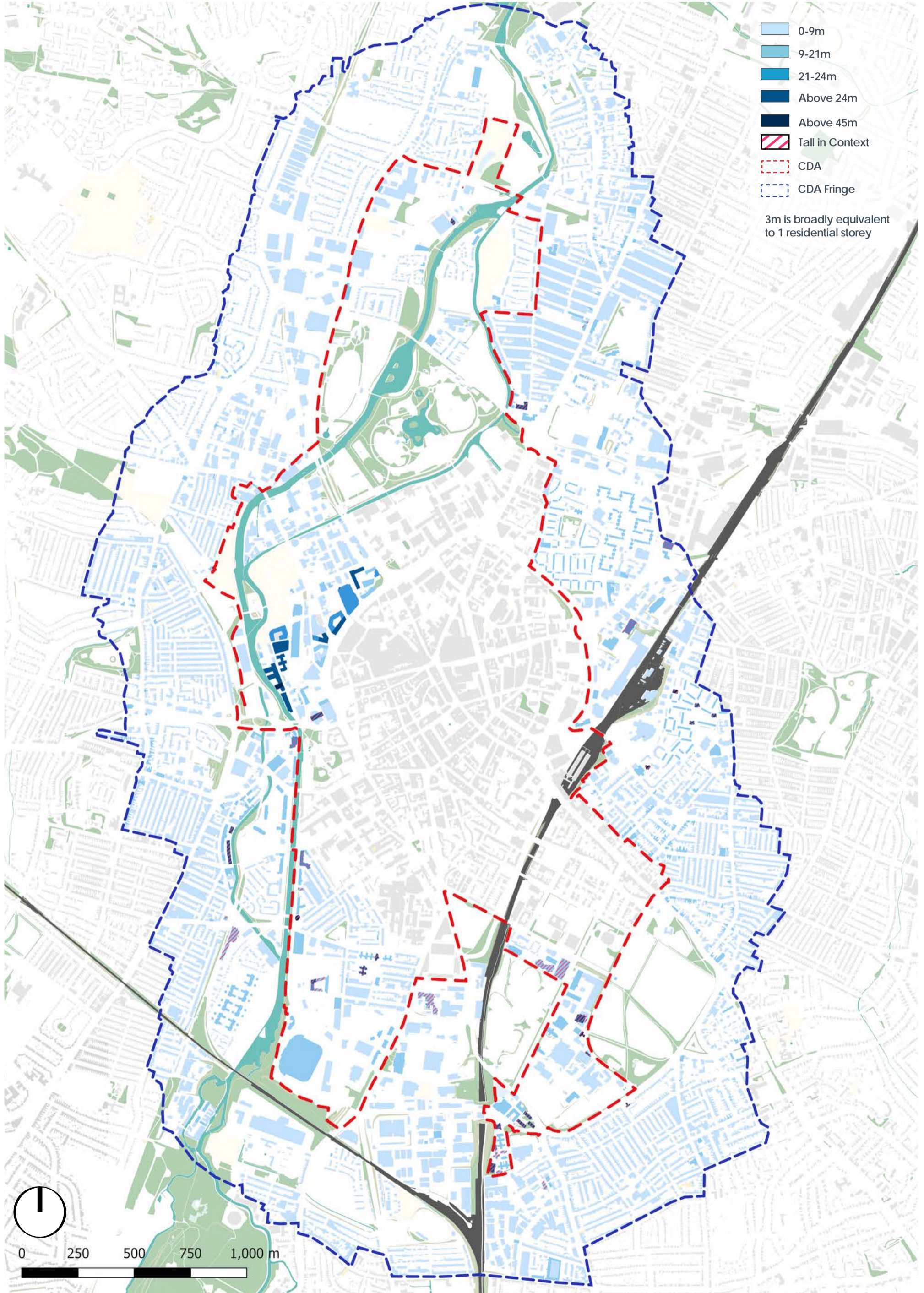


Figure 85. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe 0-9m Heights

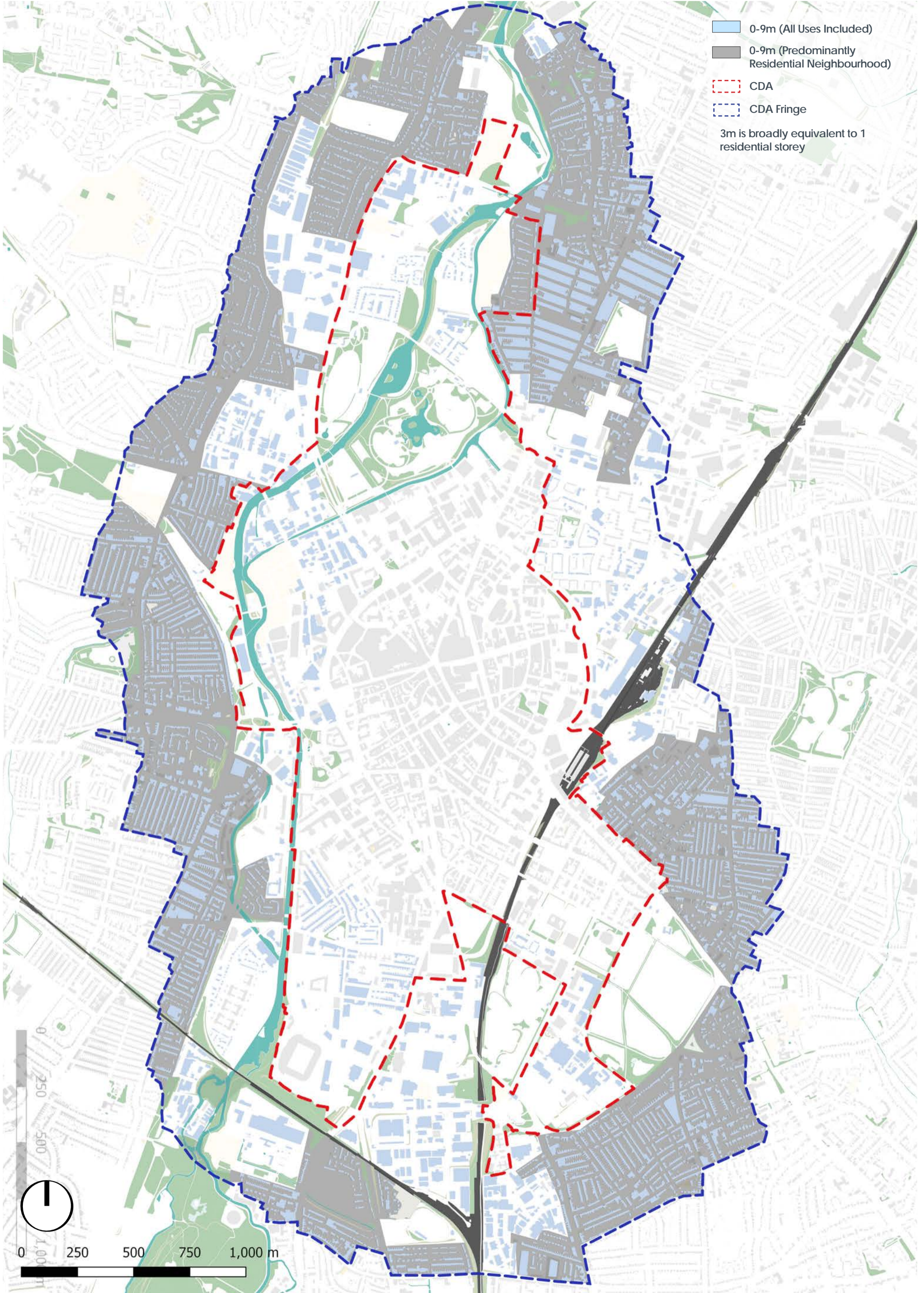
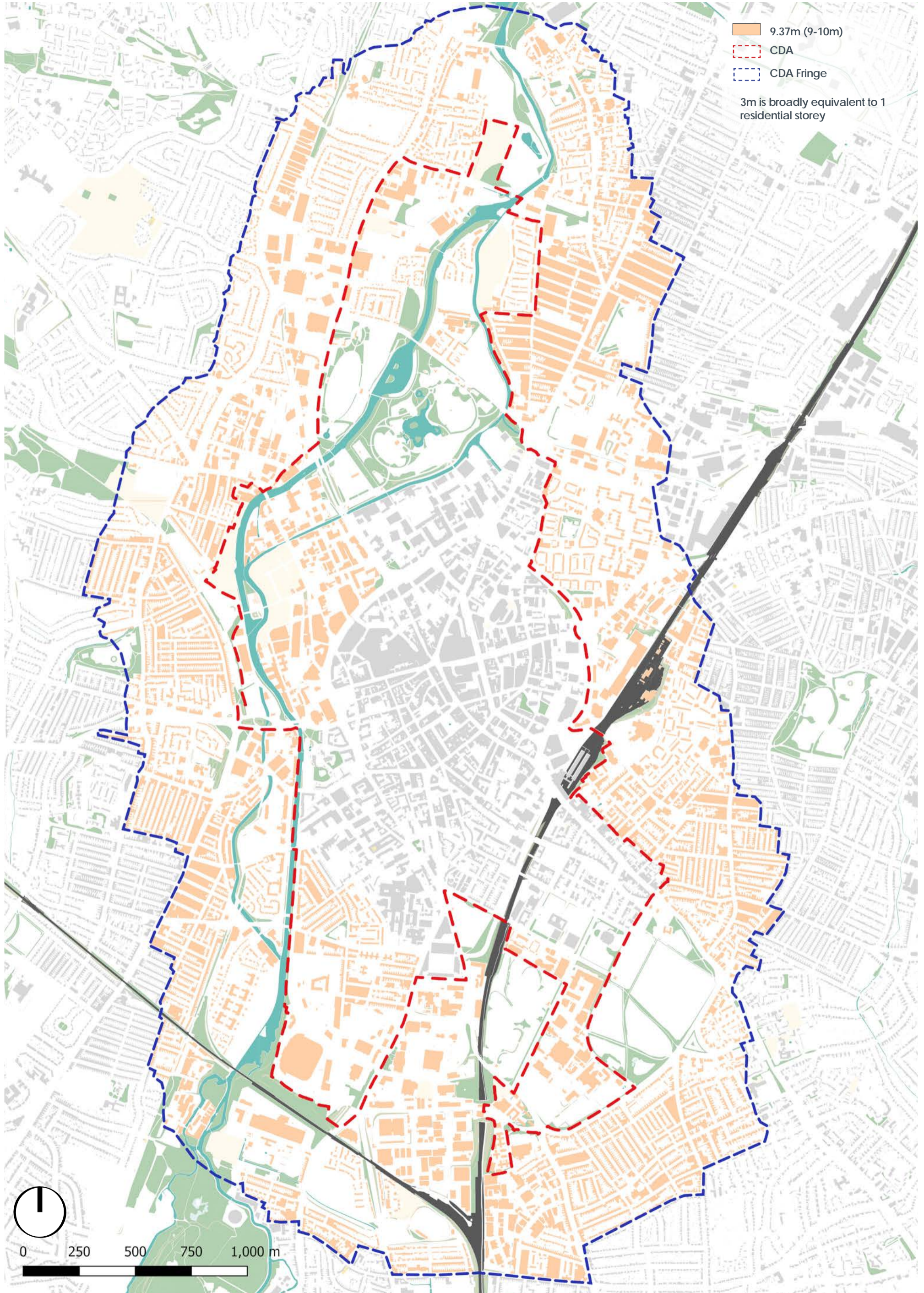


Figure 86. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Ambient Height



## 4.6 Heritage

Figure 93 shows:

- Key Buildings, Spaces and Setting
- Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens
- Grade I, II\* Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and locally listed buildings

As outlined in Chapter 3, the city centre includes the highest concentration of heritage assets in Leicester. As the historic core of the city, development has been concentrated in this location over a much longer time span than much of the rest of the current spatial extent of Leicester and the area exhibits significant historic buildings and structures from a wide range of historic periods. The Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe have areas that are located within the historic core of the city, although as expected, the number of heritage assets reduces and are more scattered further away from the historic core.

