

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE 2025

Present: Councillor J G Simmons (Chair)

Councillors P Lees, M Ball, A Barker (Substitute for Councillor S Lambeth), D Bigby, J Legrys, C A Sewell, L Windram and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr I Nelson, Mr J Arnold, Ms B Leonard, Ms S Lee, Ms J Althorpe, Gibson, Ms E Trilk and Mrs R Wallace

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors S Lambeth, R Morris and P Moulton.

8 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

It was noted that members of the Committee had received an email from Ms G Baker, a member of the public that spoke to the petition later in the meeting.

There were no interests declared.

9 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were 3 questions; addressed by the Chair of the Committee.

Question from Mrs G Baker

'C86, Howe Road Whitwick is located close to historic landfill and will require further geo-environment investigation. It is also within a mining consultation area. I understand that this site is owned by the Council and that it was successfully nominated as a site of community value in August 2020. It only has capacity to build 17 properties, so how can development of this site benefit the council and residents?'

Response from the Chair of the Local Plan Committee

'Development of this site by the Council provides an opportunity to help address some of the Council's housing priorities which might not otherwise be addressed by the housing market.

A land contamination assessment would be required as part of any planning application process.'

In response to a supplementary question, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager explained that the response to the question was set out because the plot of land was owned by the Council and one of the options was to develop 100% Council housing or affordable housing, subject to policies. This was envisaged as being most likely. The access to this site hasn't been looked into in great detail, as of yet. It was also clarified that the Gladman developer's interest was in land parcels to the west of Whitwick and excluded C86.

Question from Mr M Elton

'The West Whitwick area was historically an area of sheep farming, but I am not totally clear which particular part of the site was used for sheep dipping. Sheep dip sites lead to arsenic and organophosphate contamination, which is extremely hazardous to the health

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of builders and potential residents if the site is developed. I have researched Part 2A of the Environment Protection Act 1990 and understand that the Council should hold records about potential areas of contamination. What steps will the council take to ensure that homes are not built on contaminated soil in the area?’

Response from the Chair of the Local Plan Committee

‘The Council’s Environmental Protection Officer has advised that as the site is currently agricultural land and sheep dipping is an agricultural use, it wouldn’t be considered under Part 2A of the EPA 1990 so it would only be assessed if a change of use that would introduce new receptors was proposed. Furthermore, they have confirmed that farm sites would require land contamination risk assessments as part of any planning application process.’

In response to the supplementary question, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager explained that there would be a need for a contamination risk assessment as part of a planning application and so if there were any issues this is where they would be picked up together with any remediation necessary.

Question from Mr C Taylor

‘I’ve noted that some sites listed as SSSIs in the North West Leicestershire District Council’s site assessments may be out of date, as they do not appear in Natural England’s current records. Given the abundance of wildlife and wildflowers in the West Whitwick Valley, when was this area last assessed for SSSI status by Natural England?’

Response from the Chair of the Local Plan Committee

‘The site assessment work has used information on the Natural England Magic website. Natural England are responsible for identifying SSSIs. They have advised that “land West of Whitwick, as outlined in the map provided by you, is not a Proposed SSSI nor part of one. We can also confirm that Natural England is not considering a proposal to notify this land as a SSSI”. They go on to state that they “will select and notify an area as a new Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) when it believes the land’s wildlife, geology or landform is of special interest. When land becomes a SSSI, it does not give the public the right to access the land. A substantial amount of evidence is required to show that an area has special interest of a standard to be considered a SSSI.

The rationale for the evaluation and selection of SSSIs is available on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website:

Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/guidelines-for-selection-of-sssis/>)

Guidelines for selection of Earth Science SSSIs (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/dfe0020b-efef-4f93-9fe4-1e10bab91cdf>)’

In response to a supplementary question, it was agreed that the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager would provide further information to the questioner about whether there were any SSSIs in the proposed plots included in the Local Plan.

10 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2025.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

Chair’s initials

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 TO CONSIDER THE PETITION REFERRED BY COUNCIL ON 13 MAY 2025

At the Council meeting on 13 May 2025, a petition was submitted and presented to the Committee by Ms G Baker. The petition was moved by Councillor T Gillard and seconded by Councillor Barker to be referred to the next convenient meeting of the Local Plan Committee.

After the Committee was reminded of the petition and the actions that could be taken, Members emphasised the importance of meeting the Local Plan deadlines and the risk of no plan leading to “developer anarchy”. They were concerned that further withdrawal of sites would result in a failure to meet the deadline of December 2026. It was recognised that the need for additional housing due to demographic changes was there and that it was important to trust professional advice from Planning Officers and External Agencies. Should another allocation be pulled, the Distribution Strategy would become more imbalanced.

A motion was proposed by Councillor D Bigby to note the petition. This was accepted by Members of the Committee and a recorded vote was taken.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby and seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

The Chair put the motion to the vote. A recorded vote being requested, the voting was as detailed below.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Committee noted the petition.

To note the petition referred by Council on 13 May 2025 (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Carried	

12 NEW LOCAL PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO POLICIES

The Planning Policy and Land Charges presented the report, and along with the Principal Planning Officers, summarised each of the policies for consideration. Reference was also made to the additional papers as circulated prior to the meeting.

Each policy was then discussed in turn and several questions of clarity were addressed throughout the discussion.

Policy H7

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Some concerns were shared in relation to paragraph 3 of part 3, as some Members felt that this part of the policy encouraged self-build properties outside the limits to development. It was believed that there was a strong argument for deleting the part of the paragraph, particularly as other Local Authorities did not include this in their local plans. It was also noted that the recent information received regarding the exemption for self-build properties for biodiversity net gain was significant. Officers justified this part of the policy as a safety net should there be a situation where the plots required were not met on the allocated sites. Further discussion was had both for and against the removal of part 3 of paragraph 3 of the policy.

