

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 12 JULY 2022

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Chairman)

Councillors J G Simmons, D Bigby, D Everitt, D Harrison, J Legrys, R L Morris, A C Saffell, N Smith, M B Wyatt and K Merrie MBE

Officers: Mr I Nelson, Mr C Elston, Ms R Haynes, Mrs R Wallace, Ms S Lee and Ms J Althorpe

6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor J Hoult, for whom Councillor A Woodman acted as substitute.

7 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests for item 5: Local Plan Review - Response to Consultation:

Councillor J Legrys declared a non pecuniary interest as he had been lobbied by the Northern Parish Councils and by constituents in the local area, but had come with an open mind.

Councillor T Saffell declared a non pecuniary interest as a member of Castle Donington Parish Council.

Councillor R Morris declared a non pecuniary interest as Chair of Breedon Parish Council.

8 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

It was declared that a statement from the Northern Parish Councils had been received, however as it had been received almost immediately prior to the commencement of the meeting there had been insufficient time to give this due consideration.

Councillor J Bridges assured the parties who had submitted the question that it would be considered and incorporated in the production of future reports.

9 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor J Simmons and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

10 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Officers presented the report which considered responses to consultation received between January and March 2022 and which looked at the strategic issues to be addressed in the plan.

Members queried the decision to decide all recommendations as one vote as they felt that some were acceptable whilst they did not agree with others and requested that

recommendations be voted upon individually as opposed to en bloc. The Chair noted the comments however advised that all recommendations would be voted for as one.

Officers set out the Local Plan objectives, highlighting that the objectives were overarching statements, fairly general in nature, and would be a framework for the policies, not the policies themselves. It was noted that overall, the consultation reflected a good level of support for the objectives. As a result of the consultation, it was agreed that changes, as detailed within the report, be made to the wording of some of the objectives as this would add more accuracy or detail.

Members requested clarification on the figures presented with regard to a petition which had been put forward, as it was felt that in some instances individual signatures had been overlooked and considered per household, rather than per signatory. Officers agreed that this would be clarified in the minutes and would be corrected. Subsequently officers confirmed that there were 323 signatories on the tear off slips.

Members raised concerns that the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party had not been part of the consultation despite this being a forum to discuss issues which would be heavily focused on the Coalville urbanised area and requested that this be noted.

A member queried a change in the recommendations, specifically Objective 4, and it was agreed to rephrase this to read "including by private car".

Officers provided members with details in regard to the Settlement Hierarchy section of the report, and noted that, whilst the proposed hierarchy would remain roughly the same as in the existing Local plan, some of the more rural settlements would be moved to a different tier. Local Housing Needs Villages, was outlined and the controls in these locations were described.

Officers informed members of the development strategy options for housing, specifically how much and where it should be located. It was noted that there had been a good spread of responses from individuals, developers and landowners.

Members noted that there had been a government announcement that there would be an intention to end the "Duty to Co-operate" however officers advised that at present this remained a requirement and therefore the authority remained under the obligation to meet Leicester's unmet housing need.

Members addressed the numbers contained within the Statement of Common Ground and raised a concern that the authority had been asked to provide a disproportionately large percentage of Leicester's unmet housing needs. It was argued that in order to promote growth and prosperity in the region, it would be necessary to provide more homes, which would in turn equate to more residents and more trade for local businesses.

Members suggested that the construction of more affordable homes would be necessary in order to enable people who work locally to be resident in the area.

Officers clarified that the numbers of houses which would be built would be subject to Council's agreement in the meeting scheduled for September 2022. It was noted that the Statement of Common Ground considered many key factors in setting out future requirements, including economic growth, unmet need and a consistent deliverability rate across the county. With regard to the infrastructure, it was noted that there would be a need to address whatever infrastructure would be required and that an Infrastructure Delivery Plan had been commissioned.

Officers informed members of the options as to how growth may be delivered across the district and acknowledged that it would not be feasible for all the required growth to be restricted to one settlement.

Officers requested more information from Councillor A C Saffell with regard to the statement which had been received from the Northern Parishes in order to consider all reasonable alternatives thoroughly. It was agreed that Councillor A C Saffell would seek further clarity on the statement and provide feedback.

