

	December 2018 North West Leicestershire – The need for employment land (The Stantec report) – November 2020	
Financial Implications	The cost of the Local Plan Review is met through existing budgets.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The Local Plan must be based on robust and up to date evidence.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	No staffing implications associated with the specific content of this report. Links with the Council’s Priorities are set out at the end of the report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To agree which housing and employment sites should be proposed to be allocated as part of the new Local Plan, with a view to these being consulted upon alongside the draft policies agreed by this Committee on 18 October 2023.	
Recommendations	THAT THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE AGREE THE PROPOSED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SITES IDENTIFIED AT APPENDIX A FOR THE PURPOSES OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION	

1.0 **BACKGROUND**

1.1 Members will be aware that the key purpose of the Council’s Local Plan is to plan effectively for growth over the long term, in this case 2040. To this end this Committee has previously considered a number of reports in respect of the Local Plan review which address matters such as the amount of development that needs to be planned for and how growth should be distributed across the district. These matters have also been the subject of consultation with local communities and other interested parties.

1.2 At the meetings of this committee on 12 July 2022 and 27 September 2022 the following (amongst other matters) were agreed:

- A housing requirement of 686 dwellings each year (subject to the Council agreeing the proposed Statement of Common Ground in respect of housing and employment needs) together with the inclusion of a flexibility allowance of 10% resulting (as at April 2021)) in a need to be identify land for a minimum of 6,693 dwellings.
- A housing distribution based on option 7B
- A residual requirement (as at April 2021) for 0.78ha of land for offices and 44.7ha for industrial/small warehousing employment use
- A distribution of employment land based on option 2A

- 1.3 In terms of the housing requirement, this was based on the figure in the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) that had been proposed to address the issue of unmet needs in Leicester City. The meeting of Council on 6 September 2022 formally considered and agreed the SoCG. Therefore, the housing requirement for the Local Plan is confirmed as being 686 dwellings each year.
- 1.4 In terms of how employment should be distributed, Option2a was the preferred option. This sees development focused at the following locations: Coalville, Ashby and Castle Donington/East Midlands Airport, at the Local Service Centres and at a 'new', expanding employment location at J11 M42. This strategy takes a balanced approach, including the higher order settlements where historically the market has been strongest, capitalising on the existing Mercia Park development and the excellent transport links at J11 and also making some, limited provision for new employment land in the more rural parts of the district.
- 1.5 Having confirmed the amount of development that needs to be accommodated and identified in the preferred development strategies for housing and employment, the next step is to identify the sites which the Council is of the view will best match and deliver the strategies. To do this the report:
- Considers how much land needs to be provided to meet the outstanding housing and employment requirements
 - Outlines how sites have been assessed
 - Identifies for members which sites it is suggested be proposed as allocations
 - Outlines what documents it is proposed to consult upon.

2.0 HOW MUCH LAND NEEDS TO BE IDENTIFIED?

- 2.1 The meeting of this Committee on 5 July 2023 considered a report in respect of housing and employment land as at 1 April 2023. The report can be viewed from the links above.

Housing

- 2.2 Since the meeting of the Local Plan Committee, the government has announced that it will no longer proceed with the eastern leg of HS2 which would have passed through the district. The proposed route had implications for three housing sites which had the benefit of planning permission, one at Measham (426 dwellings) and two at Kegworth (251 dwellings). Table 1 of the report to the 5 July 2023 meeting of this Committee included an allowance for expected completions up to 2040 from existing sites. Because of the uncertainty arising from HS2 no allowance was made for these sites. With the recent government announcement this uncertainty no longer exists and so it is appropriate to take account of these sites in terms of projected completions. The table below, therefore, provides an updated assessment to that previously reported to this committee.

Table 1 – housing requirements at 1 April 2023, updated to take account of decision to abandon HS2.

A	Annual requirement	686 dwellings
B	Total requirement 2020-40 (A x 20)	13,720
C	Completions 1 April 2020 - 31 March 23	2,396
D	Remaining as at April 2023(B – C)	11,324
E	Flexibility allowance @ 10% of D	1,132
F	TOTAL REQUIREMENT (D +E)	12,456
G	Projected completions 2023-31	4,698
H	Projected completions 2031-40	1,388
I	Projected additional completions due to HS2	677
J	Total projected completions 2022-40 (G+H+I)	6,763
	REMAINING PROVISION REQUIRED (F – J)	5,693

- 2.3 The net effect of this is to reduce the amount of additional land that will need to be found from that previously estimated in July 2023.
- 2.4 Information about projected completions (lines G and H in the table above) can be found in an Housing Trajectory based at April 2023. It can be viewed from this [link](#).
- 2.5 Therefore, provision needs to be made for enough land to accommodate at least 5,693 dwellings.
- 2.6 In terms of projected completions for 2031-40, this comprises two sites; land at South East Coalville and land at Money Hill Ashby de la Zouch. Land at South East Coalville has the benefit of planning permission. However, the remainder of the existing allocation at Money Hill does not have planning permission and so it will be necessary to reconfirm its allocation as part of this plan.
- 2.7 Having regard to Option 7b, the preferred distribution for new housing would be as set out below.

