

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) identifies three large-scale potential development sites around Castle Donington and East Midlands Airport. These sites are:
- CD10 – Land North of Park Lane Castle Donington (Site C on the plan at Appendix A)
- IW1 - Land South and West of Isley Walton (Site A on the plan at Appendix A)
- IW2 - Land south of East Midlands Airport, Isley Walton (Site B on the plan at Appendix A)
- 1.2 The sites were put forward as mixed housing/employment development, although housing was anticipated to be the dominant use.
- 1.3 The Council is currently considering two planning applications in respect of employment proposals on land immediately south of the A50 at Castle Donington/Hemington (Site I on the plan at Appendix A) and at Netherfield Lane (Site J on the plan at Appendix A) .
- 1.4 These five sites are all located relatively closely together in an a part of the district which is home to existing facilities such as East Midlands Airport and Donington Park Racetrack and has already seen significant development (for example the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange and the start of construction on about 900 homes at Castle Donington).
- 1.5 The northern part of North West Leicestershire is identified in the Strategic Growth Plan ("SGP") as Part of the 'Leicestershire International Gateway' ("the Gateway"). The SGP identifies that the Gateway could accommodate about 11,200 dwellings, of which at least 5,200 dwellings would be in North West Leicestershire (the remainder in Charnwood).
- 1.6 The Local Plan review will need to consider all reasonable alternatives. In considering such alternatives it will be important to understand what the potential implications are on a number of factors, including infrastructure and landscape.
- 1.7 In respect of infrastructure, it was decided to commission a high-level assessment of the five sites referred to above to understand at a strategic level the potential infrastructure implications. In addition, for the three potential strategic development sites it was also decided to commission a landscape sensitivity assessment. A similar piece of work had been previously undertaken for the main settlements across the district to help inform future decisions about the allocation of sites for development. These sites are located further afield and so they had not been covered in this previous study.
- 1.8 A further potential strategic site (Site D on the plan at Appendix A) was identified to officers by Councillor Saffell around the junction of the A42 and A444 and it was decided to include this site in both the infrastructure study and the landscape assessment as well. Unlike sites A, B and C this site does not, at this stage, have any landowner support.
- 1.9 This report summarises the findings from both of these studies in respect of the strategic sites.

2.0 INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

The study

- 2.1 The infrastructure study was undertaken by Arup, an established multi-disciplinary consultancy. The study considered 18 infrastructure types covering utilities, community facilities, and healthcare and emergency services. It also considers flood risk, air quality, and noise pollution as key development constraints relevant to whether development can be accommodated on the sites. Further details are set out at Appendix B of this report. It is important to note that a key infrastructure which was not considered as part of the study was transport. This will be picked up in additional work (see section 4 of this report).

- 2.2 The study involved a combination of desktop assessment and targeted stakeholder engagement. As it is a high level assessment it does not go in to detail. Such matters would need to be picked up through additional work.
- 2.3 A copy of the report can be viewed [here](#).

The findings

- 2.4 For most of the infrastructure and constraint types considered, it was established that relatively typical levels of mitigation and investment would be likely to be required to make development acceptable. In terms of the infrastructure considered, no fundamental barriers to development in the study area were identified.
- 2.5 The scale and distribution of development potentially envisaged means that strategic approaches to delivery will be required – particularly for sewerage provision, primary and secondary schools, and GP surgeries. Engagement with Western Power Distribution has also identified that the electricity supply network within the study area is almost saturated, and therefore likely to necessitate the provision of a new primary substation at relatively significant cost to allow any of the sites to be developed.
- 2.6 For the individual sites considered, the following conclusions were reached:
- 2.6.1 Sites A and B, West and East of Isley Walton (Residential)

No unmitigable constraints identified, but significant new infrastructure provision and/or mitigation is likely to be required for nine of the infrastructure and constraint types considered.

