

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2026

Present: Councillor J G Simmons (Chair)

Councillors M Ball, D Bigby, S Lambeth, P Lees, J Legrys, R L Morris, P Moulton, C A Sewell, L Windram and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillor A Barker

Officers: Ms J Althorpe, Mr J Arnold, Mr B Dooley, Mr D Gill, Mr T James and Ms S Lee

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

38 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

Councillor R Morris declared that he had been lobbied without influence on item 5 of the agenda, New Local Plan – Diseworth and Isley Woodhouse Area of Separation but had come to the meeting with an open mind.

39 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were 6 public questions received.

Question from Mr Roy Todd

With reference to the Council's own records, can the Committee identify the specific recorded rationale relied upon when progressing site EMP97 for not undertaking Regulation 18 consultation, in circumstances where:

- technical engagement on EMP97 has been ongoing since at least early 2024, including sustained engagement with the site promoters and Leicestershire County Council Highways;
- that engagement included an acknowledged in-principle highways objection relating to access arrangements, the operational function of the Kegworth Bypass, and site topography, as evidenced in contemporaneous internal records received by way of Environmental Information Regulations requests, including correspondence dated 8 August 2024;
- internal correspondence disclosed under the Environmental Information Regulations confirms that, as at 14 November 2025, just five days prior to the Local Plan Committee decision of 19 November 2025, officers regarded the site as "at risk" because the primary access arrangements lie outside the site red line and beyond the promoter's control;
- Environmental Information Regulation disclosures show that no engagement had taken place at allocation stage with either the Civil Aviation Authority or East Midlands Airport / Manchester Airport Group, despite the site's proximity to the airport's runway approach and Public Safety Zone; yet
- the site was not subject to Regulation 18 consultation, and Members themselves recorded on 19 November 2025 that it "did not get full scrutiny from local residents";

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and, in those circumstances, how the Committee reconciles a prolonged period of promoter-engaged technical work on EMP97 with the purpose of Regulation 18 and the Council's own Statement of Community Involvement, both of which are intended to secure early and meaningful public engagement and a robust evidence base before options are effectively fixed?

Response from the Chair

- It is established practice for officers to discuss the technical aspects of potential site allocations (of all types) with expert agencies, such as the local highways authority, before making recommendations to the Committee. This may also include asking for information and clarifications from the site promoters.
- The fact that LCC Highways has concerns about the access to this site was clearly stated in the 19 November 2025 Local Plan Committee report (paragraph 4.12). Appendix B of the same report identified that more detailed assessment may reveal a technical solution which LCC could support.
- In respect of the airport, the greatest proportion of the site lies outside the airport Public Safety Zone. Officers' view is that the site can be developed without encroaching on the PSZ.
- If these, or any other technical matters, cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of professional officers, the advice to the Committee to allocate the site may be changed.
- The 19 November 2025 Local Plan Committee report gave reasons both for and against Regulation 18 consultation at this stage and, on balance, recommended against it. This advice and the decision the Committee made does not contravene the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- It is relevant to highlight that a site allocation policy will be included in the Regulation 19 version of the plan which will include requirements to address the impacts of development such as landscaping, design quality and sustainable transport improvements.

A supplementary question was asked urging officers to identify evidence which authorised proceeding with site EMP97 without Regulation 18 engagement. The Principal Planning Policy Officer responded that the decision to not undertake the Regulation 18 consultation was not made in conflict with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Question from Mr Carl Sutton

Environmental Information Regulations disclosures show that on 18 June 2025, Ian Nelson, then Planning Policy Manager at North West Leicestershire District Council, specifically asked Manchester Airport Group, the owner and operator of East Midlands Airport and a statutory consultee, whether it had any concerns regarding the proposed residential allocation of Site K12.

This was followed by a further email on 15 July 2025, in which Mr Nelson stated:

"I was just wondering if you were able to advise on this issue as we are in the process of finalising a report to our Local Plan Committee."

On 24 July 2025, Manchester Airport Group responded directly to that request and provided site-specific statutory consultee advice, concluding unequivocally:

"For reasons of aircraft noise exposure and disturbance, and residential amenity, it would be inappropriate to allocate this site for residential development."

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Given that Manchester Airport Group, as the statutory airport operator, provided site-specific advice stating that site K12 is inappropriate for residential allocation on aircraft noise and residential amenity grounds, and that this advice was specifically requested by officers prior to the Local Plan Committee report being produced, can the Committee confirm how this conclusion was presented to Members when site K12 was considered, and whether the Committee is satisfied to progress the allocation to Regulation 19 in light of that advice?

Response from the Chair

- Whilst Manchester Air Group (MAG) responded to the March 2025 Regulation 18 consultation (alongside Prologis UK), they did not comment on site K12 as part of their response.
- As a direct result of residents' Regulation 18 comments, Ian Nelson wrote to MAG on 18 June 2025 to establish their views on site K12 and airport safety. At the same time, officers were seeking legal advice on the issue, with the intention of reporting this to 30 July 2025 Local Plan Committee.
- A response from MAG was received on 24 July 2025; after the publication of the 30 July LPC reports. The email trail between MAG and Ian Nelson confirmed that MAG's concerns with the site were about noise rather than safety. At this point in time, officers had requested, but not yet received, legal advice about site K12 and airport safety.
- Whilst MAG's concerns about noise were not reported to LPC, the issue of noise and the suitability of site K12 was raised by Cllr Sutton and referenced in the update report to 30 July LPC, where officers concluded that "excluding this site on the basis of noise without a more detailed assessment, as required in the policy, would be premature." After considering the issue of noise, officers did not propose any changes to the original recommendation that site K12 should be allocated in the Regulation 19 Plan "subject to confirmation that the site is acceptably located in relation to the EMA Public Safety Zone."
- The update report was finalised by Ian Nelson as Planning Policy Team Manager on 30 July and it is reasonable to assume that his email exchange with MAG (24 July), although not explicitly referred to, would not have changed the conclusions set out in the update report.
- It should be noted that there are still several stages before the site can be formally allocated in an adopted Local Plan. MAG can make formal comments at Regulation 19 stage; the Council can change the Plan after the Regulation 19 consultation and the Planning Inspectorate can explore the soundness of allocating site K12 during the Local Plan examination. Furthermore, a site allocation does not equate to a planning permission and any future planning application would need to demonstrate that the proposed development is acceptable in noise terms.

As part of a supplementary question, it was asked whether members were made aware of the conclusion provided in the response.

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The Principal Planning Policy Officer confirmed that email correspondence received from the airport had not been previously reported to the Committee, but issues related to noise were dealt with by the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager at the last meeting. It was added that the airport operator responded to the Regulation 18 consultation but did not comment on site K12, and that the airport operator would have the opportunity to raise concerns as part of the Regulation 19 consultation.

Question from Mr Noel Suthesh

At the Local Plan Committee meeting on 19 November 2025, Members were advised that progressing Site EMP97 was necessary to avoid undermining the Local Plan.

However, EIR material shows that, just five days earlier, officers were recording internally that EMP97 itself was “at risk” because its primary access depends on land outside the site red line and beyond the promoter’s control.

Can the Committee confirm whether Members were explicitly informed, at the point of decision, that officers were simultaneously assessing EMP97 as carrying a site-specific deliverability risk, as opposed to a general procedural or plan-level risk?

If that distinction was not made clear, how were Members able to make a fully informed, evidence-based decision to rely on EMP97 as a strategically critical allocation?

Response from the Chair

- The fact that LCC Highways has concerns about the access to this site was clearly stated in the 19 November 2025 Local Plan Committee report (paragraph 4.12). Appendix B of the same report confirmed that more detailed assessment may reveal a technical solution which LCC could support.
- If this, or any other technical matters, cannot be addressed to officers’ professional satisfaction before the Committee’s consideration of the Regulation 19 Plan, the advice to the Committee to allocate the site may be changed.

As part of a supplementary question, it was asked whether officers could identify the section in the report that went to the last meeting which made members aware of the risks associated with land control and deliverability before they arrived at their decision.

In response, the Principal Planning Policy Officer stated that members were made aware of the risks associated with satisfactory access to site EMP97, and that it was up to the developer to work with Leicestershire County Council to resolve land ownership and access issues if needed. It was added, in the event satisfactory access was not achieved, the recommendations may need to be changed.

Question from Mr Michael Elton

Following the last round of consultation for additional sites put forward for development, you decided to remove 3 of them from the plan. One of those sites Ap15/17 because you stated that it was undeliverable. Could you outline for me please why the site is undeliverable?

Response from the Chair

- Land at Old End, Appleby Magna (Ap15) and 40 Measham Road, Appleby Magna (Ap17) was proposed as a single housing allocation. However, the sites are in different ownership and have been submitted to the Council independently. No evidence has

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been presented to the Council which gives certainty that the site would be delivered as a comprehensive development.

- It was not considered appropriate to allocate Ap15 and Ap17 as independent sites in light of each site's potential capacity when viewed individually.
- Ap15 has a capacity of less than 10 dwellings and falls below the identified necessary site threshold for a site to be considered as a potential allocation.
- It is uncertain whether 10 or more dwellings could be delivered at Ap17, following a reduction in and amendment to the site area, potential flood risk constraints and the need for development to take into account the surrounding character of the area.
- Whilst the sites are not proceeding as allocations, at 11 March 2025 Local Plan Committee it was agreed that these sites would be included in the Limits to Development for Appleby Magna in the next version of the Plan (Regulation 19).

As part of a supplementary question, officers were asked why they were not taking forward sites Ap15 and Ap17.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer stated that the sites would not have delivered affordable housing, open spaces, and beneficial contributions to schools. It was also noted that the sites had been replaced by Site Ap1 as it was deemed more suitable.

Question from Ms Gayle Baker

The majority of sites included within your plan, will be part of large-scale housing estates proposed by major promoters and building companies such as David Wilson homes and Gladman's. These developments have a much greater negative impact upon the area, community identity, heritage and wildlife, infrastructure flooding etc. There are relatively few smaller developments across the district. Hugglescote and Ashby are now unrecognisable and often grid locked, this has had a huge negative impact upon those communities. You now plan to treat Whitwick and Diseworth in the same way.

What evidence do you have that concentrating large scale developments in 2 unfortunate areas, for the period of your plan, will deliver the best outcomes for residents of NWLDC?

Response from the Chair

- The Local Plan needs to allocate a sufficient supply and mix of sites in order to meet its housing requirement up to 2042.
- In order to be deemed sound by an independent Planning Inspector, the Council's strategy to meet housing needs must be justified, taking into account reasonable alternatives and based on proportionate evidence.
- Sites have been identified in accordance with an agreed distribution strategy, which includes a new settlement but also delivers housing in line with an agreed settlement hierarchy (approved for the Regulation 19 plan at 14 August 2024 Local Plan Committee). Sites have been assessed in accordance with a specified methodology and have undergone sustainability appraisal.
- The identification of sites is underpinned by a wide range of evidence. Some of that evidence, such as transport modelling, an infrastructure delivery plan, Sustainability Appraisal and a viability assessment is ongoing and will be completed by the time the Regulation 19 version goes out to consultation.

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- All the Council's Local Plan evidence will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, alongside the Regulation 19 version of the plan and will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector against the tests of soundness.

In response to a supplementary question asking how officers knew the large sites strategy was more deliverable, the Principal Planning Policy Officer replied that a number of strategies had been examined in different locations, the options went through a Sustainability Appraisal, and the favoured most sustainable option was drawn from that assessment process.

Question from Mr Chris Taylor

At the last meeting, it was acknowledged that the decisions surrounding site selection for the Local Plan are becoming increasingly difficult. Given this, why did the Committee choose to remove Site C76 (Meadow Lane, Coalville)—the very site that Planning Officers and independent consultants ranked first in the hierarchy for housing development in the area? To date, we have not seen any technical or environmental evidence that justifies the removal of this top-ranked site. By rejecting the most viable and sustainable option without a published evidence base, are you not making the final decision to produce a 'sound' and defensible Plan significantly more difficult for this Council?