A proposal was formally put forward to remove part 3 of paragraph 3, therefore a separate vote would be taken along with the remaining recommendations at the conclusion of the item.

Policy IF2

A discussion was had on the wording used in part 3 of the policy which some Members felt diluted the requirement to provide community facilities. After further discussions it was proposed that the wording be amended to:

‘Major residential/residential-led development is required to provide for or contribute to new community facilities where no facilities exist or...’

Policy IF6

Discussions were had on the long-term aspirations for the reopening of the Ivanhoe rail line and it was felt that the policy should reflect that by including the support for the provision of a station somewhere in the heart of the National Forest should passenger trains resume.

Policy EN3

Members felt that the policy should be deferred to a future meeting to allow officers and the National Forest company more time to discuss and agree any modifications felt necessary to strengthen the policy to support the aim to increase tourism in the area.

The Chair thanked the committee for its comments and advised that they had been noted.

By affirmation of the meeting

The Chair put the motion to the vote, a recorded vote being requested the voting was as detailed below

RESOLVED THAT:

The following policies from the draft Local Plan proposed policies for consultation document (January 2024) be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment:

- (i) Policy EC10 (East Midlands Airport: public safety zones);
- (ii) Policy IF7 (Ashby Canal);
- (iii) Policy EN4 (Charnwood Forest Regional Park)

By affirmation of the meeting

The Chair put the motion to the vote, a recorded vote being requested the voting was as detailed below

RESOLVED THAT:

Chair's initials

The following policies as amended in Appendix F be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment:

- (I) Policy H6 (rural exception sites);
- (III) Policy H10 (space standards);
- (IV) Policy H11 (accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user homes);
- (V) Policy EC4 (employment uses on unidentified sites);
- (VI) Policy EC5 (existing employment areas);
- (VII) Policy EC6 (start up workspace);
- (VIII) Policy EC7 (local employment opportunities);
- (IX) Policy EC8 (East Midlands Airport);
- (X) Policy EC9 (East Midlands Airport: Safeguarding);
- (XI) Policy EC11 (Donington Park Circuit);
- (XII) Policy EC12 (retitled to: tourist attractions and visitor accommodation);
- (XIII) Policy TC1 (town and local centres: hierarchy and management of development);
- (XIV) Policy TC2 (hot food takeaway uses);
- (XVII) Policy IF8 (parking and new development);
- (XVIII) Policy EN2 (River Mease special area of conservation);
- (XX) Policy EN6 (land and air quality);
- (XXI) Policy EN7 (conservation and enhancement of the historic environment).

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby that paragraph 3 of policy H7 be deleted. It was seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

The Chair put the motion to the vote, a recorded vote being requested the voting was as detailed below

The motion was LOST

RESOLVED THAT:

Policy H7 (self build and custom housebuilding), as detailed in the report, be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby that the word “for” be removed and that “or contribute to” be included as an alternative in Policy IF2.

By affirmation of the meeting

The Chair put the motion to the vote, a recorded vote being requested the voting was as detailed below

RESOLVED THAT:

The word “for” be removed and that “or contribute to” be included as an alternative in part 3 of Policy IF2 and, Policy IF2 (community facilities) be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment.

It was moved by Councillor M Ball that Policy IF6 be supported subject to the inclusion of provision of a station within the heart of the National Forest. It was seconded by Councillor P Lees.

The Chair put the motion to the vote, a recorded vote being requested the voting was as detailed below

RESOLVED THAT:

Chair's initials

Policy IF6 (retitled to: Reopening of passenger rail services), with the inclusion of provision of a station within the heart of the National Forest, be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment.

It was moved by Councillor M Ball and seconded by Councillor J Legrys that Policy EN3 (The National Forest) be deferred to a future meeting for consideration.

The Chair put the motion to the vote, a recorded vote being requested the voting was as detailed below

RESOLVED THAT:

Policy EN3 (The National Forest) be deferred to a future meeting for consideration.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys and seconded by Councillor M Ball and

RESOLVED THAT:

The policy map changes from Appendix A of the draft Local Plan proposed policies for consultation document (January 2024), excluding East Midlands Gateway existing employment area and Mercia Park, be included in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys and seconded by Councillor D Bigby and

RESOLVED THAT:

The policy map changes listed in paragraph 8.3 and shown in Appendix G and, shown on maps A and B in the update note, be included in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

The following policies from the draft Local Plan proposed policies for consultation document (January 2024) be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment: (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Carried	
The following policies as amended in Appendix F be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment: (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For

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Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Carried	
Paragraph 3 of policy H7 be deleted (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	Against
Councillor Paul Lees	Against
Councillor Mike Ball	Against
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Lee Windram	Against
Councillor Michael Wyatt	Against
Councillor Richard Blunt	Against
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Rejected	
The word “for” be removed and that “or contribute to” be included as an alternative in part 3 of Policy IF2 and, Policy IF2 (community facilities) be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment. (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	Against
Councillor Paul Lees	Against
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Lee Windram	Against
Councillor Michael Wyatt	Against
Councillor Richard Blunt	Against
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Carried	
Policy IF6 (retitled to: Reopening of passenger rail services), with the inclusion of provision of a station within the heart of the National Forest, be included in the Regulation 19 plan, subject to the findings of whole plan viability assessment. (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Carried	
Policy EN3 (The National Forest) be deferred to a future meeting for consideration. (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Paul Lees	For

Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	For
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Guy Rogers	For
Carried	

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm