

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – 27 OCTOBER 2021

Title of Report	LOCAL PLAN SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW – SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY	
Presented by	Ian Nelson Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager	
Background Papers	National Planning Policy Framework Report to Local Plan Committee – 7 November 2018 Report to Local Plan Committee – 26 June 2019 Adopted North West Leicestershire Local plan	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	The cost of the review is met from existing budgets which are reviewed as part of the annual budget setting process.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Legal implications considered in the preparation of this report	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	None identified	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	The purpose of this report is to agree the settlement hierarchy as part of the Local Plan substantive review.	
Recommendations	THAT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE AGREE: (I) THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY AS SET OUT AT PARAGRAPH 3.19 OF THIS REPORT; AND (II) THAT THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY BE CONSULTED UPON AS PART OF THE NEXT ROUND OF CONSULTATION	

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states (paragraph 11) that:

“all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;”

1.2 To help achieve a sustainable pattern of development a settlement hierarchy is defined as part of a Local Plan.

1.3 The adopted Local Plan established (Policy S2) a settlement hierarchy which distinguishes between the roles and functions of different settlements with the respective position in the hierarchy determined by the availability of services and facilities that communities need (i.e. settlements with a similar range and level of services and facilities

are at the same level in the hierarchy). The settlement hierarchy is used to guide the location of future development. A report elsewhere on this agenda considers the issue of the potential development strategy for the Local Plan substantive review.

1.4 The current settlement hierarchy consists of the following categories of settlements:

- Principal town
- Key Service Centres
- Local Service Centres
- Sustainable Villages
- Small Villages
- Hamlets

1.5 Appendix A of this report sets out the settlement hierarchy in full.

1.6 As part of the Local Plan substantive review it is necessary to determine whether the current settlement hierarchy is appropriate, or if changes to it are required.

2 THE REVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

2.1 Officers have undertaken a Settlement Study of the district to inform the review of the current Settlement Hierarchy.

2.2 The starting point for this was to establish an up-to-date list of services and facilities available by settlement. This was then checked in March 2021 by consulting with Parish and Town Councils across the district, as well as ward members for those unparished parts of the district.

2.3 Having established a definitive list, officers then developed a methodology to be able to assess the relative sustainability of settlements. Rather than simply being about what services and facilities are available within a settlement, it also considered accessibility to services and facilities elsewhere by public transport as such provision can contribute towards the sustainability of a settlement.

2.4 The following were assessed:

- Access to convenience stores for food shopping;
- Access to education facilities, both primary and secondary;
- Access to employment locations.
- Public transport access to higher order services outside of the settlement; and
- Range of accessible community services and facilities (libraries, GPs, pharmacies, post offices, community venues, pubs, places of worship, and recreation facilities)

2.5 The methodology involved a system of scoring points depending upon how a settlement performed against the set criteria for each service and facility assessed. There then follows a series of steps to define those settlements which are considered to be sustainable to some degree and hence appropriate as potential locations for general market housing.

2.6 More details regarding the methodology, including the overall scoring, are set out in the Settlement Study attached at Appendix B of this report. Due to the size of the document, this does not include the detailed settlement proformas and maps which have been used to inform the study.

3 THE OUTCOME FROM THE REVIEW

3.1 In general terms the outcome from the review shows that:

- The Coalville Urban Area scores well across all services and facilities and has the greatest range of any settlement;
- Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington have the next best scores followed by Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham.
- Beneath these the range of services and facilities is more varied with some settlements having very few

3.2 The outcome largely supports the current settlement hierarchy. Therefore, no change is proposed in respect of the higher order centres of:

- Principal town – the Coalville urban area;
- Key Service Centres – Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington;
- Local Service Centres – Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham

3.3 The next level down is Sustainable Villages. Policy S2 of the adopted Local Plan states that these are *“Settlements which have a limited range of services and facilities where a limited amount of growth will take place within the defined Limits to Development”*.

3.4 The remaining settlements which are considered to be sustainable are proposed as Sustainable Villages as set out below.

Albert Village
 Appleby Magna
 Belton
 Blackfordby
 Breedon on the Hill
 Coleorton (Lower Moor Road Area)
 Diseworth
 Donisthorpe
 Ellistown
 Heather
 Long Whatton
 Moira (including Norris Hill)
 Oakthorpe
 Packington
 Ravenstone
 Swannington
 Woodville (Part)
 Worthington

3.5 Again, this list is virtually the same as in the adopted Local Plan, save for the addition of Woodville. Whilst Woodville is largely located within South Derbyshire, a small area of recent development adjoining Hepworth Road is within the boundaries of North West Leicestershire. Woodville it itself has a good range of services and facilities. The designation only applies to that part of Woodville within North West Leicestershire.

3.6 The characteristics that these villages have in terms of services and facilities are broadly consistent:

- Majority have a shop
- All have primary school
- A small number (4) score the maximum available for employment uses, whereas all the higher order settlements score maximum
- Most have an hourly bus service to a higher order centre
- Most score at least 4 out of 9 for community services, only 2 villages (Albert village and Coleorton (Lower Moor Road area)) score less than 4.

- 3.7 The next level down in the current hierarchy is Small Villages. Policy S2 of the adopted local plan states that these are:

“Settlements with very limited services and where development will be restricted to conversions of existing buildings or the redevelopment of previously developed land (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) or affordable housing in accordance with Policy H5 (Rural Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing).”

- 3.8 The adopted Local Plan does not make any specific provision for development in these settlements.
- 3.9 A report was considered by a meeting of this committee on 7 November 2018 which suggested a revised approach whereby the scope of development in Small Villages would be widened out to include development to meet a specified local need. A copy of the report can be viewed from the link included at the beginning of this report.
- 3.10 The committee supported this proposed approach which was subject to consultation between 12 November 2018 and 1 January 2019. The consultation responses were considered at a meeting of this committee on 26 June 2019. A copy of the report can be viewed from the link included at the beginning of this report
- 3.11 The committee agreed *“in principle, subject to the outcome of the sustainability appraisal, to allow for some limited development in small villages where the proposed development meets the needs of somebody with a demonstrable local connection”*.
- 3.12 In terms of a local connection, the wording suggested in the report to the Local Plan Committee of 12 November 2018 is included at Appendix C of this report.
- 3.13 The proposed approach has yet to be subject to a sustainability appraisal, this will happen as part of a later stage. However, rather than referring to these settlements as Small Villages, it is suggested that they be renamed as Local Housing Needs Villages as this presents a more accurate description of their role in the settlement hierarchy.
- 3.14 In considering which of the remaining settlements should be Local Housing Needs Villages, the study considers two factors:

Size in terms of number of dwellings

This is on the basis that the greater the number of dwellings (and hence people) the greater the pressure and need for additional dwellings to meet local needs.

Proximity to a sustainable settlement

This is on the basis that if a sustainable settlement (i.e. a Sustainable Village or above in the hierarchy) was close by, any need could be met in the sustainable settlement, which because of its proximity, would maintain the local connectivity whilst also allowing that person or household access to a wider range of services and facilities. In contrast, a village not in close proximity to a sustainable settlement would, if new housing could not be provided, potentially result in that person or household losing the local connectivity that is so important to them.

- 3.15 Therefore, those settlements with more than 100 dwellings, or if they had between 50 and 100 dwellings and are more than 2km from a sustainable settlement (i.e. a Sustainable Village or above in the hierarchy) are proposed to be designated as Local Housing Needs Villages. The figure of 2km was used as this is the maximum walking distance recommended by the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation.

3.16 The list of Local Housing Needs Villages is:

Battram
Boundary
Coleorton (Outside
the Lower Moor Road
Area)
Griffydam
Hemington
Lockington
Lount
Newbold
Newton Burgoland
Normanton le Heath
Peggs Green
Osgathorpe
Sinope
Snarestone
Sweepstone
Wilson

3.17 The provision of services and facilities in the Local Housing Needs Villages is more varied than in Sustainable Villages. For example, 6 have a primary school whilst 3 have access to an hourly public transport service. The range of community services ranges from 1 to 4, in contrast as already noted the Sustainable Villages largely score at least 4.

3.18 Those settlements of less than 50 dwellings or between 50 and 100 dwellings but less than 2km from a sustainable settlement would be designated as Other Villages (or Hamlets?) and be subject to the general countryside policy. In these settlements only 1 settlement scores more than 1 for the range of community services. Whilst 3 settlements have an hourly bus service this is offset by the lack of other services and facilities. Therefore, when taking account of services and facilities this supports the demarcation between Local Housing Needs Villages and Other Villages.

3.19 For completeness, the proposed Settlement Hierarchy is:

Settlement Classification

Principal Town

Coalville Urban Area which comprises of Coalville, Donington-le-Heath, Greenhill, Hugglescote, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick as well as the Bardon employment area.

Key Service Centre

Ashby de la Zouch
Castle Donington

Local Service Centre

Ibstock
Kegworth
Measham

Sustainable Villages

Albert Village, Appleby Magna, Belton, Blackfordby, Breedon on the Hill, Coleorton (the Lower Moor Road area only), Diseworth, Donisthorpe,

Ellistown, Heather, Long Whatton, Moira (including Norris Hill), Oakthorpe, Packington, Ravenstone, Swannington, Woodville (part), Worthington.

Local Housing Needs Villages

Batram, Boundary, Coleorton (the part not considered to be a Sustainable Village), Griffydam, Hemington, Lockington, Lount, Newbold, Newton Burgoland, Normanton le Heath, Osgathorpe, Peggs Green, Sinope, Snarestone, Swepestone, Wilson.

Other Villages/Settlements

Settlements not named in the above categories

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Subject to the recommendations of this report being agreed, it is proposed that consultation be undertaken with stakeholders on the proposed Settlement Hierarchy as part of a wider consultation on a number of key issues which have been the subject of reports to previous meetings of this committee.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Our communities are safe, healthy and connected Local people live in high quality, affordable homes
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	None discernible
Equalities/Diversity:	An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
Customer Impact:	No issues identified
Economic and Social Impact:	The decision, of itself, will have no specific impact. The Substantive Local Plan Review as a whole will Aim to deliver positive economic and social impacts and these will be recorded through the Sustainability Appraisal.
Environment and Climate Change:	The decision, of itself, will have no specific impact. The Substantive Local Plan Review as a whole will Aim to deliver positive environmental and climate change benefits and these will be recorded through the Sustainability Appraisal.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	In due course the planning policy considerations outlined in the report will be incorporated in a consultation document for the Substantive Local Plan Review. The consultation arrangements will be governed by requirements in the Statement of Community Involvement
Risks:	A risk assessment for the Local Plan Review has been prepared and is kept up to date. As far as possible control measures have been put in place to minimise risks, including regular Project Board meetings where risk is reviewed.
Officer Contact	Ian Nelson Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN – SETTLEMENT HIERACHY

Settlement Classification	Settlement(s)
<p>Principal Town</p> <p>The primary settlement in the district which provides an extensive range of services and facilities including employment, leisure and shopping and which is accessible by sustainable transport from surrounding areas and to other large settlements outside the district. The largest amount of new development will be directed here, including retail development, to support the regeneration of Coalville Town Centre.</p>	<p>Coalville Urban Area which comprises of Coalville, Donington-le-Heath, Greenhill, Hugglescote, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick as well as the Bardon employment area.</p>
<p>Key Service Centre</p> <p>Smaller than the Principal Town in terms of population and also the range of services and facilities they provide, they play an important role providing services and facilities to the surrounding area and are accessible by some sustainable transport. A significant amount of development will take place in these settlements but less than that in the Principal Town.</p>	<p>Ashby de la Zouch Castle Donington</p>
<p>Local Service Centre</p> <p>Settlements which provide some services and facilities primarily of a local nature meeting day-to-day needs and where a reasonable amount of new development will take place.</p>	<p>Ibstock Kegworth Measham</p>
<p>Sustainable Villages</p> <p>Settlements which have a limited range of services and facilities where a limited amount of growth will take place within the defined Limits to Development.</p>	<p>Albert Village, Appleby Magna, Belton, Blackfordby, Breedon on the Hill, Coleorton (the Lower Moor Road area only), Diseworth, Donisthorpe, Ellistown, Heather, Long Whatton, Moira (including Norris Hill), Oakthorpe, Packington, Ravenstone, Swannington, Worthington.</p>

<p>Small Village</p> <p>Settlements with very limited services and where development will be restricted to conversions of existing buildings or the redevelopment of previously developed land (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) or affordable housing in accordance with Policy H5 (Rural Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing).</p>	<p><i>Battram, Coleorton (the part not considered to be a Sustainable Village), Griffydam, Hemington, Lockington, Lount, Newbold, Newton Burgoland, Osgathorpe, Peggs Green, Sinope, Snarestone, Sweptstone, Spring Cottage, Tonge, Wilson.</i></p>
<p>Hamlets</p> <p>Small groups of dwellings with no services and facilities and where development will be considered in the context of the countryside policy (Policy S3).</p>	