- Gas main investment - £375,000 (whether one or both sites developed)
 - New primary substation required – on-site costs of £5.7m (combined)
Recommended that this be somewhere within Sites A and B
 - Possible need to relocate WwTW at Castle Donington
 - New primary school(s) – for each site 2 or 3 form entry (greater flexibility if sites come forward together)
 - Secondary education - Expansion of Castle Donington College
 - Between 6.7 and 13.8 Ha of outdoor sports provision required
 - Community facility of 180sqm to 370sqm required
 - Potential need for new GP surgery (definitely, if both sites developed as one)
 - Opportunities to provide improvements to offsite flood risk management
 - Some air quality mitigation measures may be required
 - Not a 'showstopper', but proximity to EMA will require careful consideration in respect of a number of issues including lighting and bird habitats
- 2.6.2 Because Sites A and B are adjacent, a more holistic approach to infrastructure provision would be possible if both are developed together. In discussion with the site promoters, officers have raised this issue, as it would make for sound planning.
- 2.6.3 Site C, West of Castle Donington (Residential)

For the avoidance of doubt, this is site CD10 from the SHELAA referred to above at paragraph 1.1.

No unmitigable constraints identified, but significant new infrastructure provision and/or mitigation is likely to be required for seven of the infrastructure and constraint types considered.

- New primary substation required – as per sites A and B. Would require some diversion work estimated at £30,000 in addition to the cost of the new primary substation above, and onsite cabling and connection costs estimated at £1.7m for a total of 1,425 dwellings.
- Additional WwTW capacity required. Depending upon combination of sites this may require relocation of WwTW at Castle Donington
- New primary school(s) – for each site 1 or 2 form entry (this would be in addition to a new school to be provided as part of current Park Lane development as that has been designed to only meet the needs from that site)
- Secondary education - Expansion of Castle Donington College
- Between 4.1 and 8.2 Ha of outdoor sports provision required
- Contributions required towards enhancement of existing community facilities
- Unable to support new GP surgery, but will be challenging to enhance existing facilities. If sites A and/or B developed then may be able to link to any new facilities provided on those sites.
- Not a 'showstopper', but proximity to EMA will require careful consideration in respect of a number of issues including lighting and bird habitat

2.6.4 Site D, South of the A42/A453 Junction (Residential)

Several significant constraints to development identified which whilst not totally insurmountable, would be very difficult to mitigate and are therefore considered likely to impact the viability of development. This reflects the relatively isolated location of the site, at some distance from existing settlements and infrastructure.

- Gas main investment – this will be challenging to connect to the gas supply network due to distance from network. Cadent Gas has not been able to provide indicative cost figures for connection, but these are understood to be significant.
- New primary substation required – assuming this is located near sites A and B WPD has estimated the cost of a cabling at £2.9m, in addition to the cost of the new primary substation and onsite cabling and connection costs estimated at £6.2m for a total of 5,200 dwellings.
- STW has expressed fundamental concern about sewerage provision. Its closest WwTW is in Worthington, and the scale of development envisaged would necessitate significant enlargement. However, because of the small scale of the receiving watercourse from Worthington WwTW, STW has indicated that a significant influx of treated water may have adverse environmental implications.
- New primary school(s) –between 3.7 and 7.2 forms of entry would be required, potentially requiring at least two new schools.
- Secondary education – on-site provision required for between 3.7 and 7.2 forms of entry. The smallest Secondary School that would be considered by LCC would be for 600 pupil places (4 forms of entry), requiring a land take of 5ha and cost in the region of £18.5 million to construct.
- Between 15 and 30 Ha of outdoor sports provision required
- Community facility of 406sqm to 811sqm required
- Need for new GP surgery. CCG has suggested best achieved through relocation of existing surgery at Belton.
- LLFA has expressed particular concerns around potential impacts on flood risk in Breedon. Because of the size of the site the LLFA has reserved judgement as to whether this is likely to be achievable until further details on the scale and layout of development are available.
- Some air quality mitigation measures may be required (possible issues from construction of HS2 but may depend upon timing of new development)