Table 2 – distribution of housing - option 7b based on residual requirement

	Proportion from Option 7b (%)	Total provision based on residual of 5,693
Principal Town	35	1,993
New settlement	35	1,993
Key Service Centre	15	854
Local service Centre	10	569
Sustainable Villages	5	285
Total	100	5,693

General Needs Employment

- 2.8 The table below sets out the need for, and supply of, general employment land at 1 April 2023 as reported to the 5 July 2023 meeting of this Committee.

Table 3 – Employment land provision as at 1 April 2023

		Offices	Industrial/small warehousing
A	Stantec Requirement (2017 – 40)	59,590	195,500
B	Losses allowance (2025-40)	3,716	60,088
C	Flexibility margin	11,819	84,206
D	TOTAL REQUIREMENT (A+B+C)	75,125sqm	339,794sqm
E	Net completions (2017-23)	23,069	112,667
F	Net permissions at 31 March 2023	9,570	69,925
G	Adopted Local Plan allocation (Money Hill)	31,980	42,640
H	TOTAL SUPPLY (E+F+G) at 1 April 2023	64,619sqm	225,232sqm
I	REMAINING REQUIREMENT (2023-40)	Up to 10,506sqm (=1.75Ha)	At least 114,562sqm (=28.64Ha)

- 2.9 The new Local Plan, therefore, needs to make provision for up to 10,500sqm (1.75Ha) of office space and at least 114,500sqm (28.6Ha) of industrial/smaller warehousing (Line I). For the avoidance of doubt, small scale warehousing is defined as less than 9,000sqm floorspace.

Strategic Warehousing

- 2.10 The Leicester and Leicestershire authorities have committed to continued joint working on strategic warehousing matters (defined as more than 9,000sqm floorspace). This includes the intention to agree how the requirement for additional land for strategic warehousing could/should be distributed across the city/county area. To this end, the authorities have appointed consultants to advise on how best this need should be apportioned between Areas of Opportunity (AoO). This work is underway.
- 2.11 Previously, to make progress with the Local Plan, Members agreed an initial policy option for 50% of the outstanding road-served requirement to be met in NWL equating to approximately 106,000sqm. This option was included in the Development Strategy Options and Policy Options consultation in January 2022. The option was preliminary and did not signal the council's commitment or agreement to take a particular share of the remaining Leicester and Leicestershire need.

3.0 HOW HAVE SITES BEEN ASSESSED?

- 3.1 The source of sites is the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This has been the subject of a number of reports to previous meetings of this Committee, most recently on 26 May 2021. The report can be viewed from this [link](#).
- 3.2 A SHELAA identifies a potential future supply of land which is considered to be suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over a local plan period. It does not make decision or recommendations on which sites should be allocated as part of the Local Plan and nor does the inclusion of a site in the SHELAA provide an indication of the Council's support.

- 3.3 A Site Selection Methodology has been prepared and this forms Appendix B to this report. The methodology provides further detail on the process followed for identifying, assessing and selecting sites that it is proposed to be allocated in the Local Plan. However, in summary it brings together information from the Sustainability Appraisal of all sites undertaken by the Council's appointed consultants and a planning assessment undertaken by officers. A key issue is that whatever is proposed must be demonstrably deliverable in order to meet the test set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.4 The proposed Consultation document is attached at Appendix A and identifies the preferred sites along with draft policy requirements with which any development will need to comply. It should be noted that there are a number of gaps where links to other documents need to be added. This will be done in time for the consultation.
- 3.5 The following suite of documents comprise the evidence base for the recommendations set out in this report. These will be published alongside the consultation document (see section 6 of this report).
- Site proformas – these bring together a variety of information on each potential site. This is used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal and the subsequent site assessments
 - Sustainability Appraisal – this assesses all potential sites against the previously agreed Sustainability Framework and was undertaken by the Council's appointed consultants
 - Site assessments – this brings together information from the above two documents, together with the SHELAA, along with other information to arrive at a conclusion as to which are the preferred sites. For housing these have been done by settlement.
- 3.6 These documents are available on the Council's website at https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/local_plan_review_progress_so_far
- 3.7 It should be noted that there are a number of additional sites which have been put forward after the cut-off date for sites to be assessed as part of the initial Sustainability Appraisal (31 March 2021). These sites will be assessed, both in terms of the Sustainability Appraisal, but also a planning assessment. It is possible that at the Regulation 19 stage some of these sites may be recommended for inclusion, either as a replacement for sites currently proposed if deliverability or other issues suggest they should not be allocated, or as additional sites.

4.0 WHAT IS PROPOSED - HOUSING

- 4.1 Appendix A to this report contains the proposed allocations document recommended for consultation alongside the draft policies considered by this Committee at its meeting on 18 October 2023.
- 4.2 The following sections provide more explanation of what is proposed in terms of housing.
- 4.3 Having assessed all of the various sites and having regard to the distribution proposed under Option 7b, officers propose that the sites identified in Table 4 be allocated, subject to the agreement of this Committee. The site code is that from the SHELAA and is used to avoid confusion as to which sites are being referred to. It is standard practice to only allocate specific sites where they can accommodate 10 or more dwellings.

- 4.4 There is a separate policy for each of the proposed allocations which identifies any site-specific requirements that a development would be expected to address. For example, this could be the retention of a key feature (e.g. a footpath link, area of woodland etc) or the provision of or a contribution to key infrastructure. It should be noted that at this stage the latter may not always be known, but this will be firmed up through the consultation process with infrastructure providers, so that at the time of the final plan (referred to as a Regulation 19 plan) there will be more certainty.

Table 4–proposed housing allocations

Address	SHELAA Site Reference	Number of dwellings
Principal Town – Coalville Urban Area		
Rear of Bardon Road	C21	26
South of Church Lane, New Swannington	C48	283
Jack's Ices, North of Standard Hill	C50	108
Church View, Grange Road, Hugglescote	C61	10
Land at Lilly Bank, Thringstone	C74	64
Land off Meadow, Lane	C76	400
186,188 and 190 London Road	C83	50
Land at Coalville Lane/Ravenstone Road	R17	153
	C47 C77 C78 C86 C81	
Broad Location, West Whitwick		500
Principal Town – Total		1,594
Key Service Centres – Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington		
Land at Money Hill, Ashby de la Zouch	A5	1,200
South of Burton Road, Ashby de la Zouch	A27	50
Land north and south of Park Lane, Castle Donington	CD10	1,076
Key Service Centres - Total		2,326
Local Service Centres – Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham		
Land off Leicester Road, Ibstock	Ib18	450
Local Service Centres - Total		450
Sustainable Villages		
East of Measham Road, Appleby Magna	Ap17	32
Land off Ramscliff Avenue, Donisthorpe	D8	32
Land between Midland Road and Leicester Road, Ellistown	E7	69
Land off Swebstone Road, Heather	H3	37
Land off Ashby Road, Moira	Mo8	49
Land at School Lane, Oakthorpe	Oa5	47
Land south of Normanton Road, Packington	P4	18
Land at Heather Lane, Ravenstone	R12	50
Sustainable Villages - Total		334

New Settlement		
Land at Isley Woodhouse	IW1	1,900
Total Provision		
		6,604

4.5 It should be noted that land at Money Hill Ashby de la Zouch is allocated in the adopted Local Plan and so it included as a projected completion in Table 1. Therefore, the total of new allocations is 5,404 dwellings (i.e. 6,604 dwellings less 1,200 dwellings).

4.6 The following section outlines the rationale behind the proposals using the settlement hierarchy structure.

Principal Town (Coalville Urban Area)

4.7 The SHELAA identifies land for about 4,200 dwellings in the Coalville Urban Area. This is significantly more than the figure of 1,993 dwellings identified in table 2.

4.8 Of these sites, about 1,800 dwellings are located within the current Area of Separation. Therefore, excluding these sites at this stage reduces the potential number of dwellings available to about 2,700 dwellings.

4.9 Whilst this is still more than the requirement, the margin is not that great.

4.10 Of the remaining sites some have the benefit of planning permission (for example land at Wolsey Road (SHELAA reference C28) whilst many have a range of constraints, including lack of access or other highway related issues, poorly related to services and facilities, ecological or environmental concerns or deliverability issues which means they are either not suitable to be allocated or are too small (sometimes due to factors such as the need for buffer zones for ecological purposes which reduces the amount of land that can be developed).

4.11 The SHELAA includes five sites west of Whitwick and running up to Thringstone (SHELAA references C47/C77/C78/C86/C81). On their own each of these sites would deliver little in the way of housing (and also contribute little to infrastructure provision) or cannot realistically be developed on their own (for example they are in effect landlocked and require third party land to gain access). However, each of the sites share at least one boundary with at least one of the other sites.

4.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 23) refers to Broad Locations. These represent areas where housing development is considered potentially feasible but where this is not demonstrably the case at the present time. These can be comprised of a number of individual sites or one single site. It is considered that the five sites referred to above represent such a situation.

4.13 There is no guarantee that it will be possible to bring forward the Broad Location in its entirety, but at this stage officers are of the view that the consultation represents an opportunity to test the feasibility of bringing forward development through co-operation between the various landowners. At this stage it is estimated that these could potentially deliver 500 new homes, although this will need to be tested with the site promoters and be assessed through transport modelling.

4.14 The inclusion of the Broad Location results in a total of about 1,650 dwellings in the Coalville Urban Area. This is about 350 dwellings less than in Option 7b.

- 4.15 Land between Coalville and Whitwick is identified in the adopted Local Plan as an Area of Separation (AoS) where the principal aim of the policy is to maintain the physical separation between Coalville and Whitwick. The AoS is a local designation which is not specifically recognised in the NPPF. However, the Council has successfully defended the principal of the AoS against proposed development on a number of occasions at appeal. The AoS has strong support within the local community, particularly in Whitwick.
- 4.16 A study was undertaken by independent consultants in 2019 which assessed the AoS in detail. This identified whether different units of land made a primary, secondary or incidental contribution to the AoS. This was then updated in 2022 following the completion of the new Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre. These reports can be viewed from this [link](#).
- 4.17 The AoS defines incidental areas as making a “*limited contribution to the openness that separates adjacent settlements*”. Of the four incidental areas identified in the study, only one site has been put forward as part of the SHELAA (site C45). This site is largely occupied by well used allotments. For development to be considered acceptable it would be necessary for a replacement allotment to be provided. There has not been any contact with the site promoter since 2019 and there is no clear evidence that it would be possible to secure a replacement site for the allotment. Therefore, at this time allocation would not be appropriate.
- 4.18 Of the remaining parts of the AoS identified as making an incidental contribution, one would require access via third party land (parcel 19 in the study) and one is partly used as an allotment and would also require access via third party land (parcel 11). The remaining parcel (3) is owned by the District Council and is a play area/recreation ground. None of these areas are, therefore, considered to be suitable as there is no evidence of likely deliverability and they also have other unresolved planning issues.
- 4.19 In terms of those sites identified in the AoS as making a secondary contribution (defined as providing “*an important component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements or different parts of the same settlement*”) there are eight parcels that fall into this category. Each of these is considered below.

Table 5– Assessment of sites in Area of Separation identified as being of ‘secondary’ importance

Site Address	SHELAA reference	2023 Area of Separation study reference	Comments
Broom Leys Farm, Broom Leys Road Coalville	C46	1 2	A Previous planning application (Ref 14/00808) was not determined and was subsequently disposed of. The 2019 Area of Separation study notes that the two parcels that make up this site are judged as making a “ <i>limited contribution</i> ” and a “ <i>minimal contribution</i> ” respectively to the separation of Coalville from Whitwick. It goes on to note that development would be likely to

			have a significant effect on the open character of this part of the Area of Separation but that it “ <i>would have a relatively limited effect on the remainder of the AoS to the north due to the level topography and intervening vegetation in Units 3, 4 and 5.</i> ”
Rear of Green Lane Whitwick	Not promoted	12	Site is not being promoted for development and comprises a children’s play area.
Off Hermitage Road Whitwick	C19	14	A small part of a much larger site which encompassed units 6,7,8,9,10,13 and 14 and was subject of planning application for residential development which was refused and then dismissed at appeal in 2012. Other than parcel 14, the parcels which made up this previous application are all judged as making a primary contribution to the AoS.
Rear of Church Lane Whitwick	Not promoted	20	Site is not being promoted for development.
Church Lane Whitwick	C44	21a 21b	There is no means of access to Church Lane without acquiring third party land.
Church Lane Whitwick	Not promoted	22	Site is not being promoted for development and comprises of Whitwick Cemetery.
Land between Whitwick Cemetery and Hermitage Recreation Ground Whitwick	Not promoted	23	Site is not being promoted for development and comprises established footpath along former railway line.

- 4.21 Having regard to the above, only three parcels identified in the AoS study sites are being promoted for development. Of these, parcel 14 comprises a very small part of a much larger site (C19) which was dismissed at appeal. A such, development in isolation from the remainder of this larger site would not represent comprehensive development. Furthermore, access on to this part of Hermitage Road so close to the roundabout with the A511 would be likely to be unacceptable. Parcels 21a and 21b (SHELAA site C44) do not have any means of access and so cannot be regarded as being deliverable.
- 4.22 Therefore, the only part of the AoS that is judged as making a secondary contribution, is being promoted for development and is considered to be deliverable are parcels 1 and 2 (SHELAA site C46). However, as noted above, the AoS study still identified that development would be likely to have a significant effect on the open character of this part of the AoS.
- 4.23 As noted previously (paragraph 3.6) there are a number of additional sites which have been put forward which have yet to be assessed. This includes sites in the Coalville Urban area. Furthermore, additional sites may come forward as part of the forthcoming consultation. Therefore, it is possible that development within the AoS may turn out to be

unnecessary and so allocation of site C46 at this stage could be regarded as being somewhat premature.

- 4.24 Not allocating any land within the AoS does mean there would be a shortfall in the Coalville Urban Area of about 400 dwellings compared to option 7b. If at the Regulation 19 stage it is apparent that there is still a shortfall in the Coalville Urban Area, then this issue will have to be re-examined. Members are advised that this could result in the need to release some land in AoS if the Council is to be able to demonstrate at Examination that it has prepared a 'sound' plan. This would be consistent with the comments of the Planning Inspector who conducted the Examination of the adopted Local Plan and who concluded that *"there is scope for reconsideration of the detailed boundaries and land uses of the AoSs, in the event that it becomes necessary, at any time in the future, for the Plan to be reviewed in the light of increased development needs"*.

