

## LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – 27 SEPTEMBER 2022

Title of Report	<b>LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Councillor Keith Merrie Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder <a href="mailto:keith.merrie@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">keith.merrie@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Background Papers</b>		<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
		<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	The cost of the studies is met from existing budgets.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	Legal implications considered in the preparation of this report	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	None identified	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b>	
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide an update for Members in respect various aspects of the evidence base that will support the Local Plan review.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>THAT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE NOTE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(I) THE OUTCOME FROM THE AREA OF SEPARATION UPDATE REPORT;</li> <li>(II) THE OUTCOME FROM THE GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY</li> <li>(III) PROGRESS ON THE PREPARTION OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN AND GYPSY AND TRAVELLER NEEDS ASSESSMENT</li> </ul>	

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report provides an update for members in respect of some key pieces of the evidence base in respect of the review of the Local Plan

**2.0 EVIDENCE UPDATE**

- 2.1 Work on the substantive review continues. This section outlines recent work on the evidence base.

Area of Separation Study

- 2.2 Members may recall that the 2 October 2019 meeting of this committee considered a report in respect of a study of the Area of Separation between Coalville and Whitwick. That study had assessed the Area of Separation as identified in the adopted Local Plan to ascertain as to whether it could still be justified and if so whether any changes were required to the boundaries.
- 2.3 Since the study was undertaken the new Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre has been permitted and built within part of the Area of Separation. To take account of the change in circumstances an update to the study was commissioned from the same consultants who undertook the original study.

- 2.4 The updated study can be viewed from this [link](#).
- 2.5 The updated study used the same methodology as the previous study. The new leisure centre is located in Land Unit 16 in the original study. This covered land fronting Stephenson Way between Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road an up to Hermitage Lake. In the updated study this was split in to two separate parcels, Land Units 16a and 16b. Land Unit 16b comprises of the area occupied by the new leisure centre, whilst Land Unit 16a comprises the eastern most part of remainder of the former Land Unit 16 up to Hermitage Road and Hermitage Lake.
- 2.6 The study notes that "*The presence of the Leisure Centre and associated parking areas represent substantive-built forms which affect the open character and have some links with other built forms to the edge of Coalville and Stephenson College*". It goes on to note that "*The unit is contained by rising ground and vegetation to the north-west corner*" and that whilst its landscape value is currently judged as being moderate to low scenic quality, it is anticipated that this will "*increase to moderate as the mitigation planting is completed and established across the unit*".
- 2.7 Overall, Land Unit 16b is judged as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.
- 2.8 In terms of Land Unit 16a this is noted as making "*a notable contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation*". It is judged as being of moderate scenic quality and as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.
- 2.9 As with the original study the report advises that "*All the individual land units assessed as forming a 'Primary' Contribution to the AoS [Area of Separation] are considered to be essential to retaining the physical and visual separation between the settlements and their distinct identity. However, it is recommended that all units assessed as making a 'Primary' or 'Secondary' contribution should be retained within the AoS to prevent the erosion of the AoS as a whole*".
- 2.10 The updated study will form part of the Council's evidence base to support the review of the Local Plan. The updated study provides the Council with independent evidence to help define what the boundaries of an Area of Separation should be and consideration of the updated study's findings will be taken forward as part of the Local Plan review.

#### Green and Blue Infrastructure Study

- 2.11 It is important that new development creates attractive places in which people want to live and work. One way to do this is through the provision of Green and Blue Infrastructure. Such provision will maximise the benefit for residents (of housing developments) and workers and customers (of commercial development) but also nature.
- 2.12 Green Infrastructure is defined by The Landscape Institute as:
- "The network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. Individually, these elements are GI [Green Infrastructure] assets, and the roles that these assets play are GI functions. When appropriately planned, designed and managed, the assets and functions have the potential to deliver a wide range of benefits – from providing sustainable transport links to mitigating and adapting the effects of climate change."*
- 2.13 The term blue infrastructure refers to all aspects of the water environment - rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands and floodplains. This has led to the increasing use of the term green and blue infrastructure (GBI).

- 2.14 To help inform consideration of this issue as part of the Local Plan review a study was commissioned to:
- Identify and map the existing GBI assets in the District, and outline the key challenges faced by the GBI network locally; and
  - Identify opportunities for enhancing and creating GBI within seven selected settlements.

- 2.15 The study can be viewed from this [link](#).
- 2.16 The study is focussed upon the largest settlements in the settlement hierarchy (i.e. Principal Town, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres) as these are likely to accommodate most new development and so provide the greatest opportunities for enhancing GBI. In addition, the potential new settlement at Isley Walton is also included. This is because in the event that the Council decides to include the new settlement the provision of GBI will need to be a key feature of any future development.
- 2.17 The study was the subject of a period of key stakeholder engagement with amongst others, parish and town councils, including an online survey.
- 2.18 The Study provides a framework that sets out both a long-term vision and a coordinated programme for action. It does this by setting out a range of potential interventions using six 'tools' (or themes), each of which has a specific purpose as outlined below.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Tool 1: Managing flood risk	Slow and filter rainwater by 'depaving' urban areas and providing sustainable urban drainage.
Tool 2: Restoring the condition of rivers	Reduce flood risk, capture carbon and improve habitats
Tool 3: Growing green towns	Create healthier, walkable towns and attract investment through urban greening.
Tool 4: Expanding woodlands	Store carbon and protect species.
Tool 5: Encouraging walking, cycling and wheeling (ie using a wheelchair, or other mobility aid)	Connect places for local and visitors, encourage active travel and reduce air pollution.
Tool 6: Making the most of our parks and open spaces	Repurpose open spaces to allow for multiple functions, including habitat creation, growing and natural play.

- 2.19 The same approach is then used to identify potential interventions in each of the settlements covered by the study.
- 2.20 The study notes whilst the planning system will have an important role to play in the delivery of new GBI, it is not the only means by which provision can be secured. Similarly, many will be delivered outside the Council by a range of partners – with shared responsibility across a range of sectors or bodies.
- 2.21 In terms of the Local Plan, the study will help to inform specific requirements for potential site allocations and will also inform other policies, as well as work on infrastructure generally and viability.

#### Other evidence

- 2.22 In addition to the above completed studies, work is progressing on the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and also an update to the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTAA). The outcome of these will be reported to future meetings of this Committee when they are completed.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	Our communities are safe, healthy and connected  Developing a clean and green district
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	No issues identified
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:	No issues identified at this stage
Environment and Climate Change:	No issues identified at this stage
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None
Risks:	A risk assessment of the review has been undertaken and is reviewed at the officer Project Board meetings.
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