Response from the Chair

- Officers proposed to allocate site C76 and presented it, as part of a report on Proposed Housing and Employment Allocations, to the Local Plan Committee on 15 November 2023.
- Members at that meeting resolved not to allocate the site *“because of the impact on the Coalville Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest, destroying this part of the Charnwood Forest, the loss of mature trees, the impact on local roads, particularly the junction of Meadow Lane and Leicester Road but also the increased risk to children going to and from Castle Rock School.”*
- Planning policies need to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account of their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Officers have undertaken a site assessment exercise which involves weighing up the potential benefits and adverse impacts of developing sites.
- In carrying out the site assessment work underpinning the proposed site allocations, officers have never ranked sites nor have they referred to site C76 as its top-ranked site in the Coalville Urban Area.
- As confirmed at 11 March 2025 Local Plan Committee ([Local Plan Proposed Housing Allocations](#) report) planning policy officers consider that they have identified a range of suitable sites to broadly accord with the Council's agreed distribution strategy (see Table 7 of that report) and meet the Council's housing need up to 2042.

In response to a supplementary question asking if officers could provide documents that were produced concerning site C76, the Principal Planning Policy Officer stated that site assessment work and the Sustainability Appraisal could be located on the website.

40 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025.

A concern was raised that there was a possible inaccuracy in recommendation 1 of minute item 17.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby, seconded by Councillor M Ball and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of proceedings, and that the recording be reviewed before the next meeting to determine whether recommendation 1 of minute item 17 needed to be amended in the minutes to include Appendix B to more accurately reflect the decision made at the Committee.

Post-meeting note: Following a review of the recording, recommendation 1 was agreed as minuted.

41 NEW LOCAL PLAN - DISEWORTH AND ISLEY WOODHOUSE AREA OF SEPARATION

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report.

A discussion was had during which members expressed their support for including Parcels A – I in the Area of Separation. It was commented that it was reasonable to include Parcels H and I in the Area of Separation as the developers of Isley Woodhouse proposed sporting uses for these areas. It was also noted that there would be no negative impact on the character of the surrounding area because Policy En5 of the Local Plan ensured that future developments were sustainable and caused minimal disruption.

The Interim Local Plan Manager explained that policy wording was key to ensuring that the Area of Separation provided effective protection to the intended areas.

Councillor R Morris moved that the proposed Diseworth and Isley Woodhouse Area of Separation should encompass Parcels A - I. It was seconded by Councillor D Bigby and

RESOLVED THAT:

The proposed Diseworth and Isley Woodhouse area of separation should encompass Parcels A to I as shown on the Plan at Appendix A.

42 NEW LOCAL PLAN - OPEN SPACE, PLAYING PITCHES AND BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGIES AND POLICY IF4: OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report.

A discussion followed during which several questions of clarity were addressed by the planning policy officers and the Legal Advisor.

Members questioned whether local councils (including parish and town councils) could have the first option to adopt open spaces and play areas on new estates, and also if that could be included in a policy.

Members were advised that the Council could not direct a private landowner in such a way, and that these would be managed by the developer. It was added by the Legal Advisor that if there was a policy, it could say that the preferred option would be for it to go to parish and town councils but ultimately it was for the developers to decide on how they dispose of the land, and up to the parish and town councils to accept it.

The Legal Advisor commented that these concerns were being looked at by the Government, and legislation could be introduced in the future to prevent unsustainable development from happening.

Following the request of a member, it was minuted that members were frustrated about the length of agendas, and that they had been given insufficient time to study the content. Officers were urged to provide members with sufficient time to read lengthy documents prior to the meeting.

As recommendations 1, 2, and 3 were to note the contents of the report, members were thanked for their comments.

Councillor M Wyatt moved recommendation 4. It was seconded by Councillor P Lees and

RESOLVED THAT:

Subject to the findings of the whole plan viability assessment, the Local Plan Committee agrees to Policy IF4: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities, as amended at Appendix E, for inclusion in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

The meeting commenced at 6:00pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 7:16pm

Chair's signature