

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Chairman)

Councillors D Bigby, D Everitt, J Geary (Substitute for Councillor J Legrys), J Hoult, A C Saffell, J G Simmons and N Smith

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Ms J Althorpe, Mr C Colbourn, Mr C Colvin, Mr C Elston, Ms S Grant, Ms S Lee, Mr I Nelson and Mrs R Wallace

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman advised that Councillor A C Saffell was unable to attend the meeting in person and therefore would be joining the meeting remotely. In accordance with the law, he was able to participate in the meeting but would not be permitted to vote.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Boam, J Legrys, R Morris and M B Wyatt.

16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors D Bigby and J Hoult declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 – Blackfordby Neighbourhood plan as members of Ashby Town Council who had contributed to the preparation of the plan.

17 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

A question had been received from a Member of the public, the question plus the response was detailed in the additional papers. As the questioner, Mr Pickering, was not in attendance at the point the item was opened, the Chairman stated that he would be happy to take a supplementary question in writing outside of the meeting but at that point would move onto the next agenda item. However, Mr Pickering arrived at 6.35pm and the Chairman moved back to the public question and answer session to allow his question to be asked.

QUESTION RECEIVED FROM MR PICKERING

“Will the local plan be put forward for a referendum like the parish council neighbourhood plan?”

RESPONSE

“A referendum for a Neighbourhood Plan is a specific requirement of Regulations. There is no such requirement for a Local Plan. Instead, Regulations prescribe that once the Local Plan has been subjected to Examination by an independent Planning Inspector the final decision as to whether the plan should be adopted is one for a meeting of Full Council.”

Mr Pickering asked the following supplementary question:

Chairman's initials

“Can you explain to me why the Parish Council is wasting it’s money on a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum when you 10 Councillors and 5 Officers have already voted against the public and Parish Councillors wishes 3/4 meetings ago?”

The Planning Policy Team Manager explained that the Government were encouraging Neighbourhood Plans but unfortunately, they could not deal with strategic issues, therefore there had to be a district Local Plan. At this point the Chairman stopped discussion as Mr Pickering attempted to debate the matter further which was not permitted in accordance with the Council’s Constitution. It was agreed that a formal written response to the supplementary question be sent to Mr Pickering outside of the meeting.

18 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021.

It was moved by Councillor N Smith, seconded by Councillor J Hoult and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

19 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – HOUSING STANDARDS

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to Members.

Members were pleased to see the proposed policy inclusions, especially in relation to space standards, and wheelchair accessible and adaptable housing. Members shared concerns on the sizes of rooms currently being built in new homes by developers and the lack of ease of access for wheelchairs. The Chairman concurred and explained that the proposals would put the council in a good position to address these concerns.

Some Members expressed the importance of addressing water efficiency standards and a suggestion was made to include aids to capture water within developments to assist with this problem. Both the Chairman and the Planning Policy Team Manager assured Members that this was something developers were working on already, but the inclusion of a standard would be another step forward.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

Subject to the outcome of a future consultation and consideration of a whole plan viability assessment, that policies in respect of -

- 1) Space standards;
- 2) Wheelchair accessible and adaptable housing; and
- 3) Water efficiency standards

be included in the Local Plan substantive review.

20 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report to Members.

Chairman’s initials

A Member was unhappy in relation to the First Home aspect which was a Government initiative, but was pleased, however that rented housing would be the next priority. In response to a question, the Planning Policy Team Manager confirmed that the Supplementary Planning Document would need to be reviewed once the Local Plan was adopted.

In relation to the wording of section (5) in the proposed planning policy H4 as detailed at appendix 1, a Member questioned the use of the word 'encourage' for the provision of affordable homes for elderly people. It was felt that providing affordable homes for elderly people was of a high importance and therefore developers should be told to make provision rather than encouraged. The Portfolio Holder concurred with the comments. The Planning Policy Team Manager explained that the local policy did state 'encourage' as at the time of adoption there was not enough evidence to make it stronger, however this could now be looked at going forward.

A regular suggestion made at previous meetings was reiterated by a Member in relation to the use of factory built houses in areas such as Castle Donington that required more affordable homes for people that worked in the area, this was endorsed by a number of Members.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby, seconded by Councillor J Hoult and

RESOLVED THAT:

The draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document in appendix 1 be approved for public consultation.

21 BLACKFORDBY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to Members.

Comments were made on the importance of a Neighbourhood Plan and maintaining areas of separation between the villages. It was also felt that the support of officers for the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan was encouraging for other parishes currently in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

It was moved by Councillor J Hoult, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The proposed response to the submission draft of the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan in appendix A be approved.
- 2) The consultation period for the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan be noted.
- 3) Following the receipt of the Independent Examiner's report it be noted that the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder would determine whether the conditions had been met for the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.
- 4) It be noted that following the referendum and if time does not allow for a report to the Committee, the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder would determine if the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan should be made.

Chairman's initials

- 5) The decision to send the Hugglescote and Donington Le Heath Neighbourhood Plan to referendum be noted.

22 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK UPDATE

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report to Members.

Members were happy to see the updates, especially the 30 year vision for larger scale developments and the improved ability to refuse applications that did not fall in line with the Council's design aspirations. In response to a question, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the updated advice in the NPPF in relation to the design was effective immediately as the updated document had been published.

In response to a question in relation to NWLDC's participation in the National Model Design Code pilot programme, the Planning Policy Team Manager confirmed that a financial contribution from government was provided for the additional work involved.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor D Bigby and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework be noted.
- 2) The potential implications for the Local Plan Substantive Review as outlined in the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.31 pm