Where there are townscapes demonstrating a more contiguous heritage significance, areas are protected by conservation area designations and/or designation as a Registered Park and Garden. Individually significant heritage assets, such as Abbey Pumping Station, are generally designated as nationally listed buildings, although this designation may overlap with the aforementioned broader heritage designations.

Individual heritage assets that are of a lower order of significance are identified as Local Heritage Assets, which are sometimes referred to as locally listed buildings. These heritage assets are still to be considered as a material planning consideration, but they do not overlap with conservation areas or Registered Parks and Gardens.

There are four conservation areas located within the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe; including Belgrave Hall, Evington Footpath, Loughborough Road and South Highfields. A further four conservation areas are partly within the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe or have views into the area that effects its setting such as Ashleigh Road and St. Paul's.

Nationally listed buildings and Local Heritage Assets are located within the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe, with a fairly even distribution. Of the six Registered Parks and Gardens in Leicester, Abbey Park, Victoria Park, Belgrave Park and Garden and Welford Road Cemetery are in the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe.

Additional information on the special qualities of the conservation areas and listed buildings are provided in dedicated guides. These include individual conservation area character appraisals and dedicated guides to both locally and nationally listed buildings. Policy in the emerging Local Plan and through the National Planning Policy Framework (2010), National Planning Practice Guidance (2019) and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 detail that the significance of heritage assets should be properly considered in the assessment of development proposals that may impact on them or their setting. Due to their scale, tall development may harm the setting of heritage assets and undermine their significance if the design and sitting is not properly considered.

Leicester has a number of 'set pieces' of heritage significance where both buildings and spaces of significance combine, often framing a view or enclosing a space. In the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe these include North Bridge and the cluster of industrial heritage assets that enclose the view looking south towards the city centre and Belgrave Hall from the formal garden. The 'set pieces' are both located within and outside conservation areas, but their importance is recognised in the plan below.



Figure 87. University of Leicester



Figure 88. Belgrave Hall



Figure 89. South Highfields Conservation Area



Figure 90. Ashfield Road Conservation Area

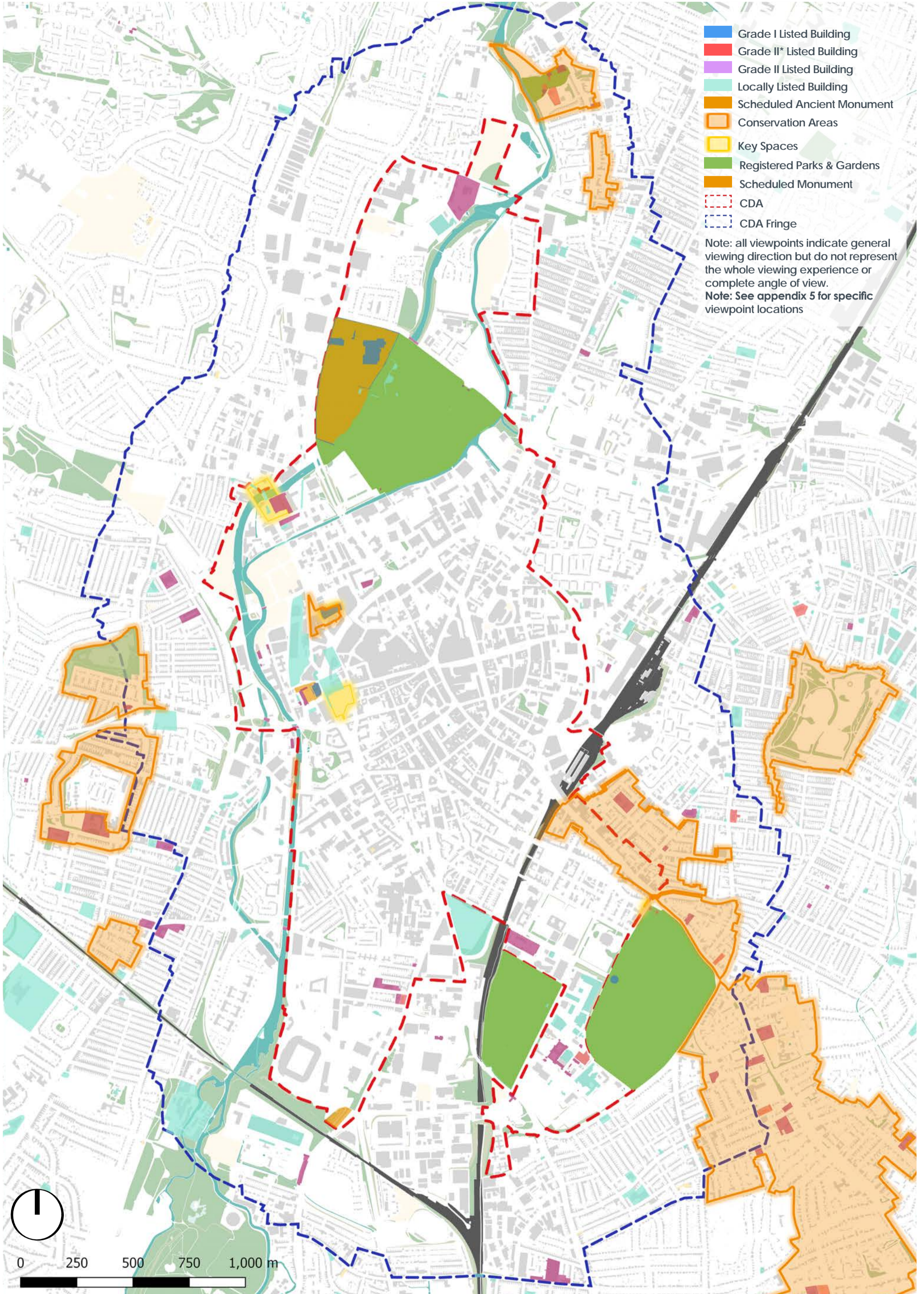


Figure 91. Abbey Pumping Station



Figure 92. North Bridge Cluster

Figure 93. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Heritage Constraints



## 4.7 Views

The Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe are part of an expanded study area for this evidence document and so the views assessed have not been consulted on previously.

As with the Chapter 3, Appendix 5 outlines a further 94 views which range in scale from city-wide significant views to local townscape views, within the urban fabric, of local landmarks and buildings. As stated previously, given the potential prominence and impact of tall development on the townscape and the identity of Leicester, this is a major consideration when evaluating tall development.

In assessing the views for the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe, the same methodology has been used as in Chapter 3 and criteria have been identified, relevant to Leicester, but aligned with national guidance. They focus both on the importance of the view and the type of the view. One view can meet a number of criteria for both importance and type.

### A. Criteria for assessing the IMPORTANCE of the view

1. Historical importance
2. Cultural importance
3. Maintaining 'sense of place' / legibility'
4. Image of Leicester
5. Skyline and panoramas

The views of the Cathedral have not been included in the views assessment for this area.

### B. Criteria for assessing the TYPE of views

1. Specific views from special places that provide historic viewpoints of city landmarks and panoramas. As this area includes the River Soar, and the Old Soar views of the river corridor, and in particular from important bridges, have been included.
2. Linear long, mid and short range views with landmarks as focal points (ie terminating the views) and prominent in the view
3. Sequential, dynamic, views of city landmarks from approach routes.
4. Important views within the urban fabric – allowing the appreciation of key buildings and key spaces.
5. Townscape panoramas

Figures 94 to 96 show three types of view which have been categorised and assessed;

#### (1) Views & Vistas of City-Wide Significance

Generally meet a large number of criteria and are significant to the history, identity and place of Leicester (Labelled CW VP 1, CW VP 2 etc.).

For some of these views a number of viewpoints are selected to capture sequential, or dynamic, views, for example the changing views of the listed Gas Works from Aylestone Road, and the range of views from Registered Parks and Gardens such as Abbey Park.

#### (2) Conservation Area Views

These views are localised to Conservation Areas and meet some of the assessment criteria. They are taken from Conservation Area Appraisals, where identified, and have been recently updated by the Council's Building Conservation Team. There may be some repetition with views and vistas of city-wide significance, for example to Belgrave Hall (Labelled CA BH VP 1, 2 etc.; CA EVP VP 1, 2, 3 etc.).

#### (3) Local Townscape Views

These views have been identified, following a thorough assessment of the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe, as significant to the urban fabric and contributing to the distinctiveness of the areas in which they are located. These views are considered to meet the assessment criteria. (Labelled FrChA VP 1, FrChA VP 2 etc.)

There are also views identified which are to be considered for all new development, not just proposals for tall development, and in particular to areas which are likely to undergo considerable change requiring new landmarks and connections to create legible and well connected places.

To establish the extent of the area defined as 'Area Constrained by Heritage' in Chapter 5 Policy Position it is mainly the views and vistas of city-wide significance that have been used. The Conservation Area views are mostly captured within the Conservation Areas and their buffer zones. There are also views where their viewpoints are within the Character Areas yet impact on the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe. These have been included.

Views are captured in this document at a moment in time. As development takes place or buildings are removed views can be opened up and offer a view that could be considered to be of townscape and heritage value. Obviously, the criteria for considering the importance of views tends to be weighted towards historical importance and sense of place established over time. However, a watching brief needs to be placed on these and consideration given to them when developments are proposed. The Council will look to identify these views.

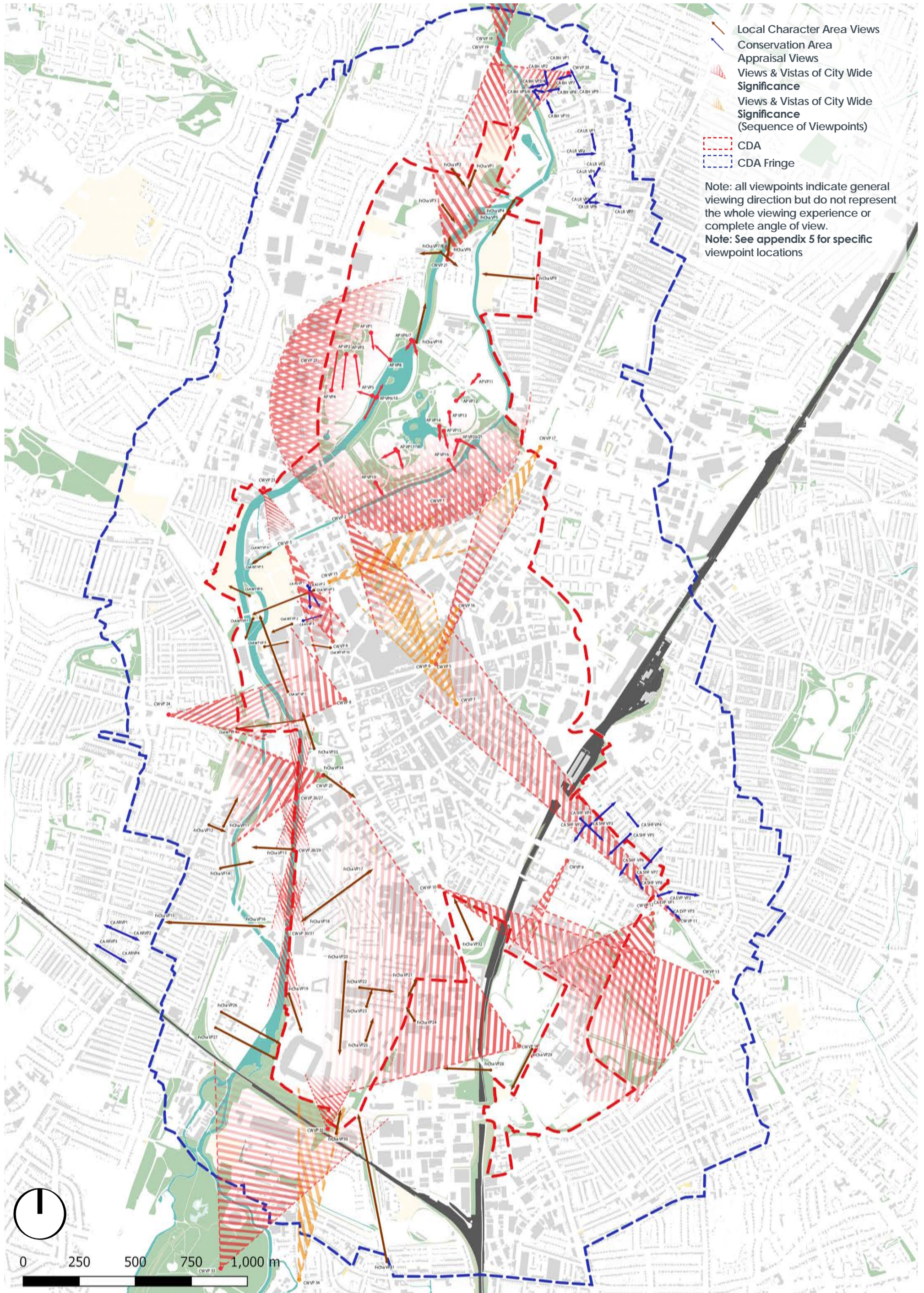
### Designated Heritage Assets

The visual integrity and setting of designated heritage assets will need to be robustly assessed, including the use of agreed verified views, seasonal changes and shadows. Longer views and any additional views will be considered on a case by case basis.