Members suggested that a new settlement should be considered at a location which would enable residents to cycle and walk to work. Officers reassured members that a new settlement would be considered alongside the other options and that all reasonable alternatives would be considered.

Officers informed the meeting that the authority would be looking at appointing consultants in order to investigate the potential job creation by the Freeport to understand better the amount of housing which would be required to ensure a balance between housing and employment. This would also allow the possibility of investigating what affordable housing the authority may be able to secure in those locations.

Officers explained to members the employment aspects of the report, with regard to how much employment land the authority needed and where it should go. A Member asked a question with regard to how the authority could predict long term housing needs when the economic future remained unclear. It has been suggested that one option would be to put things on hold until the next review when economic needs would be clearer. Officers acknowledged the uncertainty but advised that putting the plan on hold would not be likely to be supported at Examination.

The replacement of old warehousing was debated, and a suggestion was made that the authority consider these sites as part of the Local Plan for potential redevelopment. . Due to the demand for land, it would not be feasible to leave the land unused or warehouses "abandoned". Officers clarified that the strategic study would attempt to identify a reasonable figure for how much need there would be and not to look at specific sites.

Members and officers praised the Stantec report and officers confirmed that the report would be recommended along with the figures which it proposed in terms of need. However it was noted that the Stantec study recommendation with regard to flexibility figures would not be one the authority should take.

A member requested that strategic distribution sites which would potentially be obsolete in future be considered as employment land. Officers concurred.

Officers highlighted that the authority would be commissioning advice regarding the potential heritage and landscape impact of the site of the Freeport in order to be better placed to advise members in future meetings.

A member thanked officers for a good and thorough report.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, and seconded by Councillor R Morris.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The responses to the consultation be noted.
- (ii) The amendment of objectives 2,4,5, 8, 9 and 10 as set out at paragraph 3.5 of this report be agreed.

- (iii) The revisions to the Settlement Hierarchy set out at paragraph 4.6 of this report and Appendix C be agreed.
- (iv) The revisions to the Proposed Local Housing Needs Policy set out at paragraph 4.11 of this report and Appendix D be agreed.
- (v) A housing requirement of 686 dwellings each year as set out at paragraph 5.2.29 of this report (subject to the Council agreeing the proposed Statement of Common Ground in respect of housing and employment needs) be agreed.
- (vi) The extension of the plan period to 2040 as set out at paragraph 5.2.33 of this report be agreed.
- (vii) The updated housing provision as at April 2021 as set out at Table 1 of this report be noted.
- (viii) A flexibility allowance of 10% of the residual housing requirement for 2021- 40 as set out at paragraph 5.2.41 of this report be agreed.
- (ix) The fact that land needs to be identified for a minimum of 6,693 dwellings as set out at paragraph 5.2.41 of this report be agreed.
- (x) The proposal to test a further housing distribution option (option 9c) as set out at paragraph 5.3.28 of this report be noted.
- (xi) The Stantec study to provide the primary evidence base for future general employment needs as set out at paragraph 6.4.16 of this report be noted.
- (xii) The General Employment Land Needs as at April 2021 as set out at Tables 5 and 6 of this report be noted.
- (xiii) The proposal to test a further employment distribution option (Option 2a) as set out at paragraph 6.5.30 of this report be noted.
- (xiv) A working provisional figure for strategic distribution of 100,700 sqm as set out at paragraph 6.6.6 of this report (subject to agreeing to extending the plan period to 2040) pending the outcome of any agreement with the other Leicester and Leicestershire authorities in respect of the distribution of the residual requirement identified in the strategic warehousing study be agreed.
- (xv) The intention to commission additional evidence in respect of landscape and heritage issues in relation to the proposed Freeport site south of the A453 and East Midlands Airport be noted.

| Motion to approve officers recommendation (Motion) | |
|---|---------|
| Councillor John Bridges | For |
| Councillor Jenny Simmons | For |
| Councillor Dave Bigby | Against |
| Councillor David Everitt | Against |
| Councillor Dan Harrison | For |
| Councillor John Legrys | Against |
| Councillor Ray Morris | For |
| Councillor Tony Saffell | Against |
| Councillor Nigel Smith | For |
| Councillor Michael Wyatt | Against |
| Councillor Andrew Woodman | For |
| Carried | |

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15 pm