

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2018**

Title of report	<b>LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – FURTHER CONSULTATION</b>
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Purpose of report	To outline for members the proposed latest consultation as part of the Local Plan review and to provide an update in respect of various matters which are likely to impinge upon the review.
Council Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building Confidence in Coalville</li> <li>- Homes and Communities</li> <li>- Businesses and Jobs</li> </ul>
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The cost of the review is met from existing budgets for 2018/19 and appropriate budgetary provision will be sought as part of the budget process for 2019/20.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	A risk assessment of the project has been undertaken. As far as possible control measures have been put in place to minimise these risks, including monthly Project Board meetings where risk is reviewed.
Equalities Impact Screening	An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Not applicable

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	National Planning Policy Framework which can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2</a> Report to Local Plan Committee of 12 September 2018 regarding Self and Custom Housebuilding which can be viewed at <a href="https://minutes-1.nwleics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=344&amp;MId=1948&amp;Ver=4">https://minutes-1.nwleics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=344&amp;MId=1948&amp;Ver=4</a>
Recommendation	<b>THAT THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE:</b>  <b>(I) APPROVES, FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES, APPENDIX A TO THIS REPORT (SUBJECT TO THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL TEXT IN RESPECT OF THE SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY);</b> <b>(II) AGREE TO ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AS PART OF THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW RATHER THAN THROUGH A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A review of the local plan was formally commenced in February 2018, in accordance with the commitment made when the local plan was adopted in November 2017.
- 1.2 The first stage of the review was to undertake an issues consultation between 21 February and 4 April 2018. The outcome of this consultation was reported to the meeting of this Committee held on 20 June 2018.
- 1.3 The approved Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the programme for the preparation of the local plan and other key planning documents, identifies that a further round of consultation (referred to as Emerging Options) would take place in November/December 2018.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to outline what it is proposed to consult upon and to provide an update in respect of various matters which are likely to impinge upon the review.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSED CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 Attached, at Appendix A of this report, is a copy of the proposed consultation document. The document sets out options on a number of issues and will help to demonstrate that the Council has considered reasonable alternatives as part of the review process, a requirement of the Strategic Environmental Appraisal process.
- 2.2 Members will recall that in view of the fact that the Local Plan was adopted recently the review is a 'partial review'; not all policies need to be reviewed. In particular, there is a need to address the shortfall in employment land compared to the requirements identified in the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) for Leicester and Leicestershire. Therefore, the proposed consultation sets out a number of strategy options for how this might be done. At this stage no sites are proposed for development; this will be the subject of further work and consultation in due course.
- 2.3 The February 2018 consultation noted that a number of new policies could be included to address policy 'gaps'. Therefore, it is proposed to consult upon options in respect of Self and Custom Build, which was the subject of a report to this Committee of 12 September 2018, and also how we might address Health and Wellbeing issues through the plan review.
- 2.4 In terms of Self and Custom Build, since the meeting of this Committee of 12 September the response of Inspectors at examinations locally has provided different outcomes. In the case of Melton a policy is retained which provides details as to the threshold above which such provision will be sought as part of market developments and also the amount required. However, in the case of Blaby the policy has been changed such that it provides support in principle but with no detailed requirements. This serves to highlight the difficulty associated with this issue and members should be aware that whatever evidence the Council provides, there is no guarantee that a policy will be supported by an Inspector.
- 2.5 In respect of other existing policies, a report elsewhere on this agenda considers whether policy S2 (Settlement Hierarchy) should be changed to take account of members' concerns which have arisen since the plan was adopted. Subject to the views of this committee on this matter, the proposed consultation would also include this issue. The text will need to be added to that currently included at Appendix A when member's views are known.
- 2.6 Members will be aware, from previous reports to this committee, that a key change in government policy has been the introduction of a standard methodology to be used by local authorities to inform decisions on future housing requirements. The standard methodology uses a combination of data published by the Office for National Statistics on household growth projections and information regarding affordability of housing (referred to as the median workplace based affordability ratios).
- 2.7 The latest household projections were published in September 2018. When these are applied to the standard methodology it results in a housing requirement for North West Leicestershire for the period 2018-36 of 9,522 dwellings (529 dwellings every year). This is slightly higher than the housing requirement used in the adopted Local Plan (481 dwellings every year) and somewhat higher than the figure in the HEDNA for the period to 2036 (448 dwellings every year). It is also significantly higher than the requirement arising from the

previous 2014 based household projections (368 dwellings every year) as noted in the report to this committee on the revised NPPF.

- 2.8 This represents a significant change, not only in terms of the actual numbers, but also for the review and what it will need to address. Based on the previous figures (not taking in to account the possible need to accommodate any unmet need from Leicester City), it was estimated that the potential requirements would be largely met from existing permissions and allocations; in effect there would be little need to allocate new sites. However, based on the latest prediction of the number of new homes which are likely to be built on sites with planning permission or allocated for development, it is estimated that about 8,200 dwellings would be built by 2036. This is about 1,300 dwellings less than is required. Therefore, the Local Plan review will need to address this shortfall.
- 2.9 The issue is further complicated by the fact that, as previously reported to this committee, the government has stated that it will consult on changes to the standard methodology in order to ensure that the government's stated aim of 300,000 new homes being built every year can be achieved. There is no confirmed date for this consultation, but it is possible that it will not take place until late 2018/early 2019. Allowing for consultation and consideration of any responses it is likely, therefore, that it will be mid-2019 before we get a firm indication of the housing requirements.
- 2.10 There is also uncertainty as Leicester City has previously declared that it cannot accommodate all of its housing requirements within the city. The quantity of this shortfall, the implications of the latest results from the standard methodology, and the timing of when confirmation will be available are unclear.
- 2.11 Notwithstanding the uncertainty regarding the likely housing requirement it would be prudent to assume that it will be at least 529 dwellings every year and will require the allocation of additional land. This will require additional work over and above that previously anticipated.
- 2.12 It would not be appropriate to await the final confirmation of what the requirement is likely to be as this will only delay the plan review. Therefore, the consultation outlines possible ways that the plan review can build in sufficient flexibility to make sure that future requirements are met (whatever these may be) and seeks views on these options.
- 2.13 Subject to the approval of this committee it is proposed that the consultation on the matters outlined above would commence on 12 November 2018. It is the normal approach for such consultation to take place for 6 weeks. In this instance this would mean an end date to consultation on 21 December 2018. In view of the proximity to Christmas it would be prudent to have an extended period of consultation to 11 January 2019.

### **3.0 OTHER MATTERS**

- 3.1 Since the review commenced the government has published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2018. As reported to this committee on 12 September 2018 whilst the overall thrust of national policy has not changed significantly, the new NPPF has introduced a number of changes which will also need to be addressed as part of the review. For example, issues relating to the role of small sites in housing supply and entry level exception housing sites, and the distinction between strategic and local policies.

- 3.2 The review will also need to take on board the outcome from the Strategic Growth Plan which is the subject of a separate report elsewhere on the agenda for this committee.
- 3.3 Members will be aware that in parallel to the Local Plan review, work has been undertaken on a separate Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. A further call for sites was issued in the summer. Whilst no new sites were put forward as part of this process, officers are continuing to examine a wide range of possible sources.
- 3.4 The delay in the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document which has arisen from the need to do a further call-for-sites means that the timetable for both documents have, in effect, come together.
- 3.5 In view of this, there would be advantages to addressing the needs of gypsies and travellers as part of the Local Plan review rather than as a separate document. It would mean that all of the key issues are addressed in a single document and so be easier to understand. In addition, it would be more efficient in terms of officer time and would reduce costs (and possibly time) at examination stage as there would be some elements of an examination common to both plans. Any delay in agreeing appropriate sites for gypsies and travellers would have implications for the wider Local Plan review and so could delay its adoption.
- 3.6 On balance it is considered that the issue of provision for gypsies and travellers should now be included as part of the Local Plan review.
- 3.7 The implications of all of the above, including the additional work that will now need to be undertaken in respect of future housing, will be considered by officers and may result in changes to the LDS.