### Skyline Views

As stated previously the Council needs to undertake further work on skyline views and gain a more comprehensive understanding of where the Leicester skyline can be viewed from and the importance of those locations.

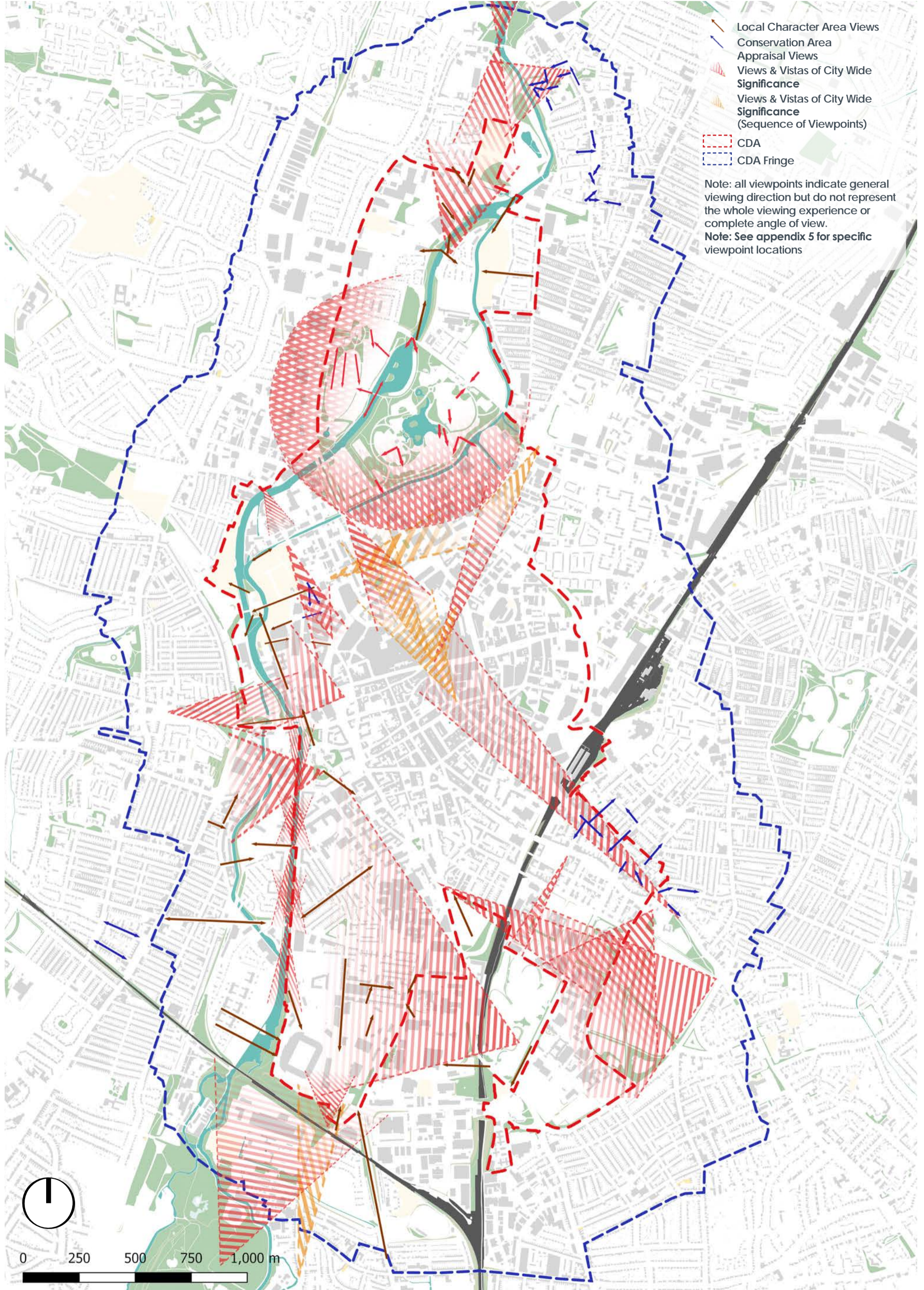
**Figure 94. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Views Assessment (with Viewpoint Locations & Names)**



Local Character Area Views  
 Conservation Area Appraisal Views  
 Views & Vistas of City Wide Significance  
 Views & Vistas of City Wide Significance (Sequence of Viewpoints)  
 CDA  
 CDA Fringe

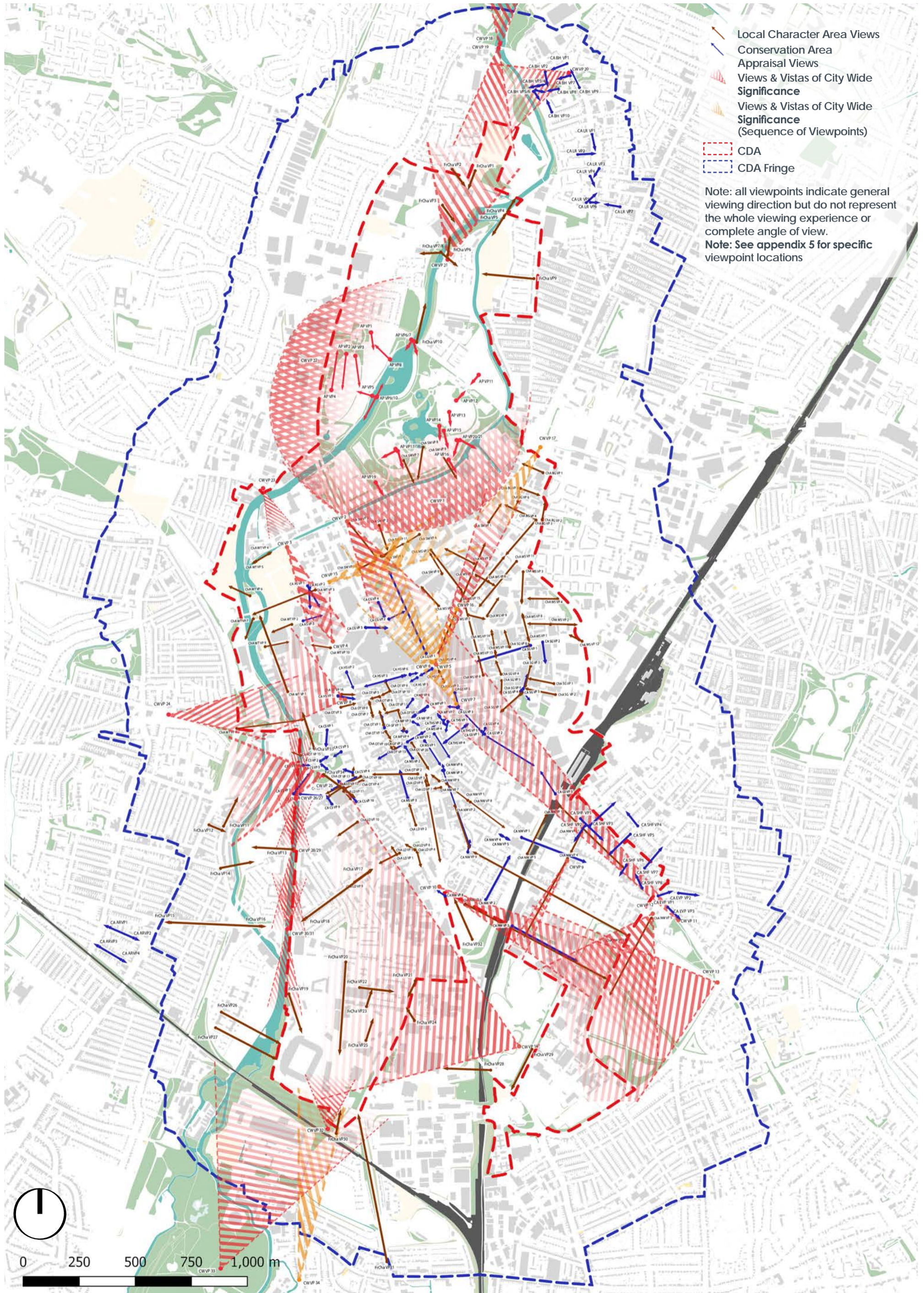
Note: all viewpoints indicate general viewing direction but do not represent the whole viewing experience or complete angle of view.  
 Note: See appendix 5 for specific viewpoint locations

Figure 95. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Views Assessment (with Viewpoint Locations)





**Figure 96. Character Areas, Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Views Assessment (with Viewpoint Locations & Names)**



## 4.8 Green Infrastructure

Figure 101 shows locations and sites, which are critical to the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and Network and the delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Many of the important and bio-diverse areas in the city have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) to give them additional protection and enhancement opportunities. However, these areas cover a very small percentage of the overall city and connecting them to other areas of open space through a Green Infrastructure Network is fundamental to assisting wildlife and to disperse and colonise a range of sites across the city and beyond. Within the Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe this network is formed by strategic blue/green corridors made up of water and terrestrial habitats, such as the River Soar and Grand Union Canal and large open spaces, such as Welford Road Cemetery. These are supported by smaller networks of space along brooks, main roads, and smaller parks and gardens.

The locations mapped include;

- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Green Wedge
- Open Spaces over 2 hectares
- Green Infrastructure Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Biodiversity Enhancement Sites



Figure 97. Abbey Park



Figure 98. Raw Dykes Local Wildlife Site

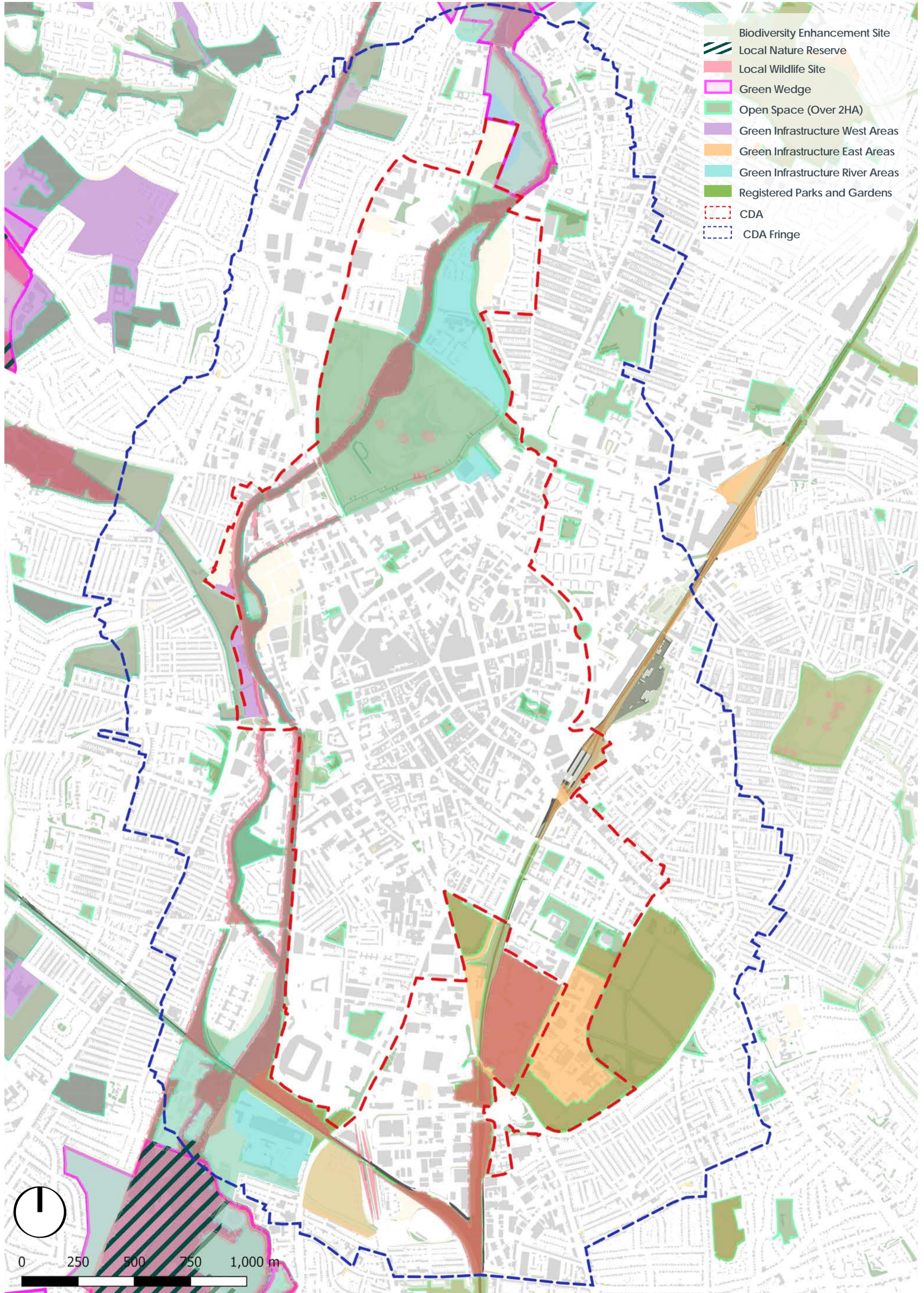


Figure 99. Ellis Meadows



Figure 100. Aylestone Meadows

Figure 101. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Green Infrastructure



## 4.9 Draft Local Plan Allocations

As discussed in Chapter 2, recent tall developments in the city are mainly for residential use, including purpose-built student accommodation. Furthermore, the 'model/ pattern' for office accommodation has moved away from the tall buildings of the past to mid-rise buildings with larger floorplates.

Figure 102 shows the proposed Local Development Framework Allocations for the draft Local Plan. Specifically;

- The Space Park
- Pioneer Park
- LDF Primary Employment
- LDF Primary Office
- LDF Office Allocations

In these areas, it is highly unlikely that residential development will be supported by the Council in order that the office and employment requirements of the city are met. Furthermore, even though the use classes may be appropriate, it is highly unlikely that tall development in the form of offices will come forward given the current market delivery model in the city.

## 4.10 Flooding & Flood Management

Figure 103 shows the Flood Alleviation projects undertaken by the Council. The projects were delivered as part of the Local Growth Funded River Soar/Grand Union Canal Partnership Programme to reduce flood risk, improve access and enhance biodiversity along Leicester's waterways. They were also delivered to enable future development on other nearby sites and therefore, these locations should be considered undevelopable and constrained.

The projects are;

- Loughborough Road Culvert
- Little Mead
- Ellis Meadows
- Swans Nest Wetland
- Cardinal Meadows
- Aylestone Meadows

Some of these locations may overlap with protected Green Infrastructure.

## 4.11 Managing Growth

It is important to consider the growth potential for residential development in the five Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe, where new development will be focussed.

The Regeneration Areas are;

1. Abbey Meadows and Pioneer Park
2. Waterside
3. Leicester City Football Club
4. University of Leicester
5. Walnut Street Area

Figure 104 shows;

- soft sites - identified as larger sites under few land ownerships which may be suitable for residential or mixed use development
- sites with planning approved for residential development
- sites of current planning applications (as of April 2021)

For the CDA Regeneration Areas, sites have been taken from the Leicester Central Development Area Residential Capacity Study (Planit.ie July 2022). It is an independent report to provide an evidence base for the draft Local Plan to assess the residential capacity of the CDA as a whole. As is evident in the plan below, clusters of potential development sites and approved planning applications can be found in these five Regeneration Areas emphasising their status. Further information can be found within the Leicester Central Development Area Residential Capacity Study (Planit.ie July 2022).

Within the CDA Fringe there are very few larger developments sites. Most are located to the west edge of the CDA, with a noticeable cluster of potential development sites near West Bridge.

Figure 102. Character Areas, Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Draft Local Plan Employment Allocations

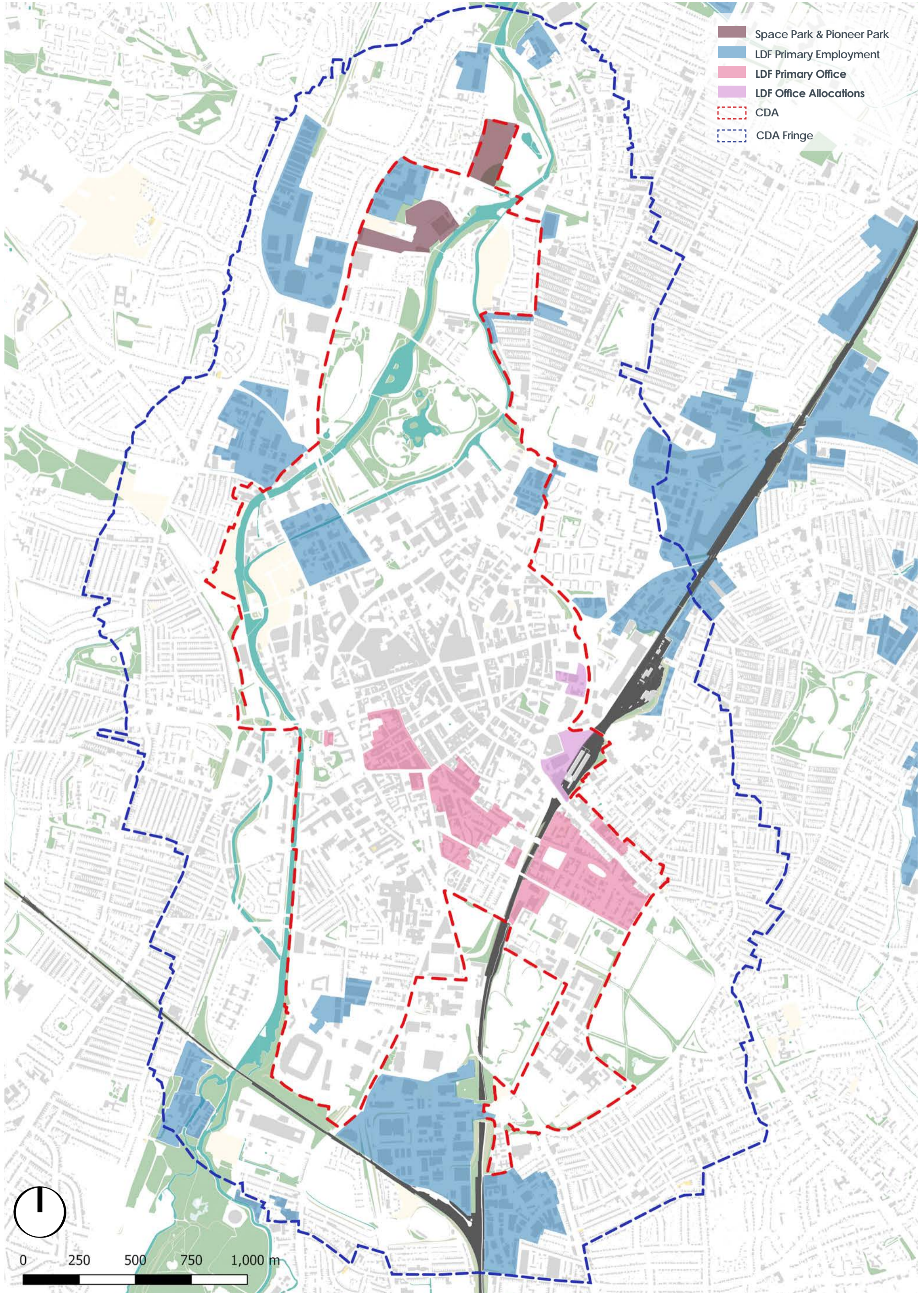


Figure 103. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Flood Alleviation Projects

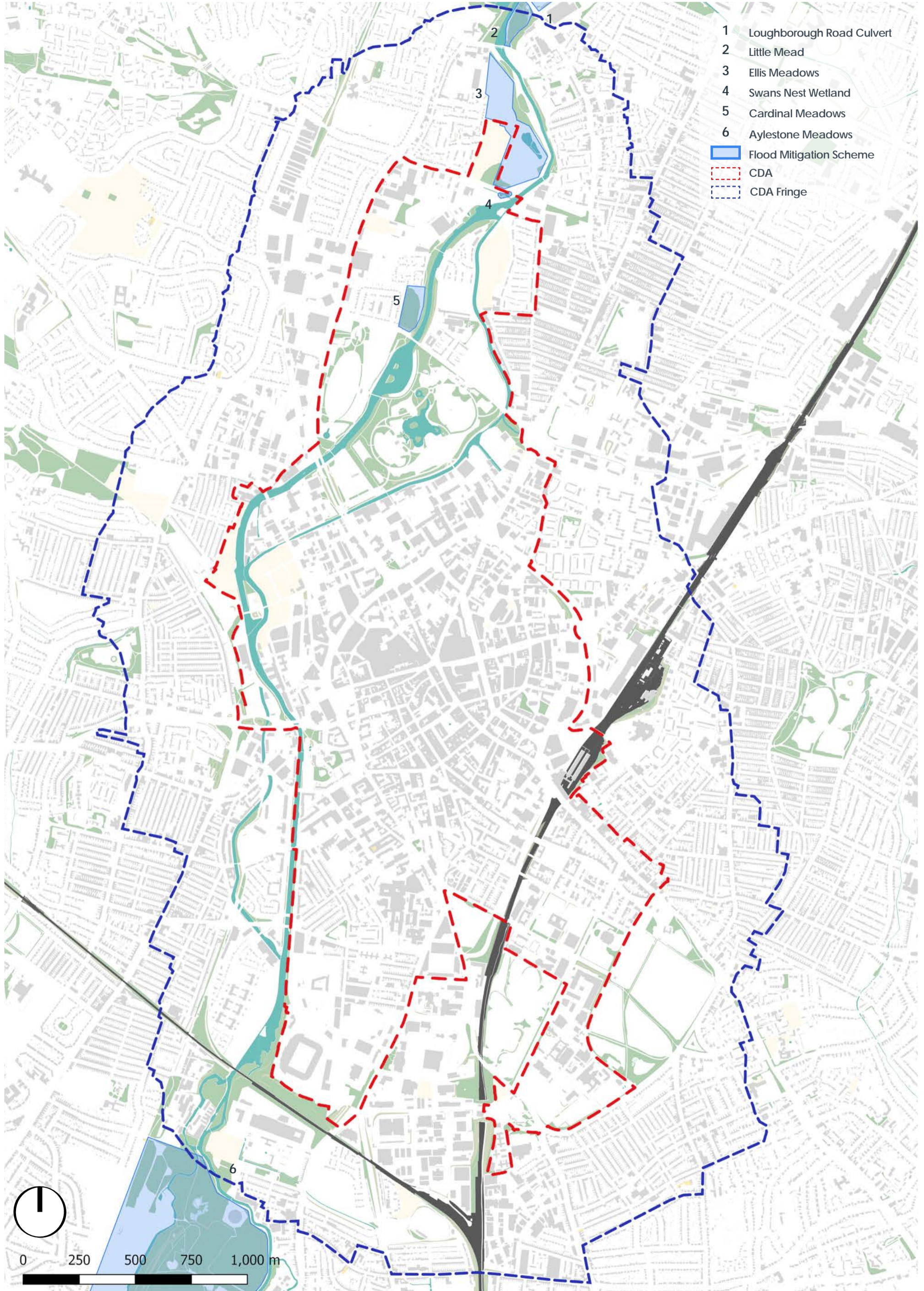
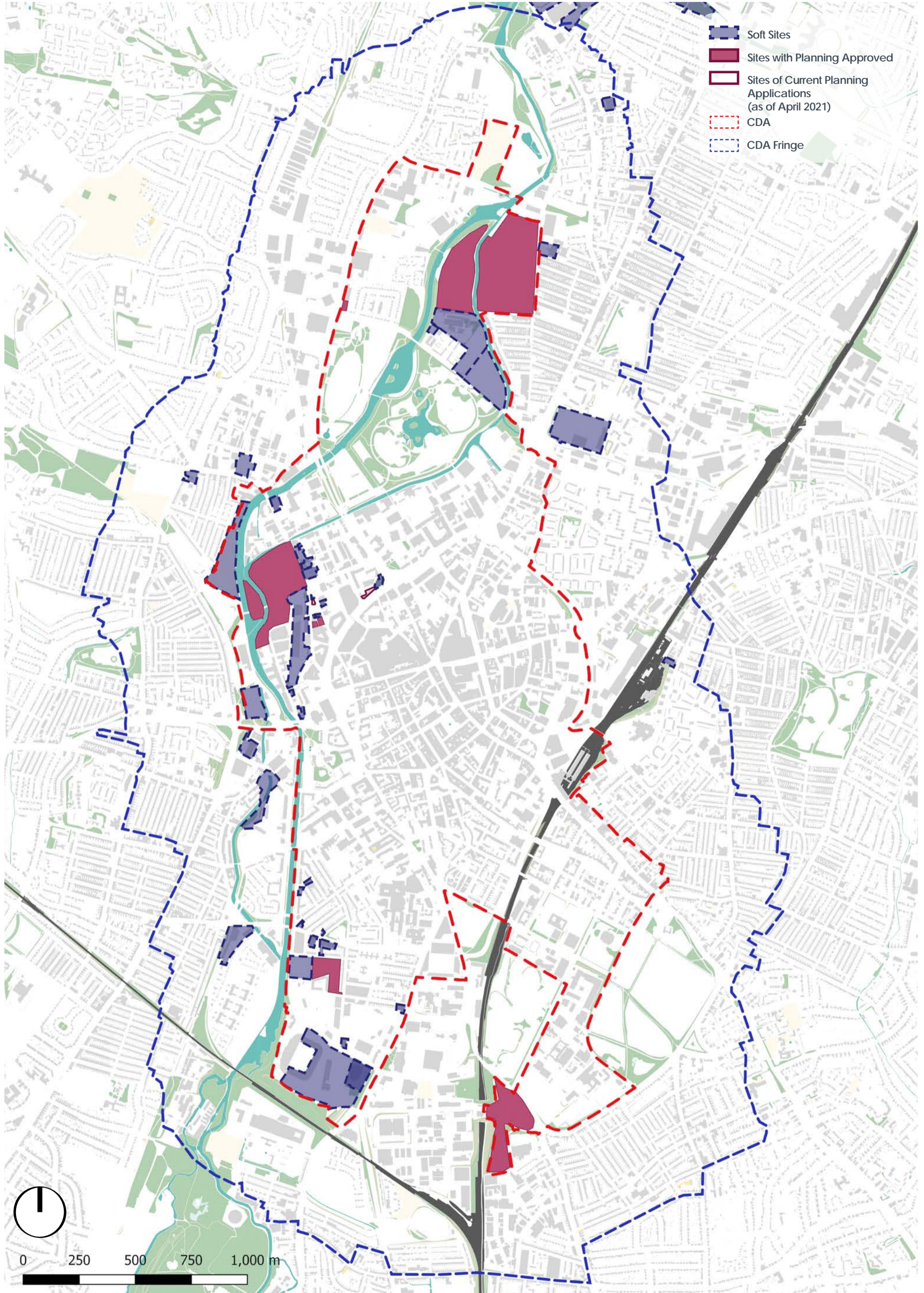


