

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2022

Councillors R L Morris, D Bigby, J Houlton, A C Saffell, J G Simmons, N Smith, M B Wyatt, J Geary (Substitute for Councillor J Legrys) and R Johnson (Substitute for Councillor D Everitt)

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr I Nelson, Mr C Elston, Mrs C Hammond, Ms S Grant, Mr C Colvin and Ms S Lee

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Legrys and D Everitt.

Councillor M Wyatt left the meeting at 6.35pm

38 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

39 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received

40 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2021.

Councillor A C Saffell stated that he considered the minutes did not accurately reflect the reason given for the non-suitability of a piece of land in Castle Donington as a new settlement nor did it reflect his strong views as to why this settlement should be included.

The Chairman offered to amend the minute to include "it was considered unsuitable due to the fact it was in multiple ownership" and to add Councillor Saffell's comments in support of this piece of land.

Councillor Saffell advised that he was happy to change "was not considered appropriate" to "was difficult to deliver" but asked if he could put forward his reasons as to how he considered it could be delivered.

The Legal Advisor stated that, whilst the proposed amendment could be accepted, it was not appropriate to re-visit this item as it was outside the remit of this meeting. The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager explained his reasons as to why the proposal was inappropriate.

Following further discussion on this matter

It was moved by Councillor J Houlton, seconded by Councillor J Simmons and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment to minute 34 which currently reads

"Following comments made by Councillor A C Saffell in relation to the proposal to make land available for a new settlement that would provide affordable homes for those

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employed at the sites in the north of the district, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager reminded members of the information in relation to this, that was contained in the Development Strategy report that they had considered at the last meeting and that land west of Belton was not considered to be appropriate”

TO BE AMENDED TO READ

“Following comments made by Councillor A C Saffell supporting the proposal to make land available for a new settlement that would provide affordable homes for those employed at the sites in the north of the district, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager reminded members of the information in relation to this which was contained in the Development Strategy report considered at the last meeting; and that land west of Belton was not considered to be appropriate in view of issues around multiple ownership and the need to demonstrate deliverability in accordance with the national planning policy framework”

41 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report to members and set out the Government’s final policy positions and the requirements for EV charge points in various building types, including the conversion of buildings. The report included the exemptions from the requirements that the government will introduce. These exemptions are largely intended to ensure that developments remain viable, where installations would be disproportionately difficult or costly.

Councillor Wyatt asked whether the Council would be adopting this stance with all new builds by making it standard practice to include charge points to all new houses being built within the district.

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that from mid-2023 onwards this would be a requirement and, in the interim, he would speak with Housing Services to establish whether they would be adopting this policy any earlier.

The Committee sought information on how many new homes had already had charge points installed; had this policy already been introduced; and if not then why not?

Councillor Bigby confirmed that there were a couple of charge points in the new car park in Ashby and was not aware that any had been included in any council houses. He had requested, unsuccessfully, that one be included in the new car park on the Willesley estate. He asked whether the requirements set out in the Local Plan would be any more stringent than those set out in the Building Regulations which would enable the Council to install more than the minimum requirement where it was deemed appropriate to do so.

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that evidence would be required to demonstrate why North West Leicestershire is any different to anywhere else, requiring us to have more stringent requirements than those included in the Building Regulations.

Councillor Bigby felt that we should be considering looking at evidence such as being a largely rural area and our reliance on the car due to lack of public transport. Furthermore, we could look at what other local authorities are doing in this regard.

Councillor Johnson referred to the Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Neighbourhood Plan which includes a requirement for charging points on new developments and gave an example of where this had already been implemented. He argued that if the Parish Council could be forward thinking in this regard, then this Committee should be able to follow suit.

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Councillor Geary referred to restrictions which he felt may give way to developers manipulating figures to exempt them from their duty to provide charge points. He also felt that planning permission should not be granted where there is insufficient power to install charge points.

The Chairman explained the difficulties faced by the Planning Committee in refusing planning applications on this ground where there are no objections from the energy companies.

In response to concerns raised by members who felt that the Local Plan should include its own policy on this matter, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager referred to the National Planning Policy Framework which states that Plans should serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies. Therefore, should it be included in the Local Plan, he would be surprised if it survived an examination.

Some members felt that we should do it anyway and if it fails, at least we can say we tried.

It was moved by Councillor R Morris, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

The proposed changes to the Building Regulations in respect of EV charge points and the implications for the Local Plan Review as set out in section 3 of the report, be noted.

42 RATCLIFFE-ON-SOAR POWER STATION PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report to members and provided the Committee with information about the proposed Local Development Order for the Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station site, including the response to the initial public consultation and matters of interest and concern to this council.

The Chairman considered the timeframe proposed by Rushcliffe Borough Council to be extremely challenging and was concerned regarding the duty to co-operate within the given timescales.

Councillor R Morris referred to the lack of any mention of a cycleway, particularly linking Kegworth with Castle Donington which he considered would be relatively straightforward and highly sustainable given there was already a bridge in situ over the M1.

Councillor A C Saffell referred to a press article regarding this site which was reported to have been earmarked as a possible high technology generation and battery centre and the new electricity energy fusion plant would not now be located at Ratcliffe but instead at Retford in west Burton.

Councillor R Johnson considered that the assumption of 7-8,000 jobs was unrealistic; the land is contaminated and that the timescales are unachievable. He also referred to any future house building in the vicinity being impractical given the area was prone to flooding.

Councillor J Hoult advised that he had worked at this site for 28 years and advised that there was a significant amount of concrete underground at the site.

Councillor D Bigby sought confirmation on the mention of housing as he couldn't see any reference to it in the report and asked why the provision of housing had not been included in the plans, particularly given the number of jobs the proposal was said to be generating. He was advised that Rushcliffe Borough Council was not in need of any more housing

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land and was not looking for further sites and that this particular site was deemed more suitable for employment use. That said, it was noted that it would be no surprise if more parties put forward the suggestion that the provision of housing may be appropriate to accommodate the workers.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary seconded by Councillor R Johnson and

RESOLVED THAT:

The response to the consultation on the Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station Proposed Local Development Order as set out at appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

43 PLANNING POLICY UPDATE

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report to members and provided an update in respect of the Local Plan and other matters related to the ongoing work of the Planning Policy team, namely the Authority Monitoring Report; Infrastructure Funding Statement; Neighbourhood Plans; Brownfield Land Register; and Strategic planning.

The Chairman asked whether the Statement of Common Ground would still need to be considered by the Committee if it came back showing no effect on the current position. He was advised that the Statement of Common would have to be agreed and signed off by each required Authority.

Councillor D Bigby asked how much of the Section 106 monies had attached to it a timescale and whether any backlog of unspent monies had been cleared. He was advised that all the monies would have a timescale by which it must be spent, most of which would be within 5 years from the date of the payment, and some would be slightly longer. The situation is constantly monitored, and appropriate prompts are sent to the relevant bodies to establish whether the monies will be spent, or an extension is required.

Councillor Bigby referred to the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of Blackfordby which he advised included an area of separation between Blackfordby and Woodville which is not included in the Local Plan. This was considered encouraging for future Neighbourhood Plans.

Councillor N Smith asked what the implications might be in relation to plans to extend HS2 through to Parkway. He was advised that sites previously discounted for housing may be brought back into play, but the details are not expected until the middle of the year and, until then, it is difficult to know for certain.

Councillor Johnson sought and received confirmation that the consultants referred to in the report had been used before and expressed his dismay at the number of houses being 'thrown up' in his ward.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The contents of the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.07 pm

Chairman's signature