New settlement

- 4.25 Option 7b included a new settlement. A study undertaken in [2020](#) looked at a number of potential strategic developments in terms of what infrastructure might be required to support them. Amongst the sites considered were three sites which were being promoted as new settlements. Of these two sites south of the A453 and East Midlands Airport shared a common boundary and were considered to be more relatively easy to develop having regard to infrastructure needs. Subsequently these two sites have been promoted as a single site (SHELAA reference IW1) known as Isley Woodhouse. The site comprises up to about 4,500 dwellings and associated infrastructure such as schools and shops.
- 4.26 Under Option 7b this would need to deliver about 2,000 dwellings by 2040. Allowing for the need to go through the Local Plan process, develop and agree a Masterplan and submit and determine a planning application, it would be a number of years before development was able to commence. The site promoters have suggested a start date of 2028.
- 4.27 The site promoter has suggested a build rate of 250 dwellings each year. Research published by Lichfields (2020) (an established and respected planning consultancy firm) found that sites of 2,000 or more dwellings had an average build rate of 160 dwellings per annum. If development was started in 2028 and the build rate was 160 dwellings each year, then by 2040 about 1,900 dwellings would have been delivered, slightly less than required under Option 7b. Further work will need to be done with the site promoter to profile the likely build out of the site to inform the Regulation 19 plan, but at this stage a build of 1,900 dwellings up to 2040 is assumed.
- 4.28 It should be noted that transport evidence has been commissioned to support the plan with a specific focus on the northern part of the district. This will consider the potential impact on the highway network arising from this site (and others in the locality) along with likely mitigation requirements. This stage will not be completed until early Spring 2024. The outcome from, and any subsequent work, will inform any specific requirements at Regulation 19 stage.

Key Service Centres

- 4.29 The Key Service Centres comprise of Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington.
- 4.30 As noted above, an area of land at Money Hill (SHELAA reference A5) is allocated for housing as part of the adopted Local Plan. Land between this allocation and the existing built area of Ashby de la Zouch to the north of Nottingham Road and the town centre has the benefit of planning permission and development has commenced. It is necessary to reconfirm this allocation as part of the new Local Plan. If the remainder of the site was not

to continue as an allocation, it could bring into question whether that part which already has the benefit of planning permission would remain viable, particularly as a significant access road has been provided from the A511 Ashby Bypass across that part that is currently allocated. Furthermore, it was always envisaged that the Money Hill site would be a long-term development going beyond the end date of the adopted Local Plan.

- 4.31 Whilst reconfirming that this site should continue to be allocated, it is important to note that as it has already been included in the projected completion figures in Table 1 this DOES NOT contribute to the residual requirement of 5,693 dwellings and nor is it included in the figures in Table 6 of this report.
- 4.32 Of the remaining SHELAA sites in Ashby de la Zouch, 11 sites are identified which could accommodate about 1,900 dwellings. Three of these loosely comprise what is known as Packington Nook on the south side of Ashby de la Zouch and one is too small to be an allocation. In addition, three sites are clustered on the west side of Ashby de la Zouch off the Moira Road and Burton Road.
- 4.33 It is proposed that one relatively small site is proposed in Ashby de la Zouch (in addition to the remainder of Money Hill. This is land south of Burton Road (SHELAA reference A27 - 50 dwellings).
- 4.34 Of the remaining sites, the preference would be for the Packington Nook site. This is partly because as noted already, most other proposed sites are on the west side of Ashby de la Zouch. This would result in more traffic having to pass through the centre of Ashby in order to access the A42, whether that be J12 or J13. In addition, the Packington Nook site would also provide the potential opportunity to create a sustainable urban extension to mirror that at Money Hill which has the potential to deliver more infrastructure than smaller development dotted around the town.
- 4.35 In Castle Donington, only six sites are included in the SHELAA which are capable of accommodating at least 10 dwellings. Of these there are only two which are capable of accommodating more than 100 dwellings. Again there are a potential 1,900 dwellings.
- 4.36 Only two sites are considered to have realistic potential for development (SHELAA reference CD9 south of Park Lane and SHELAA reference CD10 land north and south of Park Lane). Development on site CD9 is not considered to be appropriate in view the proximity to open space and ecological considerations. The SHELAA identifies that CD10 could accommodate up to about 1,400 dwellings. Since the SHELAA was completed the site promoters have undertaken further work which has resulted in a reduced site capacity of 1,076 dwellings.
- 4.37 In considering whether site CD10 should be allocated, a key issue is the relationship of the site to the nearby Donington Hall which is a Grade II* Listed Building. To understand the potential impact on this important heritage feature, the site promoters undertook and submitted a Baseline Heritage Assessment. Officers have commissioned a report from external consultants to review this Baseline Heritage Report. This has recommended that development be pulled eastwards slightly from the boundaries shown on the SHELAA to minimise the impact on both Donington Hall and Home Farm and that further planting be incorporated along part of the boundary of the site with Donington Hall.

Ashby de la Zouch or Castle Donington?

- 4.38 The scale of growth required to meet the preferred distribution of growth would be about 850 dwellings. Allowing for the smaller sites identified in Ashby de la Zouch this would leave a residual of about 800 dwellings. The question is how should this be met? On the

face of it there is a choice between land south of Ashby de la Zouch or land west of Castle Donington.

