

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Room 101, Old Council Offices, Whitwick Road, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2023

Present: Councillor J G Simmons (Chair)

Councillors P Lees, D Everitt, J Legrys, R L Morris, P Moulton, L Windram, A C Woodman and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr I Nelson, Ms S Lee, Mrs C Hammond and Mr T Devonshire

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bigby and Sewell.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

3 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

4 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Legrys, seconded by Councillor Morris and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of proceedings.

5 LOCAL PLAN - HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND UPDATE

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report.

In response to a question about whether it was possible and appropriate to bring developers with large-scale proposals before the Committee, the Planning Policy Team Manager advised how it would work: once officers had suggested their preferred sites it may then be the opportune moment to bring developers before the committee. It would be an unrealistic timeframe between now and the next meeting of the Committee. The preferred sites should be selected first.

A Member commended the idea of bringing developers before the committee but suggested that there was a number of points to consider: September was earmarked for putting land allocation proposals in front of the committee; the mechanics of bringing developers in must be fair and equitable when deciding which developers to bring before the committee, and due consideration must be given to legal matters and conflicts of interests, particularly for members who were also on the Planning Committee.

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager acknowledged that the question of how to fairly determine which developers spoke before the Committee was an important one. In response to a question about how the provision of services, infrastructure and amenities for a given development was managed, the Planning Policy and Land Charges

Chairman's initials

Team Manager advised that any proposed allocation would have individual requirements attached to it that any future development would need to satisfy. Following that there would be consultation with stakeholders. In addition, the next stage of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan would look in specific detail at each site in terms of what was required. Any development would always be subject to viability, and adjustments may need to be made. However, most infrastructure would emerge in a phased manner throughout the life of the development, although some critical facilities such as sewage treatment would of course be present from the opening of a site.

In response to a question about possibly beginning the process of rescinding the earlier Statement of Common Ground to take some of Leicester's unmet housing need, the Planning Policy Team Manager said it was a matter for Council. There were significant risks attached, which would need to be taken into consideration, especially around the duty to cooperate with other councils.

In response to a question about changes to the preferred existing employment allocation and potential changes to this because of the planned Freeport, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager said that there was only one outstanding allocation, at Ashby Money Hill. It was unlikely that changes to recommendations would occur at this time: the local plan had assumptions about what was likely to be built incorporated into them. They then explained the distinction between strategic land and employment land within the Local Plan framework.

In response to a question about the legal requirement of water companies to provide sewage treatment infrastructure to a development, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager confirmed that there was an obligation to provide capacity.

In response to a question about the weight given to employment in strategic assessments and how this was calculated, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that the assessment was in terms of land required in terms of floor space. Some forecasts, they added, were made around the question of job creation and these were then fed into floor space calculations.

In response to a question about the risk of a Local Plan not being found to be sound, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager explained the process and tests of soundness and the need to comply with national policy goals.

In response to a question about how changes to national policy would impact the nature of the Local Plan, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that changing national policy was a perennial possibility and would always be fed into the Local Plan as required.

In response to a question about the likely capriciousness of national planning policy over a twenty year period, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that they worked to a plan of how much housing they needed by a given time, in this instance 2040, and how much land they had available to utilise to achieve this goal.

In response to a question about safeguards, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that it was hard to stop people putting in planning applications and that the planning system operates within a free market system. They also advised that developers would acknowledge market imperatives: there was currently evidence of a slowing rate of new builds and a potentially deflating housing market.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the Council's strategic approach safeguarded against precisely the changing circumstances of short and medium term economic forces with which the member had been concerned. This was, they added, perhaps an argument

for the Local Plan process: things were frequently in flux, but it may be preferable to deal with the certainties which were known at any given time.

In response to a question about the deadline for the January 2025 inquiry, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that June 2025 was the essential date.

It was moved by Councillor Legrys, seconded by Councillor Lees and

RESOLVED THAT:

The position and discussion as of April 2023 regarding both housing and employment land as set out in the report be noted.

6 LOCKINGTON AND HEMINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - RESPONSE TO SUBMISSION VERSION

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report.

A member commended the parish for producing the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed that a reference to consultation with the local Member be added to resolutions three and four.

In response to a question about what support from the Council is given to the smaller parishes unable, due to their size, to create neighbourhood plans, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that the Council always gave what support they could in the consultation process, and there was also national government funded aid available in this process.

In response to a question about which parishes have Neighbourhood Plans, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that it was Council policy to encourage their production throughout the district; discussions and processes were ongoing towards that end; and the number was increasing slowly but surely.

A Member commended the Neighbourhood Plan which was just coming to fruition in their ward.

In response to a question about environmental and ecological concerns and whether they had been considered in the report, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that Neighbourhood Plans generally had a positive impact on environmental and ecological protection, and for this particular plan these concerns featured prominently.

It was moved by Councillor Legrys, seconded by Councillor Moulton and, subject to amendment,

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The proposed response to the submission draft of the Lockington-Hemington Neighbourhood Plan in Appendix A be approved.
2. The consultation period for the Lockington-Hemington 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 Infrastructure and the local ward member will determine whether the conditions have been met for the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum be approved.
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

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Infrastructure and the local ward member, will determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be 'made'.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.58 pm