Chapter 10 Summary Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

10.1 This chapter provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the sub-region. More detailed SWOT summaries feature at the end of the chapters.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Three world-class universities • Diverse economic structure not overly dependent on any one sector • Workforce qualifications in the County are amongst highest in region • Strong and improving FE sector • Progression rates to HE very high in Leicester City, especially amongst Indian population • Strategic location in relation to national road network; 95% English population accessible in 4 hours • East Midlands Airport, second largest freight-handling airport in UK • Fast rail service to London • Generally strong market towns and rural economy – as evidenced by GVA per head • Strong retail offer through Highcross and Fosse Park - retail expenditure largely remains within sub-region • Pleasant and attractive natural environment with good access • National Forest – national example of environmental-led regeneration • Relatively moderately priced housing within the overall UK housing market context • A good mix of types and sizes of housing across the wider conurbation and county. • Sufficient land for housing • Industrial development land is competitively priced in Leicester compared to many other cities	• GVA per head in Leicester City is below that of Nottingham and Derby • Lack of the right types of housing for jobs etc in the city • Workplace earnings in Leicester are low for a city – linked to low proportion of jobs in managerial and professional occupations • Leicester City male resident earnings (median) are the lowest in the region • Sub-region does not have strong identity/ image • Three-year business survival rates are low in Leicester City • 22.1% of Leicester residents have no qualifications • Only 56% of working age females in employment in Leicester City • Lack of graduate retention – especially arts and engineering graduates • Marked poor educational performance of white young people resident in the City, already apparent at age 11 • Almost half the neighbourhoods in Leicester City fall into the 20% most deprived nationally • Peak traffic congestion – routes into Leicester, Loughborough and Melton, M1 J21 • "City flight" – people leave city as become more affluent – complex issue but in part linked to quality and mix of housing available • In past, lack of employment land and obsolete premises have constrained growth • Limited supply of Grade A and high-quality office accommodation in Leicester • A shortfall of affordable housing compared to need, especially in suburban and rural areas, similar to most other areas of the UK

Opportunities	Threats
• Science and enterprise parks - Loughborough and Leicester • Strong demand for basic workspaces and serviced offices from start-up and micro-businesses, as well as for germination, incubation and grow-on space from businesses in science, technology & creative sectors • Grade A office provision in New Business Quarter • Rail freight site in NW Leicestershire with associated employment land • Potential for SUEs to accommodate and provide right employment land and housing to support the economy (jobs) in right locations • Some local sectoral strengths in food and drink manufacturing, transport and communications, wholesale and retail (Highcross / Fosse Park), high-technology manufacturing • Growing service sector, with business services making a high contribution to GVA and projected to grow in the future • Tourism & cultural offer – National Forest, Curve, Phoenix Square, National Space Centre, festivals, inland waterway network • Business opportunities to support low carbon economy – e.g. in resource efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable construction, waste management • Qualification levels are improving in both City and County which will help encourage investment in the area • Scale of mineral resources provides opportunities through planned restoration to provide improved biodiversity / green infrastructure • Significant growth in food and drink expenditure is anticipated in the future, which represents an opportunity for retail centres • Planned housing growth could generate more construction sector jobs	• 1 in 3 jobs in the City are in the public sector, making it vulnerable to public expenditure cuts • High % of start-ups in vulnerable sectors (e.g. property services and construction) which may not survive • Employers report lack of applicants that are “job-ready”, especially young people • Significant increase in claimant count (JSA) unemployed – in both City and County • 1 in 5 working age residents claiming out-of-work benefits in Leicester • Decrease in vacancies notified to Job Centre Plus in last 12 months • Low aspirations of those in deprived areas of the City, contributing to cycles of deprivation • Funding gap and continuing decrease in public sector funds will impact on delivery of essential infrastructure • Skills gaps reported by many businesses, especially in manufacturing sectors • Congestion could get worse with planned housing growth • Housing growth will also place additional demands on infrastructure • Loss of more economically active, wealth-generating households, either out of the City to the suburbs and rural areas, or out of the County completely • Competing cities and other growth areas attracting graduates and skilled workers away with a better housing and environmental offer • Climate change will increase risk of flooding and extreme weather events • Continued pressure for residential development on employment sites (especially in the City) • Inability to allocate additional undeveloped employment land outside the City boundary to meet unmet demand from within the City