- 4.39 There is already a significant scale of growth in Ashby de la Zouch that would result from the development of Money Hill (both the site that has planning permission and that which it is proposed be reallocated). These together with the two proposed allocations would equate to about 2,000 additional dwellings. Since 2021 this would equate to growth of about 33%. If Packington Nook were to be allocated this would increase to about 2,800 dwellings. Since 2021 this would equate to growth of about 44%
- 4.40 In Castle Donington about 320 dwellings remain to be built on land north and south of Park Lane and at The Spittal. Since 2021 this would equate to growth of about 18%. However, there would no further growth after 2031. The allocation of land to the west of Castle Donington would result in an increase of about 1,400 dwellings since 2021, which equates to growth of about 50% since 2021.
- 4.41 Having regard to the above, allocating land at Packington Nook, Ashby de la Zouch would result in a very significant imbalance in growth between Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington. However, allocating land west of Castle Donington would result in a more equal level of growth.
- 4.42 A further factor in favour of allocating land west of Castle Donington is the fact that the Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) identifies the northern part of the district as a growth area, referred to as the Leicestershire International Gateway. Whilst the SGP is not a statutory plan, it has been prepared jointly by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to inform the preparation of local plans so as to ensure a coherent strategy across the area. As such, therefore, allocating land west of Castle Donington (in addition to the proposed new settlement) would be consistent with the SGP.
- 4.43 Having regard to all of the above, the argument about whether land should be allocated at Ashby de la Zouch or Castle Donington is finely balanced. However, overall it is considered that allocating land at Castle Donington would be more appropriate as it would ensure that the proportion of growth in the two Key Service Centres of Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington is relatively similar. Furthermore, it would be consistent with the SGP which could also avoid objections under the Duty to Cooperate. It would also provide a balance with the significant employment opportunities that exist in this part of the district and which is forecast to increase further in the future. However, it is subject to the proposed policy for west of Castle Donington reflecting the advice set out in the heritage report commissioned by the Council.
- 4.44 It should be noted that transport evidence has been commissioned to support the plan with a specific focus on the northern part of the district. This will consider the potential impact on the highway network arising from this site (and others in the locality) along with likely mitigation requirements. This will inform any specific requirements at Regulation 19 stage.
- 4.45 The overall number of dwellings proposed in the Key Service Centres that are new allocations is 1,136 dwellings.

Local Service Centres

- 4.46 The Local Service Centres comprise Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham.
- 4.47 The recent announcement from the government regarding HS2 has significant implications for potential housing development in both Kegworth and Measham. As noted previously, two sites which had the benefit of planning permission at Kegworth (251

dwelling) and one at Measham (426 dwellings) were affected by the proposed route of HS2. These sites can now come forward for development whereas previously it had been assumed that no development was possible on these sites, which is reflected in the option 7b requirement figure.

- 4.48 The adopted Local Plan identifies reserve sites at both Kegworth and Measham in the event that HS2 did proceed and so result in the loss of the three sites referred to. However, in view of the government announcement neither of these sites are now required. Therefore, it is proposed that no further land be allocated in either Kegworth or Measham
- 4.49 In terms of Ibstock, a site to the north of Leicester Road (SHELAA reference Ib18) is proposed. This has the potential to deliver a new primary school (the existing one is near capacity and there is no space to extend) and to also provide a link road between Leicester Road and Ravenstone Road. This could potentially remove some traffic from the double roundabout on Ashby Road/Melbourne Road.

Sustainable Villages

- 4.50 The Sustainable Villages comprise the following: Albert Village, Appleby Magna, Belton, Blackfordby, Breedon on the Hill, Diseworth, Donisthorpe, Ellistown, Heather, Long Whatton, Moira (including Norris Hill), Oakthorpe, Packington, Ravenstone, Swannington, Woodville, Worthington
- 4.51 A number of these villages are the subject of a Neighbourhood Plan. These have either been 'made' or are in the process of being prepared. The Blackfordby and Swannington Neighbourhood Plans have been 'made' and contain housing allocations. Therefore, it is not proposed to allocate any additional land in these settlements. Plans are being prepared to cover Breedon on the Hill, Diseworth and Long Whatton. The Neighbourhood Plan groups are proposing to include housing allocations. Officers have advised the respective Neighbourhood Plan groups that subject to this being the case, then no further sites would be proposed at this stage as part of the Local Plan. If, however, they change their mind then a future iteration of the Local Plan would potentially allocate sites.
- 4.52 In terms of the remaining Sustainable Villages it is not proposed to allocate any sites in Albert Village, Belton and Worthington as none of the potential sites identified in the SHELAA are considered to be suitable. No sites have been put forward at Woodville, other than one site which is covered by the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan and so no provision is proposed for the reasons outlined at paragraph 4.50 above.
- 4.53 In the vast majority of cases the sites proposed are in the range of 20 to 50 dwellings. Bearing in mind the size of these settlements and the range of services and facilities these are considered to be reasonable.
- 4.54 The most amount of development is in Ellistown. There are a limited number of sites included in the SHELAA for Ellistown. Of these, only one is considered to be suitable (SHELAA reference E7). Its potential capacity based on the SHELAA is up to 237 dwellings. A promotional document submitted to the Council suggested that the amount of development could be between 150-200 dwellings, although there was nothing more specific. Either way, this would be significantly in excess of any other site in a Sustainable Village. Therefore, it is proposed that a smaller site be allocated that is restricted to the field fronting Midland Road. It is estimated that this would potentially provide 69 dwellings, more in keeping with the other Sustainable Villages. The development of this site would reduce the visual and physical gap between Ellistown and Hugglescote and it will be important that the scheme is designed in a way to maintain the actual and perceived

separation between these two settlements. Land on the opposite side of Midland Road is proposed for employment. It will be important to ensure that the two sites are designed to complement each other, not only in terms of their design but also in terms of infrastructure provision.

How does what is proposed compare to option 7b?

- 4.55 Based on the proposed site allocations, the following distribution emerges. It is important to note that the numbers are not absolutes and are subject to change as more information becomes available.

Table 6 – comparison of proposed provision compared to option 7b

Actual proportions based on residual requirement at April 2023 of 5,693 dwellings	Proportion (%)	Total provision of new allocations based on residual of 5,693	Actual number	Compared to requirement	Actual proportion (%)
Principal town	35	1,993	1,594	-399	28
New settlement	35	1,993	1,900	-93	33
Key Service Centre	15	854	1,126	272	20
Local service Centre	10	569	450	-119	8
Sustainable Villages	5	285	334	49	6
Total provision	100	5,693	5,404	-289	95

Overall

- 4.56 It will be noted that the total provision of new allocations is less than the overall requirement. However, as already noted there are a number of other sites which have been put forward which have yet to be assessed. In addition, it should be appreciated that there is still some uncertainty regarding the exact figures for individual sites or their build rates. Therefore, all of the above the numbers need to be treated with a degree of caution at this stage.

Principal Town

- 4.57 It can be seen that there is a significant shortfall compared to option 7b. For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 4.22 and 4.23 there are no proposals at this stage to identify any further land. However, this will need to be addressed at Regulation 19 stage.

New settlement

- 4.58 There is a shortfall of about 90 dwellings against option 7b which is not considered to be significant.

Key Service Centre

- 4.59 The total number of dwellings proposed to be allocated in the Key Service Centres is 2,336 dwellings (see Table 4). However, as noted previously, the overall number of dwellings that are new allocations is 1,136 dwellings. This is significantly more than under option 7b and results in proportionally more development in these settlements (20% of all growth compared to 15% required under option 7b). Artificially reducing the

numbers at the west of Castle Donington to fit more with option 7b would be inappropriate. If the one new allocation at Ashby de la Zouch was omitted it would reduce the over provision to about 220 dwellings. However, there is not considered to be any reason to exclude this site on planning grounds. The over provision also helps to address the slight shortfalls in the Coalville Urban Area and the new settlement.

Local Service Centres

- 4.60 On the face of it there is a more significant shortfall across the Local Service Centres. However, this is somewhat misleading. As noted previously the recent government announcement regarding the cancellation of HS2 will enable three sites capable of accommodating 677 dwellings and which have the benefit of planning permission to come forward in Kegworth and Measham. These sites would otherwise have been needed to be replaced through new allocations, this is no longer the case.

Sustainable Villages

- 4.61 There is a slight over provision in the Sustainable Villages, but this needs to be balanced against the fact that most villages see some growth which will help to assist with their long-term sustainability from a community perspective and will provide continued support to help maintain existing service provision. The over provision is not considered to be significant.

5.0 WHAT IS PROPOSED – EMPLOYMENT

- 5.1 Appendix A to this report includes the proposed employment allocations which it is recommended be consulted upon alongside the draft policies considered by this committee at its meeting on 18 October 2023.
- 5.2 The following sections provide more explanation of what is proposed in terms of employment.

General Needs Employment

- 5.3 General needs employment falls in to two categories:
- Offices and
 - Industry and small-scale warehousing (units of less than 9,000sqm)

Each of these is considered below.

Offices

- 5.4 Offices are a main town centre use and a sequential approach is required when identifying new sites for office development. This means that town centre and then edge of centre locations should be favoured over out of centre sites. In their study, the consultants Stantec identify a trend towards businesses favouring in-town offices over out-of-town business parks.
- 5.5 A review by officers of those SHELAA sites which are located in town centre or edge of centre locations has revealed a lack of sequentially preferable sites which are realistic candidates for new office development. Whilst it is feasible that the market could bring forward such redevelopment sites during the plan period, it is more likely that this will require some form of public sector intervention, possibly as part of a larger scale regeneration initiative.

- 5.6 Taking these factors into account, the recommended approach at this stage is to include offices as part of a mixed-use employment site at Land west of Hilltop, Castle Donington (SHELAA reference EMP89) (6.39Ha). This could function as an extension to Stud Brook Business Park which is currently under construction.

Industry and small-scale warehousing

- 5.7 Four sites have been identified as proposed allocations for general needs employment at this stage.

Land north of Derby Road (A6), Kegworth (10.24Ha) and Land north of A453 Remembrance Way Kegworth (14.8Ha) (both SHELAA reference EMP73).