3.0 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY

The study

- 3.1 The study was undertaken by Gillespies an established consultancy specialising in design, landscape planning and landscape assessments.
- 3.2 The purpose of the study was to establish how the sites are, in landscape terms, sensitive to the impact of any new development. It does this through assessing both landscape and visual sensitivity. The study reflects the latest guidance presented in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3); the industry standard for landscape and visual assessment.
- 3.3 The study was undertaken through a six-stage assessment:
- Stage 1- Desk based identification and description of the type of developments to be assessed
 - Stage 2 - Desk based identification of the four sites to be assessed
 - Stage 3 - Field Survey to identify and describe the current landscape and visual resource
 - Stage 4 - Assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity by combining judgements about susceptibility and value
 - Stage 5 - Consideration of value and susceptibility to give an overall judgement on sensitivity
 - Stage 6 - Preparation of maps and diagrams to identify key landscape and visual considerations in relation to the siting of future development and opportunities for mitigation
- 3.4 At stage 5 each site was assessed and categorised according to the level of sensitivity recorded on a five-point scale (low, medium-low, medium, medium-high and high). For the avoidance of doubt, a site that is assessed as being high is one where the landscape is more sensitive to change than one which is assessed as being low.
- 3.5 Further details regarding the methodology can be seen in the report which can be viewed [here](#).

The findings

- 3.6 The table below summarises the outcome from the assessment.

Site	Landscape sensitivity	Visual sensitivity
A	Medium	Medium-high
B	Medium	Medium
C	Medium	Medium - Low
D	Medium-high	Medium

- 3.7 It is important to note that a site assessed as being high or medium-high is not necessarily unacceptable for development. The landscape assessment is just one factor which needs to be taken in to account. Furthermore, the assessment is based on without mitigation measures being put in place. Mitigation measures would largely depend upon the exact nature and scope of a development and could potentially change the outcome from that assessed.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 In terms of infrastructure, the study highlights that there are issues associated with all of the sites, which is to be expected. It does, however, highlight more significant issues in respect of Site D.
- 4.2 A further issue in respect of site D is that the site has not been promoted by a landowner or developer. At this stage officers have not sought to identify who the owners may be,

but it is likely that it would be in multiple ownerships. Sites A, B and C on the other hand are promoted by landowners.

- 4.3 From a landscape perspective there is very little to choose between the sites, although sites A and D do score medium-high in one category each.
- 4.4 As already noted, the infrastructure study has not considered transport related issues. The scale of development on each of these four sites is such that an impact upon the highway network can be anticipated.
- 4.5 At this stage it would not be appropriate to exclude further consideration of these sites on the basis from the outcome from these two studies, not least because there is still uncertainty regarding the scale of new housing growth that will have to be provided for.
- 4.6 The Council's SHELAA identifies a large number of other potential sites, in addition to those referred to in this report. Officers are in the process of assessing each of these sites against a detailed methodology, including landscape issues which will be informed by the district wide landscape study referred to at paragraph 1.7. That study can be viewed [here](#).
- 4.7 Notwithstanding the current uncertainty regarding future housing requirements, officers are also developing a series of development strategy options for how growth might be distributed across the district. This will also be subject to transport modelling so as to understand what the impact might be upon the highway network.
- 4.8 The outcome of this work will need to be combined with the assessment of all the potential sites identified in the SHELAA, as well as a transport assessment to identify the Council's preferred sites which it wishes to take forward as part of the substantive review of the local Plan.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Local people live in high quality, affordable homes Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	The Local Plan review will need to set out a development strategy for the district. Options for this will be developed as part of the review process.
Safeguarding:	None identified at this time
Equalities/Diversity:	None identified at this time
Customer Impact:	No issues identified
Economic and Social Impact:	Not considered to date. This is a matter which will need to be addressed through further work.
Environment and Climate Change:	Other than potential impact upon the landscape these issues have not been considered to date. This is a matter which will need to be addressed through further work.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None
Risks:	The Local Plan must identify sufficient land to meet the identified needs of the district. In considering how to best meet these needs it is necessary to consider all reasonable alternatives. On the basis of these studies it would not be appropriate to exclude further consideration of these sites at this stage.

Officer Contact

Ian Nelson
Planning Policy Team Manager
01530 454677
ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk