

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2022

Councillors J G Simmons, D Everitt, D Harrison, J Hoult, R L Morris, N Smith, J Geary (Substitute for Councillor J Legrys) and R Johnson (Substitute for Councillor D Bigby)

In Attendance: Councillors Ms R Haynes

Officers: Mr I Nelson, Mr C Elston, Ms N Swan, Mrs C Hammond, Ms J Althorpe and Mr K Bassett

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors D Bigby, J Bridges, J Legrys and A C Saffell.

Councillors J Geary, R Johnson and A Woodman acted as substitutes.

12 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests:

Councillor J Geary declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 “Local Plan Review: Response to Consultation – Employment Policies” as a Director of the Springboard Centre.

Councillor R Johnson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 “Local Plan Substantive Review – Development Strategy” as Chair of Hugglescote and Donington Le Heath Parish Council.

13 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

14 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, seconded by Councillor R Morris and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15 LOCAL PLAN SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW - DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report, and pointed out key differences in the various housing options. It was noted that opportunities to extend existing settlements had become more limited therefore a new settlement would need to be a key part of the future strategy .

It was observed that whilst there is no single right approach, there had to be an appropriate strategy in place.

Officers invited member questions.

Chairman's initials

Councillor R Morris thanked officers for an excellent update and enquired whether this strategy would be subject to any external examinations by the inspectorate. Officers replied that at this stage it would be an internal document but noted that whatever strategy was employed, it would have to go before a Planning Inspector at a future date.

A member asked whether there was a particular point in the strategy which could be construed as a weakness, and officers responded that there currently was not, however should things change, information may be received which suggested the need to take a different approach.

Councillor R Johnson enquired whether neighbourhood plans would be protected and informed the meeting that the existing Hugglescote Neighbourhood Plan was currently under review. Officers advised that plans already in place would continue to hold weight, but once the new Local Plan was in place then there would be a need for Neighbourhood Plan groups to look at whether a review was necessary. He suggested that there was a need for an ongoing dialogue in order that there would be as few gaps as possible.

Councillor R Morris queried whether Breedon Neighbourhood Plan, which was currently a work in progress, would be too late and officers responded that the Local Plan was unlikely to be adopted until 2024, therefore it would be impossible to comment at this stage whether the neighbourhood plan would need a review.

Officers outlined potential options for the authority's employment land strategy and recapped the main options.

Councillor J Geary asked officers how much of the unit space is currently unused or unoccupied and officers advised that as a district, the vacancy rate was below 'normal' averages. The meeting was informed that a certain amount of vacancy was positive as this allowed for movement and growth; but too little and this was not possible.

Councillor N Smith noted that it would be good if the council attempted to provide facilities for people visiting small businesses in order to attract people to visit from outside the district.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, seconded by Councillor J Hault and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) Option 7b providing the basis for the Housing Development Strategy of the Local Plan Review be agreed and
- (ii) Option 2a providing the basis for the Employment Development Strategy of the Local Plan Review be agreed.

16 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION - EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report drawing attention to the fact that in current policy Ec2(2) there had been debate over the terms 'need' and 'demand' and noting that in future, it had been decided to use the word 'requirement.'

It was noted that the report covered an overview of the consultation responses which overall were in favour of retaining Policy Ec2 (2) in some form and the need to maintain the preferred policy but to make this more stringent.

Members congratulated officers on a thorough report and stated that having a vision for employment development outside of primary employment areas would be positive. A member asked whether the authority should specify what type of business should be permitted in order that, for example, there would be minimal disruption to residents from

industrial noise or heavy transport. Officers acknowledged that there could not be a 'blanket ban' on certain uses however stated that more specific amenity considerations would be added into the policy.

Members asked whom had been consulted in the consideration of start-up workspace and officers replied that the consultation which had been referred to was carried out between January and March 2022 and had included parishes, public, landowners and developers. It was confirmed that the consultation had been advertised to public in the press, social media, parishes and through Neighbourhood Plan groups.

Councillor J Geary informed the meeting that the Springboard Centre had a waiting list for specific units and asked officers if the Centre had been considered as existing provision. Officers responded that it had been considered in the preparation of the evidence base and affirmed that there would be demand for this type of facility.

Councillor J Geary stated that he felt there was a need for more smaller industrial units but that few were available. Officers agreed to contact the authority's Economic Development Team in order that the Springboard Centre can engage in a dialogue with them regarding the need for this type of provision.

It was moved by Councillor R Morris, seconded by Councillor D Harrison and

RESOLVED THAT:

- i. The policy set out in appendix b for future public consultation as a replacement for adopted local plan policy ec2(2) be agreed.
- ii. The policy approach for start-up premises set out at paragraph 4.16 of this report for future public consultation be agreed.
- iii. The policy approach for local employment plans set out at paragraph 5.11 of this report be agreed.

17 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report, and brought members up to date with the new evidence finalised by external consultants.

An update had been undertaken to the Area of Separation study in view of the completion of the new leisure centre which was located within the Area of Separation between Coalville, Whitwick and Thringstone and whether it would change any conclusions. The study had recommended some minor changes, but continued to provide justification for the Area of Separation.

In addition, a Green and Blue Infrastructure Study had been undertaken which identified the opportunities for enhancing existing provision. Some of these improvements could be done as part of new developments, but there could also be other means to achieve improvements outside of the planning system.

Officers noted that two pieces of work were still in progress, these being an new Infrastructure Delivery Plan and also an update to the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment, both of which would be brought to the committee when they had been completed.

It was acknowledged that there was a lack of provision for traveller sites in the district and a member enquired when there would be a date set to receive a report detailing potential sites. Officers responded that the update needed assessment and that the report would hopefully be completed by the end of 2022 or early in 2023 when gaps had been finalised.

Chairman's initials

It was noted that there was a particular difficulty in terms of identifying sites but that a lot of work had been done towards achieving this.

A member informed the meeting that he believed the siting of the new leisure centre was to replace a golf course with an alternative form of leisure and that as such, this would not lead to any further building on this area of land. Officers responded that from a planning policy point of view in determining the planning application for the new leisure centre that the area of separation policy was relevant and had been taken in to account. found to be so. The new study was intended to provide updated evidence now that the leisure centre was built and had concluded that part of the new leisure centre site was adjudged to making a less important contribution to the Area of Separation than it was previously.

It was confirmed that the old leisure centre is outside the area of separation, so any building or redevelopment on this site would not compromise this.

Councillor R Morris enquired whether sustainable urban drainage would need an enhanced requirement as it would be significant in terms of preventing flooding and to help the environment. Officers responded that while this was not a current priority, it would be something to be considered in due course.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The outcome from the Area of Separation update report be noted.
- ii) The outcome from the Green and Blue Infrastructure Study be noted.
- iii) Progress on the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment be noted.

18 SWANNINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUBMISSION (REGULATION 16) CONSULTATION

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report, informing members that following consultation, an examiner would be appointed to consider any representations made to the current consultation.

Members had no questions.

It was moved by Councillor J Hoult, seconded by Councillor R Morris and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The proposed response to the submission draft of the Swannington Neighbourhood Plan in Appendix A be agreed.
2. The consultation period for the Swannington Neighbourhood Plan be noted.
3. Following receipt of the independent examiner's report, the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning will determine whether the conditions have been met for the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum be noted.
4. Following the referendum and if time does not allow for a report to this Committee, the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning will determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be 'made' be noted.

19 DRAFT AIR QUALITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report and confirmed that at this stage, officers would only be seeking approval to for consultation.

Chairman's initials

Members noted that this was a good report of which they were fully supportive, and confirmed that it would be a positive step to put consideration of serious pollutants to the fore.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, seconded by Councillor R Morris and

RESOLVED THAT:

The draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document be approved for public consultation.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.22 pm