Figure 104. Regeneration Areas & CDA Fringe Growth & Development Potential



# 5. Policy Position

## 5.1 Defining 'Tall' For Leicester

The issues and opportunities for the Character Areas, Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe have been considered in Chapters 3 and 4. In setting the policy context for defining 'tall' in the Leicester context we should look to the existing situation. There is no formal definition of a tall building and it needs to be Leicester specific.

In the draft conclusions of the **Regulation 18 Tall Development in Leicester Evidence Document (February 2020)**, 'tall' was defined as;

- a development of any height which is substantially taller than the prevailing height of the surrounding area. This can be defined as 3 storeys (9 metres) taller; and
- a development where any element of built form is 8 storeys (24 metres) and above.

In the **Tall Building SPD (adopted 2007)** a tall building is defined as;

- a building over 20 metres in height; and /or
- a building of any height which is substantially higher than the predominant height of the buildings in the surrounding area; and /or
- a building, which would make a significant impact on the skyline of the city.

In reviewing the policy position it was not appropriate to simply repeat the definition of the past and this evidence document now includes a larger study area than for the Regulation 18 document above. Therefore, the Council have considered the following;

- the distribution of existing heights,
- the ambient, prevailing heights;
- street sections and streetscape
- heights of existing and tall development

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 outline these for the whole study area; Character Areas, Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe.

For the **Character Areas** the **ambient height** was calculated at **14.85 metres** (broadly equivalent to 5 residential storeys).

As would be expected, the **Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe** has a lower **ambient height** calculated to be **9.397 metres** (broadly equivalent to 3 residential storeys). A difference of 5.45 metres.

Leicester is generally of low to mid-rise scale and there is a clear difference in ambient heights, not only across the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe and the CDA but also potentially across the city. Therefore, to establish a clear and coherent policy a definition for tall needs to be applicable across the city of Leicester.

Revisiting, in policy terms, the definition of tall development, it can be 'a building which is significantly higher than the buildings in the surrounding area' is a critical aspect.

Given the ambient height of the Character Areas within the CDA are 14.85 metres, the previous definition (Tall Building SPD) of 20 metres (broadly equivalent to 7 residential storeys) as 'tall' would not be considered 'substantially higher' than the ambient height. However it is clear from the existing heights plans in Chapters 3 and 4 that there are large areas in the CDA and CDA Fringe that have building heights below 9 metres and are not identified for redevelopment, and any development of 18 metres and above (broadly equivalent to 6 residential storeys) would be double the ambient height to those immediate areas. This development would be considered substantially higher than the surrounding area. Additionally, in the CDA Fringe developments of 9 metres (3 residential storeys) higher/ above the ambient height (9.397m) will be considered substantially higher and 'tall' for Leicester.

Therefore, it is the Council's view that a definition for tall development, which allows a development to be considered tall in relation to its surroundings, but with no defined height threshold, is still required.

If this reasoning was applied across the Character Areas, development of 9 metres (3 residential storeys) above the ambient height would be 23.85 metres (nearly 8 residential storeys). Again, recognising that some locations in the Character Areas, and particularly sensitive locations, the ambient height is less than 14.85 metres.

In understanding this threshold, the street sections (Figures 46 to 50) in Chapter 3 illustrates the impact and prominence of development at above 24 metres on the streetscape and street enclosure compared to the surrounding context. It is the Council's view that if proposals were considered today, at the same scale, they would require thorough assessment in accordance with identified criteria to establish impact, in particular, on the townscape.

Addressing consultation from the Regulation 18 Tall Development in Leicester Evidence Document (February 2020), certainty was required as to when any future Tall Development SPD would apply. It was also clear that storey heights can vary across proposals with a range of heights and so a height expressed in metres is now proposed. Clarification has also been provided that development **above 24 metres** is now defined.

Therefore, a transition zone is recognised, for the Character Areas, where heights fall between what is and is not tall. This zone is between 21.1 and 24 meters and although this is not considered as tall, such buildings will need to be considered with care.

In considering both existing tall development and recently approved schemes it is very clear that there are only a handful of tall developments that exceed 45 metres (broadly equivalent to 15 residential storeys) in the city. If the Cathedral was to be excluded, only five existing tall developments and part of one recently approved scheme exceed this height - they are rare in the Leicester context. Further, the next five existing developments, if we consider their tallest elements, are consistently around 45 metres. It is the Council's view that a further policy definition of 'supertall' should be applied to development which exceed 45 metres.

Given that there are very few tall buildings in Leicester at that height, and the impact on townscape would be significant, it is the Council's view that opportunities for 'super tall' are likely to be very limited and only allowed in exceptional circumstances. How this will impact on the criteria for evaluation will need to be considered in the future Tall Development SPD.

In conclusion, what is defined as 'tall' is dependent on the context and general ambient, prevailing height of the context and surrounding area. However, in recognising the general prevailing heights of the Character Areas (14.85 metres) and the Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe (9.397 metres) 'tall' for Leicester is defined as;

- **a development of any height which is substantially taller than the prevailing height of the surrounding area. This can be identified as 9 metres (broadly equivalent to 3 residential storeys) taller; and**
- **a development where any element of built form is above 24 metres (broadly equivalent to 8 residential storeys)**

Additionally,

- **a development of above 45m is defined as 'super tall' in the Leicester context.**



## 5.2 The Constraints Merged

This section brings together the issues and constraints outlined in Chapter 3 for the Character Areas and Chapter 4 for the CDA Regeneration Areas and the CDA Fringe.

For the Character Areas, Figure 107 combines all the heritage constraints identified in Chapter 3. The merging of the heritage constraints, in Figure 108, identifies an area within the CDA Character Areas which is viewed to be 'constrained'. It is considered that tall development (of above 24 metres) in this area is most likely have a harmful effect on the historic environment within the Character Areas.

This highlighted area also includes a few small areas, which are within the city centre retail area (and outside the heritage constraints area) and where 'no guidance is required' as these areas are unlikely to come forward for development, for example, the main retail area of the Highcross Shopping Centre.

For the CDA Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe, Figure 109 combines all the constraints identified in Chapter 4. The merging of the constraints in Figure 110, identifies an area within the CDA Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe which is viewed to be 'constrained'. In addition, it is considered that tall development (of above 24 metres) in this area is most likely have a harmful effect on the historic environment within this area. However, as explained in Chapter 4, the constraints for the CDA Regeneration Areas and CDA Fringe are much wider in scope and the constraints also include locations where;

- any form of built development is highly unlikely;
- where tall development of above 24 metres would be substantially higher than the prevailing height;
- any residential development is also highly unlikely to be supported, noting that the majority of recent 'tall' development in the city is residential.



Figure 107. Character Area Heritage Constraints

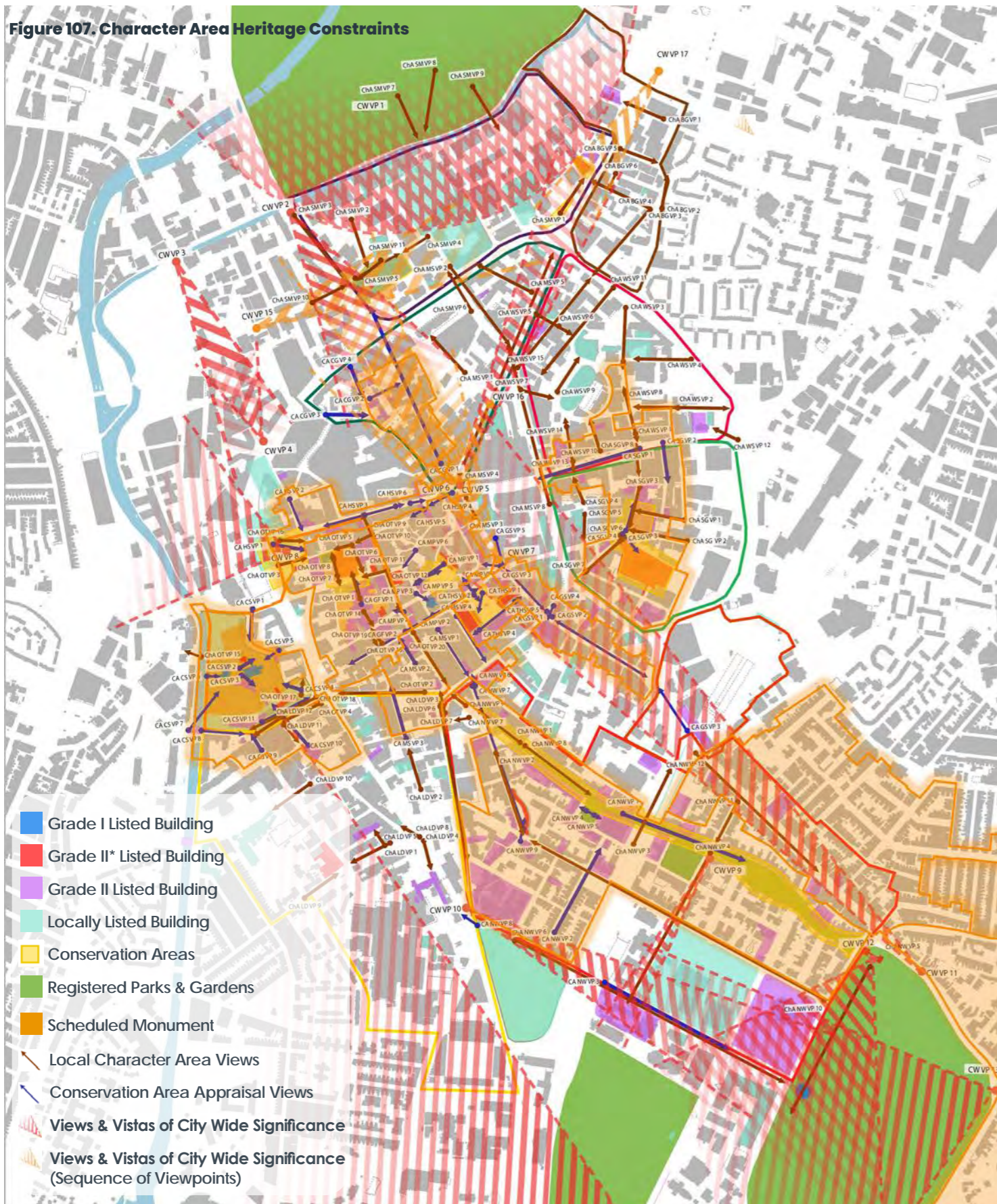


Figure 108. Character Area Merged Heritage Constraints

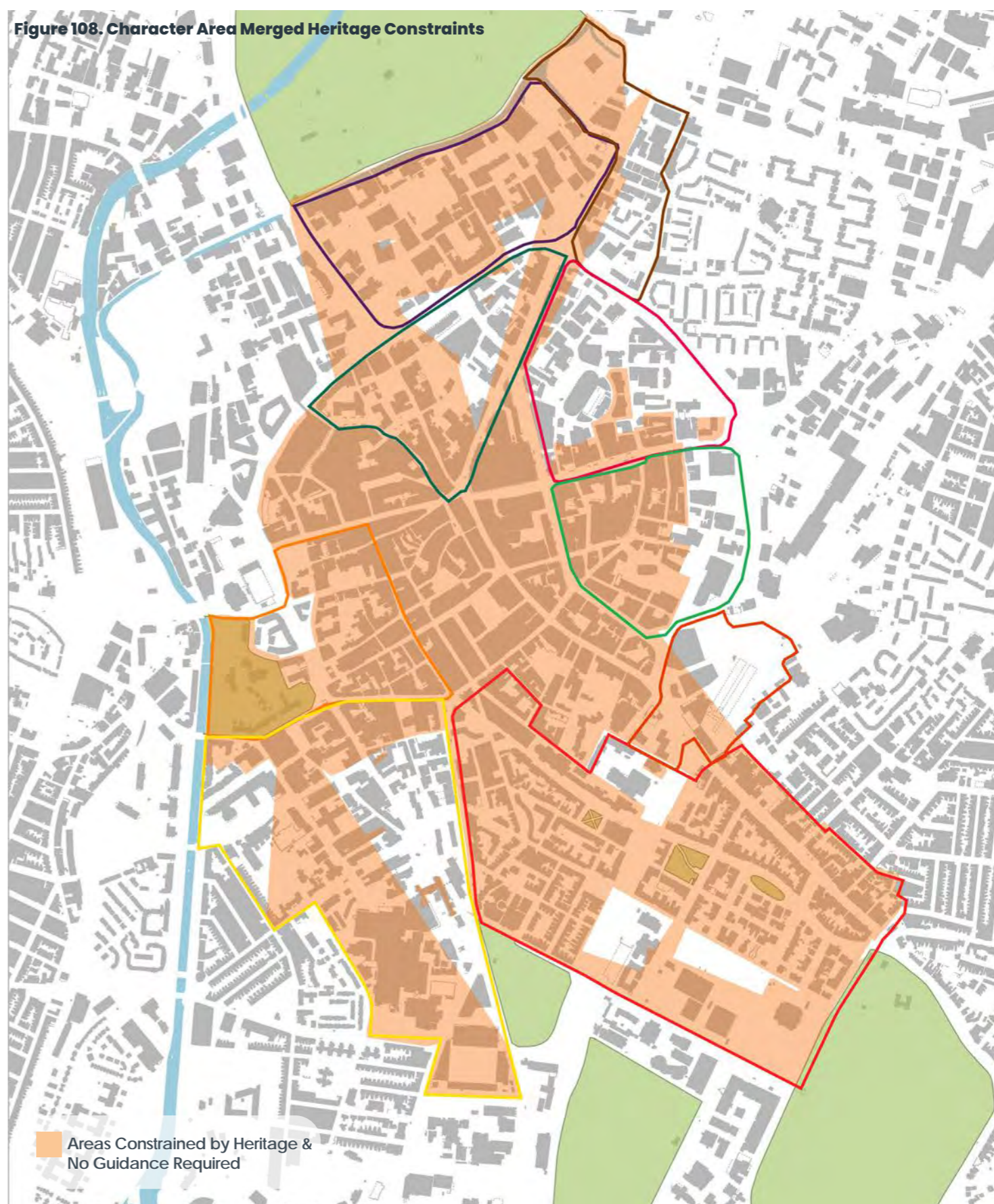


Figure 109. CDA Fringe Individual Constraints

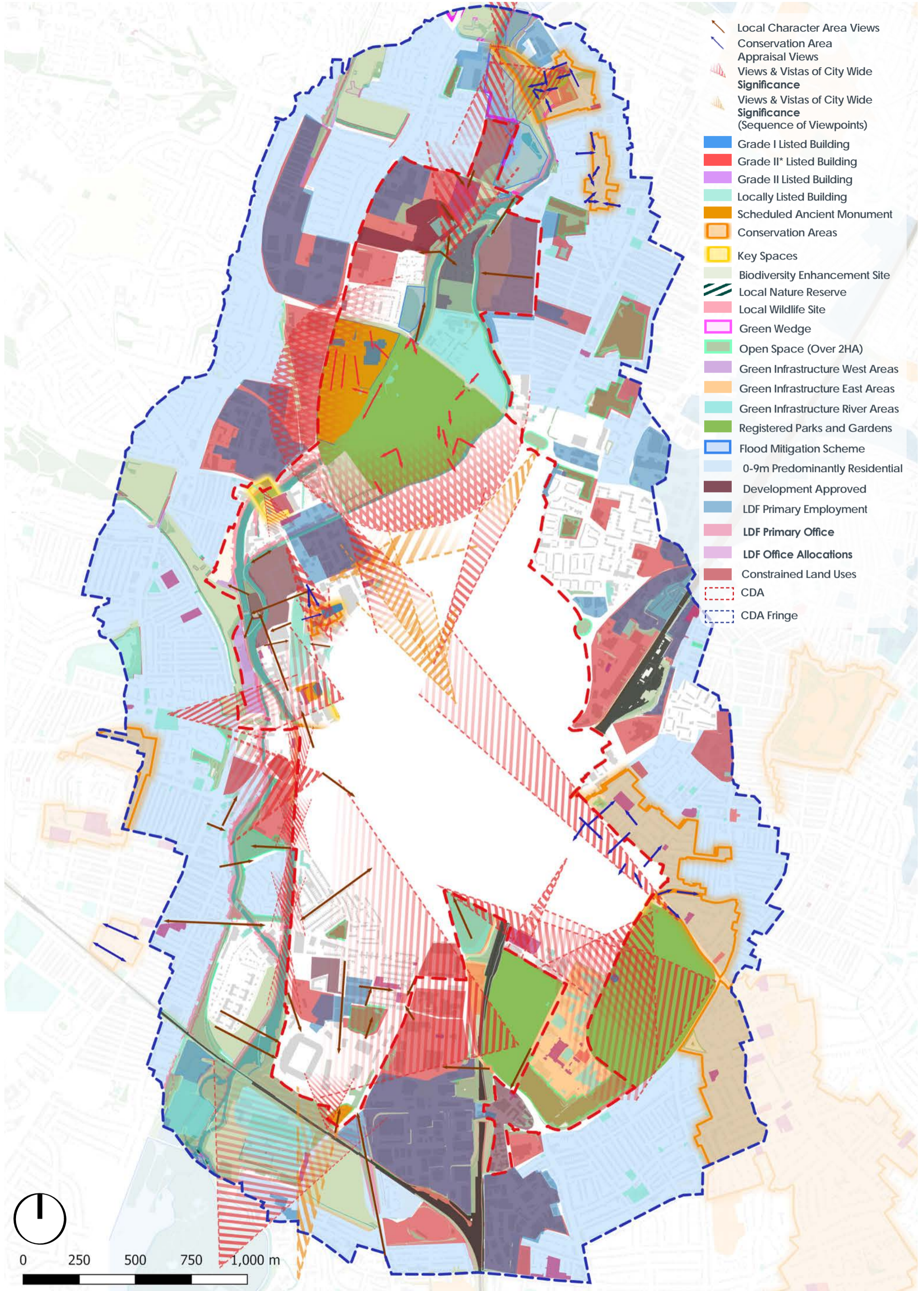
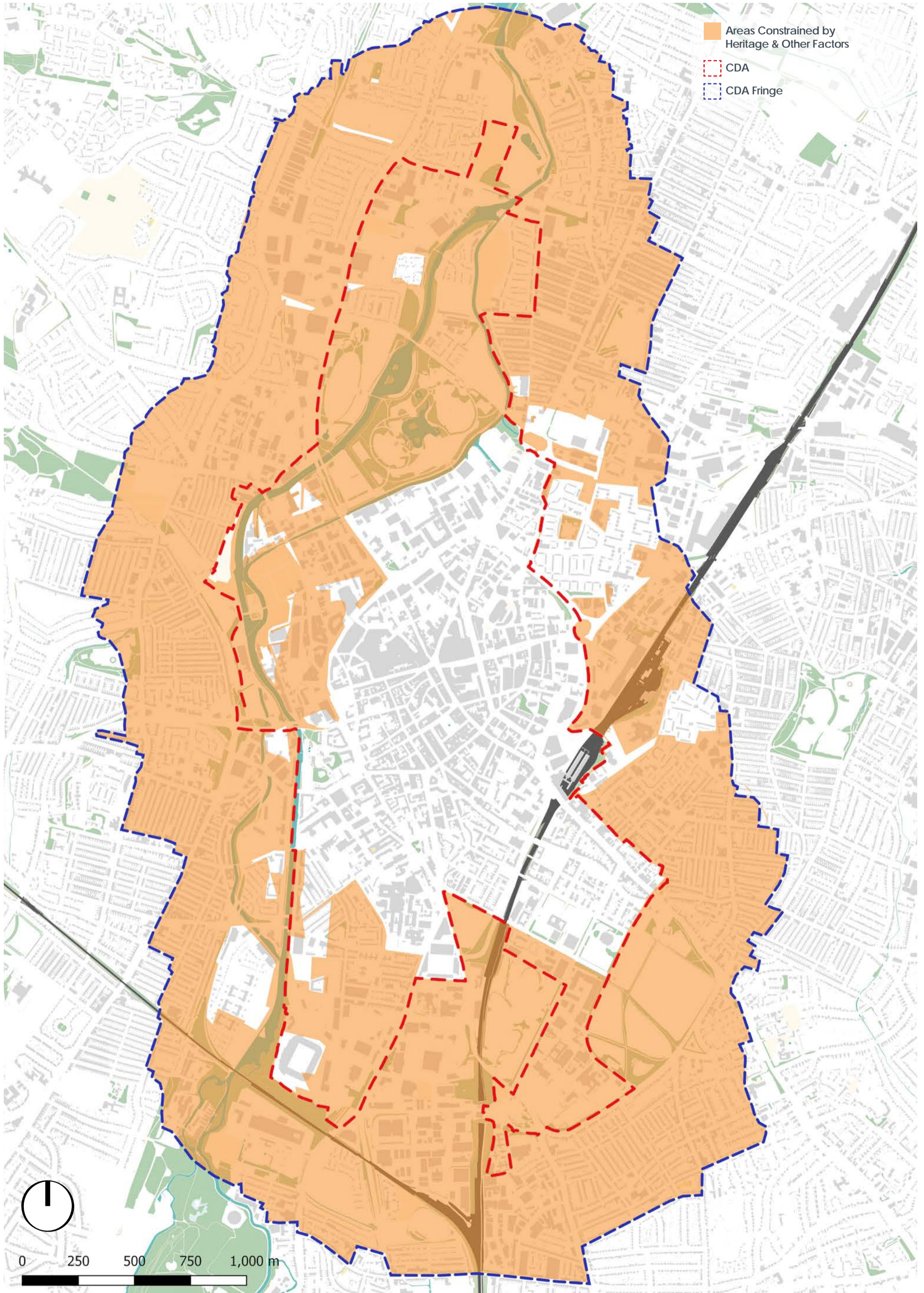


Figure 110. CDA Fringe Constraints Merged



### 5.3 Areas Offering Potential for Tall Development

Figure 112 outlines for the CDA and CDA Fringe, areas offering potential for **some** tall development, which is defined as 'development of above 24 metres' (broadly equivalent to 8 residential storeys).

For the **Character Areas**, these areas have primarily been identified through detailed consideration of the townscape and heritage constraints as outlined in Chapter 3 and in the Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance Evidence Documents for each Character Area. This has included 3D modelling, using the Leicester city model. Further information on the heights strategy for the Character Areas can be found within these documents, which also include details of where it is considered that a part of a site or a particular element of a proposal could be above 24 metres.

For the **CDA Regeneration Areas**, areas offering potential for tall development have been identified through detailed consideration of constraints, as outlined in Chapter 4, but also recognising their wider potential for growth, as Regeneration Areas, and wider Council objectives. The potential for a cluster of tall development to the Leicester City Football Club Regeneration Area has been included. Locations previously identified within the Leicester Waterside SPD (adopted August 2015), identified as 'important corner or gateway sites', but not necessarily potential sites for tall development, have been included where a more detailed review supports the potential for development above 24 metres. Many of the sites identified in the Leicester Waterside SPD as 'important corner or gateway sites' have now been constructed and are occupied.

The **CDA Fringe** context is much more constrained and consequently there are very limited opportunities for development above 24 metres. Further, given the existing building heights and the prevailing height of much of the CDA Fringe, development much lower than 24 metres could be considered tall. For much of the area, a development of above 18 metres (broadly equivalent to 6 residential storeys) would be substantially higher than the prevailing height.

Figure 112 also outlines the potential for development between 21 and 24 meters and although this is not considered as tall, the heights fall within a transition zone between what is and is not tall. Such buildings will therefore need to be considered with care.

Figure 112 also outlines the potential for **some** tall development above 24 metres (broadly equivalent to 8 residential storeys). Areas are shown as illustrative to enable the exact locations, scale, mass and built form of any proposed development to be determined more thoroughly on a site by site basis.

To note, the areas identified are defined as 'areas offering potential for **some** tall development'. It should not be assumed that all of the site allows for a blanket application for tall development. The appropriateness of any proposal will be considered on a site by site basis and will need to be considered in line with policy.

In addition, the identified 'areas offering potential for **some** tall development' are not 'unconstrained' and those constraints and context need to be carefully considered alongside any development proposals. Indeed, within the Character Areas, some of the areas identified as offering potential for some tall development fall within the 'areas constrained by heritage'. Therefore, consideration for the townscape setting is crucial to the acceptability of any proposals. These areas have been considered in more detail in the individual Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance Evidence Document for each Character Area and should be referred to.

The areas also reflect current planning approvals for proposals which contain elements of above 24 metres and where they are consistent with the findings of the townscape analysis.

The Council recognises that there are already a number of existing tall developments within the Central Development Area that are above 24 metres. Whilst some tall developments make a positive contribution to the townscape, others may not for various reasons. There is potential for tall development in locations where it already exists but it should not be assumed that the Council will support future development proposals at the same mass, scale and built form or additional development to change the mass, scale and built form. The same process for assessing proposals will be required.

Figure 111. View Looking South Down Belgrave Gate

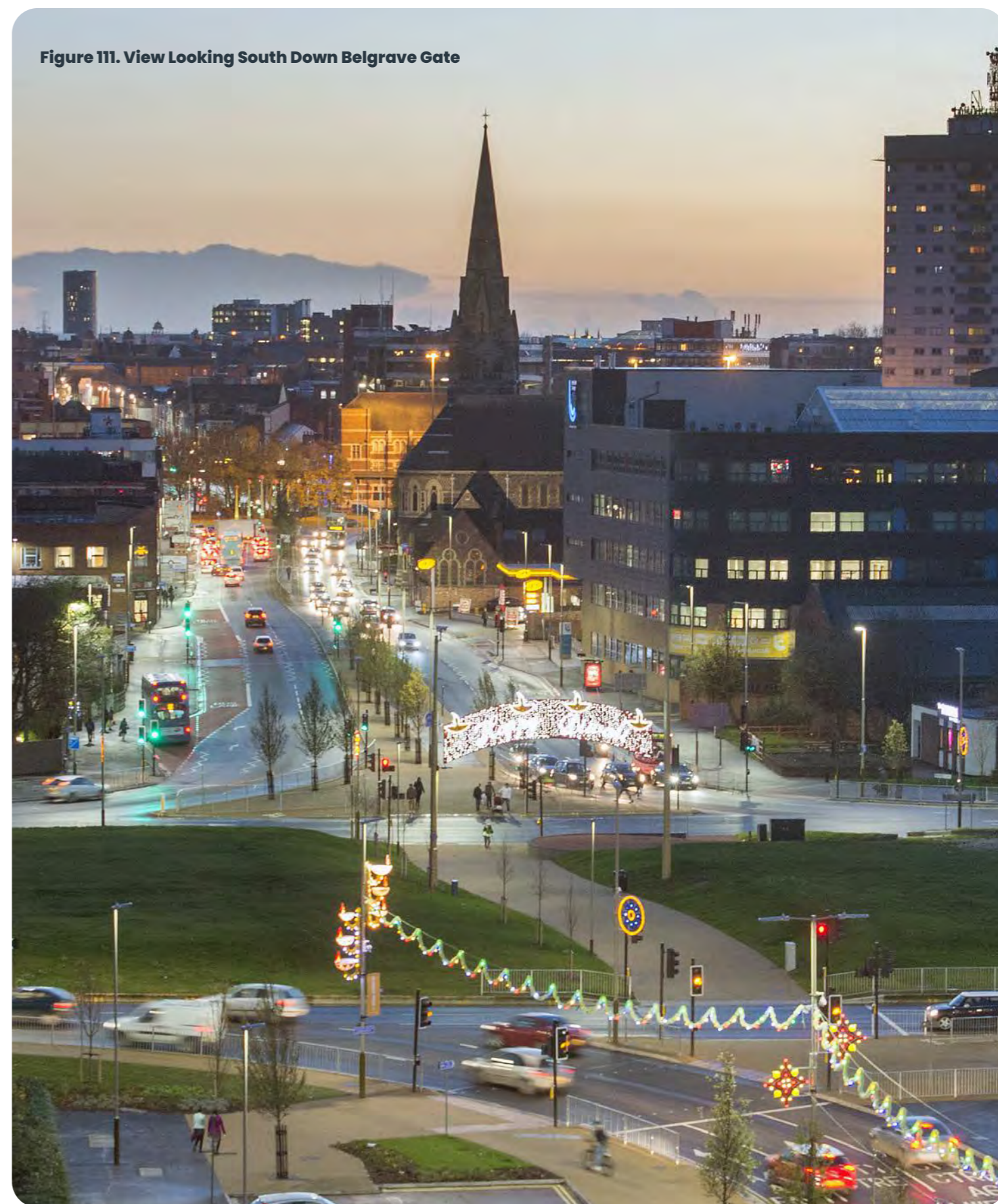
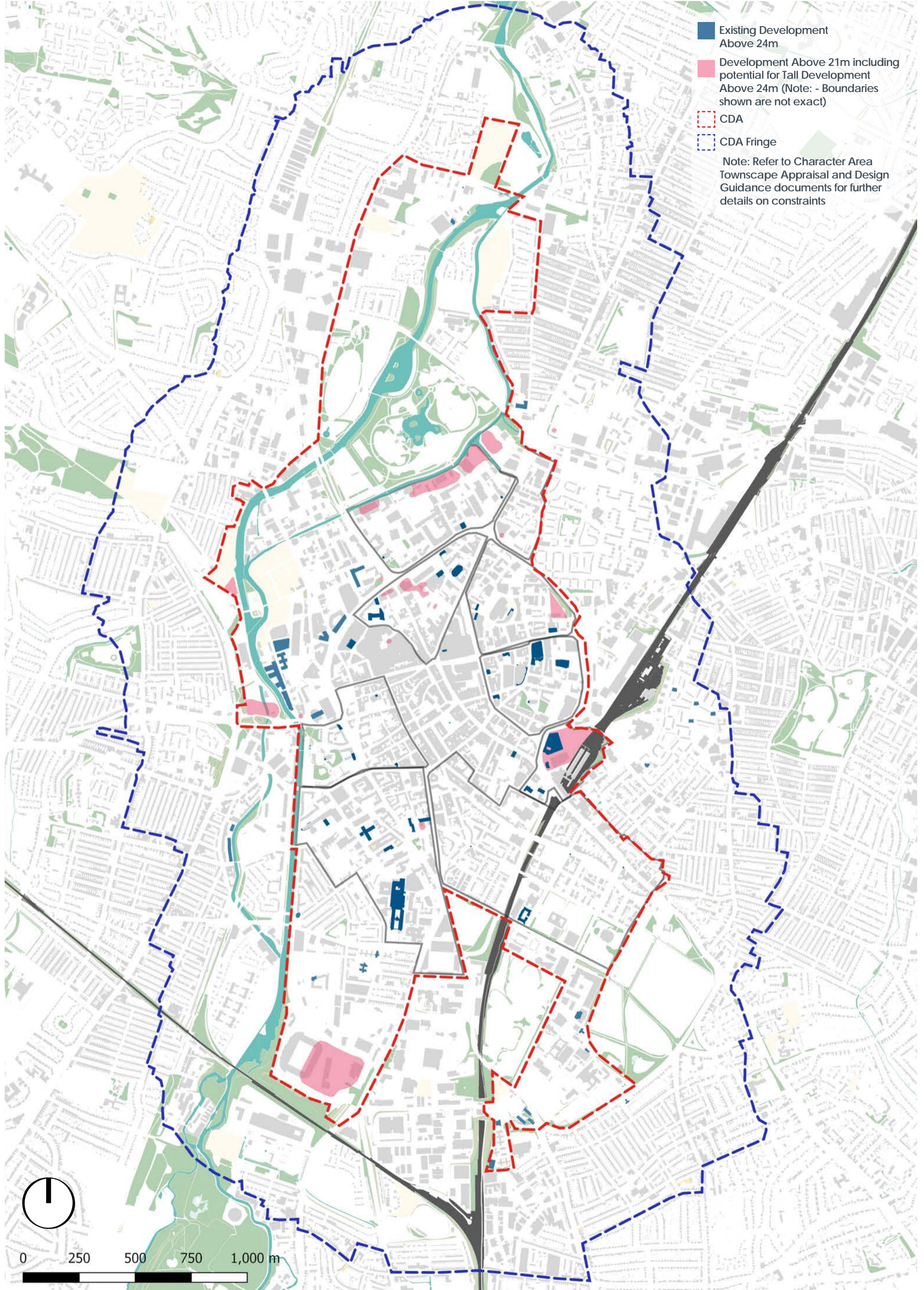


Figure 112. CDA and CDA Fringe Areas Offering Potential for Tall Development



## 5.4 Constraints & Areas Offering Potential for Tall Development

Figure 114 outlines for the CDA and CDA Fringe a combination of:

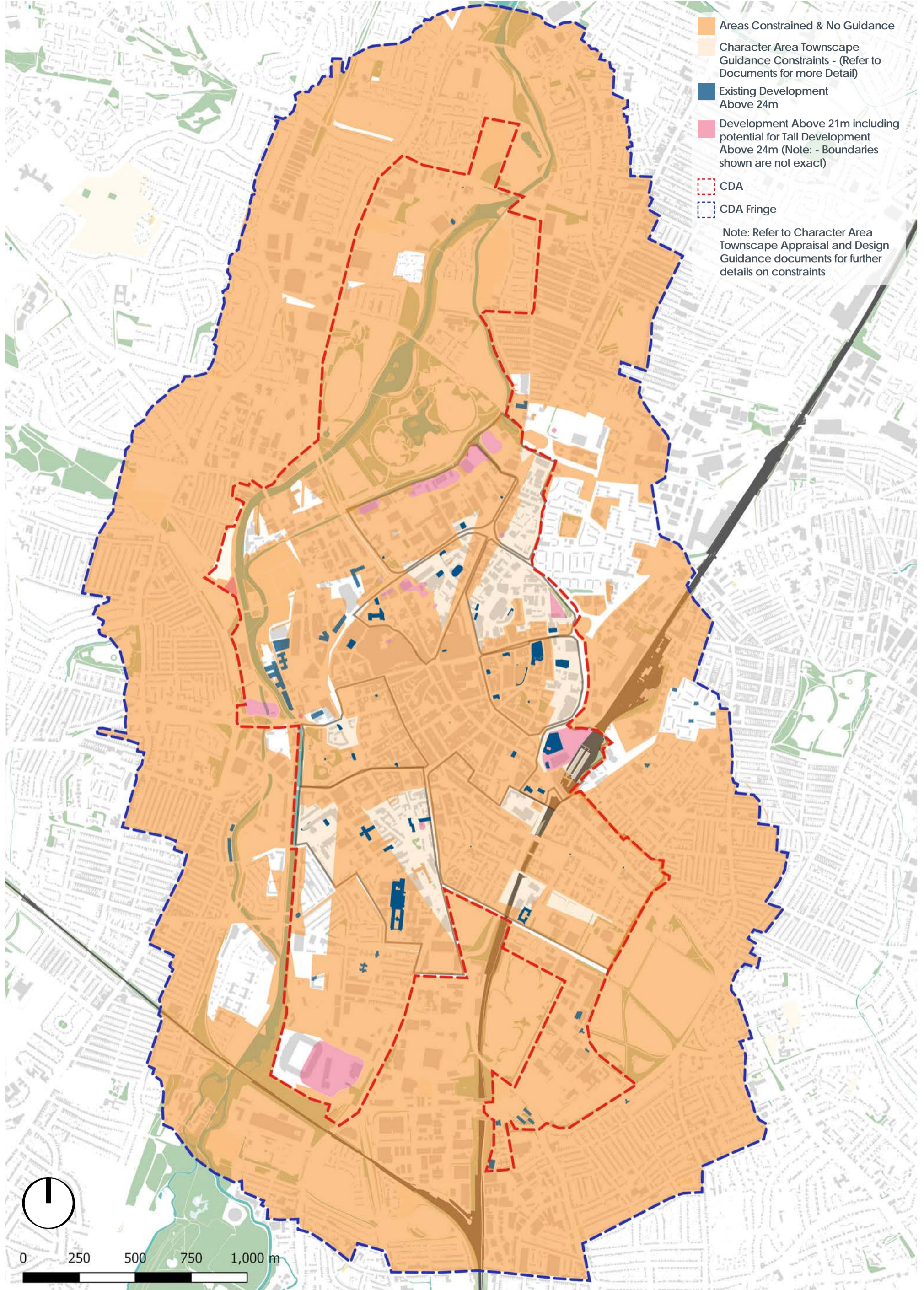
- the 'areas constrained' as identified in Chapters 3 and 4 and no guidance needed;
- the potential for development between 21 and 24 metres within the transition zone;
- the 'areas offering potential for some tall development' above 24 metres;
- existing development above 24 metres; and
- Character Area Townscape Guidance Evidence Documents constraints.

For proposals within 'Character Area Townscape Guidance Constraints' area, reference should be made to the relevant Townscape Analysis and Design Guidance Evidence Documents for that Character Area for a more detailed townscape analysis and guidance, including proposed heights.

Figure 113. Corah Chimneys



Figure 114. CDA and CDA Fringe Constraints & Areas Offering Potential for Tall Development





## 5.5 Assessing Tall Development

In Chapter 2, Section 2.5, the quality of existing tall development was assessed using the Design Quality criteria from the Tall Buildings SPD (adopted 2007). The general conclusions from this assessment are outlined in that Chapter but the overarching point is that for tall development to be successful and of high quality, all the relevant criteria concerning design quality and townscape need to be addressed. Providing excellence in one criterion does not necessarily mitigate for being poor in others. For example, design excellence in appearance, will not mitigate for a poorly located tall development or one of excessive scale and mass. Whilst all criteria may not need to be addressed equally, they would all need to be addressed positively. This is an important point for assessing tall development.

The assessment also identified some further observations regarding the Tall Buildings SPD (2007) Design Quality criteria;

- A townscape analysis/ views analysis for tall development should not be limited to an extent, for example a 500m radius. The scope would need to consider the key elements that the proposal could impact upon and these will vary dependent on the proposal and the location.
- A well-proportioned built form of an appropriate mass and scale does not necessarily have to be a "slender, graceful structure" as described in the Tall Building SPD (2007).
- It is very difficult to establish how a tall development could "overload surrounding infrastructure, services and facilities". This is a criterion within the current Tall Buildings SPD (2007). It was difficult to make an assessment on this on existing tall development that is well established.
- Tall development in itself does not need to help people find their way around, although given their prominence they can make a contribution.
- It was difficult to establish whether 'best practice related to sustainable design', a further Tall Buildings SPD (2007) criterion, at the time of construction, had been implemented.

In general, the Council is of the view that most of these previous aspects are still essential assessment criteria. It is the Council's intention to review and revise the criteria and further expand this important topic in the future Tall Development SPD.

In considering the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide also states in paragraph 70 that; 'proposals for tall buildings (and other buildings with a significantly larger scale or bulk than their surroundings) require **special consideration**. This includes;

- their location and siting;
- relationship to context;
- impact on local character, views and sight lines;
- composition - how they meet the ground and sky;
- and environmental impacts such as sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and wind'.

It states that, 'proposals should be resolved satisfactorily in relation to the context and local character'.

The National Model Design Code details further key design principles to consider;

- Top: Consider the impact on the skyline. Services need to be concealed, and both the street views and long views need to be considered.
- Form: Should be well-proportioned in terms of slenderness when viewed from all frontages.
- Materials: The use of materials to be consistent and simple.
- Base: Consider following the building line at street level, which may require a base to the building that is scaled to the surrounding buildings.
- Public Realm: Public spaces around the base to be generous, well designed and contribute positively to the local context.
- Entrance: The entrance needs to be clearly marked.
- Micro-climate: Needs to be considered in terms of overshadowing and wind. It may be necessary to protect the surrounding public realm from down draughts.
- Active frontage: If required by the design code the ground floor of the tall building needs to include active frontages.

The Historic England Advice Note (HEAN4) (published March 2022) states that tall development should have a positive relationship with a place's topography, character, heritage assets, urban grain and streetscape, open spaces and rivers, important views and skylines and height and scale of the surrounding development. It also states the importance of environmental impact and, importantly for an area undergoing significant growth and change, the cumulative, combined impacts on heritage assets and townscape from existing, consented and proposed tall buildings.

Advice Note 4 has also placed greater emphasis on the importance of acknowledging changing technologies and tools to provide evidence on tall development proposals (e.g. 3D modelling, urban design, townscape analysis and views studies) and the use of case studies to support tall development guidance.

Proposals for tall development should be considered as pieces of architecture in their own right, and as pieces of urban design sitting within a wider context; and in this respect they should be assessed in the same way as any other scheme, and against the most demanding standards of quality. However, given their prominence and design it is important to further expand on the general National and local policy context and be more explicit on the criteria for evaluating tall development proposals. Outlining these criteria will be a further objective of a Tall Development SPD for Leicester.

### Summarised Design Quality Criteria from the Tall Buildings SPD (adopted 2007)

- **Appearance** - architects should aim to design tall buildings with a lasting appeal that will be seen as exemplars of quality architecture.
- **Alignment** – relationships to existing building lines, characteristic alignments and setbacks, framing of views.
- **Built form** – tall buildings must be slender graceful structures and not monolithic or project an impression of being an impenetrable mass.
- **Massing and scale** – successful integration with the surroundings, the use of podium buildings to address surrounding scale.
- **Ground floor** – active frontages contributing to the street, generous and well-designed public realm, prominent entrances.
- **The top of the building** – skyline considerations, interruption of plant and communications equipment on the roofline and silhouette.
- **Materials** – highest quality possible, robust, life expectancy over 50 years, materials cannot disguise a building which is fundamentally poorly designed or monolithic.
- **Car Parking** - appropriately located and designed and to maximise active uses at the ground floor.
- Contribute to **public spaces and facilities** including the mix of uses.
- Minimise effect on the local environment, including **micro-climate** and general amenity.
- Contribute to making **connected places** and helping people find their way around.
- Adopt **best practise** relating to sustainable design and the construction of tall buildings.
- Effect on the **long-term regeneration** of the locality and the city as a whole.

Figure 115. Summarised Design Quality Criteria

# 6. Future Consideration / Tall Development SPD

This evidence document is not intended to be a draft of the Tall Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Leicester. As stated, its primary aim is to provide an evidence base for the Draft Local Plan, although much of the information provided in this document may be included within the future SPD.

The Council will undertake further work to inform the future SPD. This also includes considering received feedback on the Draft Local Plan and undertaking further consultation.

Considerations for further work includes the following;



## Criteria for Proposals Assessment / Evaluation

- Review of criteria within the current Tall Building SPD (Adopted 2007) and the need for new or revised criteria to assess design quality expectations. Also, to consider the National Planning Policy Framework and other statutory guidance and additional criteria required.
- Establishing whether additional criteria are required for 'super tall' (45 metres and above) proposals.
- Establish whether additional and specific criteria are required for tall development proposals that comes forward as part of a hybrid planning application (a planning application with both full (detailed) and outline elements).
- Understanding the impact of tall development on air quality and other local environmental requirements.
- Understanding how well designed places, and in particular homes, can be achieved at higher densities. Additionally, as stated by Historic England, in Advice Note (HEAN4), how can developments be assessed to establish whether tall development is the most appropriate way to deliver high densities or whether another solution is more appropriate.
- Understand more the potential for cumulative, combined impacts on heritage assets and townscape from existing, consented and proposed tall buildings and how they should new development be assessed.
- Consider the potential for planning policy to manage the re-cladding and elevational changes to existing tall development.
- How the sharing of tools e.g 3D city model can inform and used to assess tall development proposals.

## Views

- Review of skyline views and views outside the Central Development Area (CDA) and CDA Fringe towards the city centre.
- More comprehensive and focussed assessment of the long views of the Cathedral and their significance.
- Review and identification of new views created through redevelopment which have enhanced the setting of Leicester's historic environment.
- Identify locations where the removal of 'past mistakes' may enhance the setting of Leicester's historic environment and townscape.
- Explore the potential for using GPS co-ordinates and an agreed photography methodology to provide exact viewpoint locations and view extents to important views to support the production of Actual Visual Representations (AVR'S) which are now validation requirements on major planning applications.
- Identification and consolidation of views and locations in Leicester which are not heritage assets, but are considered to be significant to the culture and 'image of Leicester'.

## Other

- Understand the links between viability and taller development proposals, for individual proposals and for Leicester as a whole.
- Presentation of the 3D city models used to inform this evidence document to illustrate the principles of a three dimensional framework for the CDA and the CDA Fringe.



Leicester  
City Council

115 Charles Street  
Leicester LE1 1FZ