- 5.8 Land north of Derby Road includes land which had been safeguarded for the route of HS2, which has now been cancelled. This means that this site is now available in its entirety. The second parcel, north of Remembrance Way, is within Flood Zone 3. The site promoters are undertaking more detailed flood modelling work and are liaising with the Environment Agency to confirm the actual level of flood risk. The outcomes of this could be a) the whole site is deemed developable; b) only part of it is suitable for development or c) flood risk is a 'showstopper' for this site. Pending this being resolved, the site is included at this stage so that it can be subject to public consultation.

Land east of Midland Road, Ellistown (10.8Ha) (SHELAA reference EMP24)

- 5.9 This site adjoins the South Leicester Industrial Estate. Access would be via Midland Road and has not been ruled out by County Highways, although the double mini roundabout in Ellistown is a recognised pinch point. The development of this site would reduce the visual and physical gap between Ellistown and Hugglescote and it will be important that the scheme is designed in a way to maintain the actual and perceived separation between these two settlements. Land on the opposite side of Midland Road is proposed for housing. It will be important to ensure that the two sites are designed to complement each other, not only in terms of their design but also in terms of infrastructure provision.

Land at Burton Road, Oakthorpe (4.48Ha) (SHELAA reference EMP60).

- 5.10 Despite its address, this site is close to Measham as it is situated immediately to the west of A42. The County Highways has raised some concerns which the site owners (Leicestershire County Council) are working to resolve and, pending this, the site is included for public consultation. The site would provide valuable additional general employment land in the south of the district as no other such land is currently available.

Land at proposed new settlement

- 5.11 Employment development will be part of the mix of uses at the proposed new settlement at Isley Woodhouse. This will provide increased opportunities for people to live and work locally, improving the overall sustainability of the settlement and the wider area. Initial information from the site promoters suggests there could be in the order of 23,000sqm of industrial/warehousing space when the settlement is fully built out. At this stage it is not possible to be certain how much of this would be provided by 2040. A cautious approach is suggested which assumes that some 20% of this (i.e. 4,600sqm) can be completed by 2040.

- 5.12 The table below sets out the estimated capacity of each site and compares this with the residual requirement. The employment land supply table 3 above is dated April 2023 and since then permission has been granted for up to 6,719sqm of industry and/or storage and distribution floorspace at Land West of Regs Way, Bardon (21/02281/FULM). This quantum has been deducted from the requirement figure in the table below.
- 5.13 The table below does not include any sites at Ashby de la Zouch. However, land at Money Hill is allocated for employment purposes in the adopted Local Plan. This site has yet to come forward for development due to restrictions associated with the River Mease. These issues will be resolved when pumping out of catchment occurs (2027). This site remains an appropriate employment site and so it is proposed to reconfirm the allocation of this site. Whilst not included in the table below, it has been accounted for in the employment land supply table 3.

Table 7 – Proposed employment land allocations

			Offices	General B2/B8
EMP24	East of Midland Road	Ellistown	0	29,160
EMP89	W of Hilltop	Castle Donington	6,000	11,850
EMP 73 (part)	N of A6 Derby Road	Kegworth	0	30,000
EMP 73 (part)	N of A543 Remembrance Way	Kegworth	0	40,000
IW1	New settlement	Isley Woodhouse	0	4,600
EMP60	Burton Road	Oakthorpe	0	12,100
			Total sqm	6,000
			Requirement	Up to 10,506sqm
			Under/over	-4,506sqm
				At least 107,843sqm
				+19,867sqm

- 5.14 This shows that the sites listed are insufficient to meet the entirety of the office requirement figure. The picture for offices is a mixed one. The employment land forecast in the Stantec study shows that the number of people in office-based jobs will increase over the plan period which, on the face of it, translates into a need for new office premises. However, the Stantec report acknowledges there is uncertainty about this, particularly about the extent to which increased home working will affect future needs and presents the requirement as a maximum figure. A market demand for new stock is also not apparent and, linked to this, speculative office development is not currently viable. This situation is not unique to North West Leicestershire and a quite substantial market

adjustment would need to happen for this position to change. Officers will keep this matter under review.

- 5.15 Conversely the table shows an apparent excess of small industrial/warehousing. Officers consider that it is nonetheless pragmatic to include all these sites for the following reasons.
- The industry/smaller warehousing requirement is expressed as a minimum;
 - Some sites may fall away or be reduced in size as more information becomes available; and
 - The overall employment land supply position may change when this is updated in April 2024.

Strategic Warehousing

- 5.16 Further to the findings of the [Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing growth and change \(April 2021\)](#) , the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities have committed to continued joint working on strategic warehousing matters. To this end, the authorities commissioned a study to advise on how best to distribute the future need for strategic warehousing across the authorities' areas. This report is in preparation and, when complete, it will form a part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. The report will recommend an apportionment of the requirements, but it will be down to individual authorities through their Local Plans to determine which site/s to allocate based on their own detailed understanding of relevant planning factors.
- 5.17 As already noted (paragraph 2.11) Committee has previously agreed an initial policy option whereby this council would provide for 50% of the outstanding Leicester & Leicestershire requirement (approximately 106,000sqm). This will be revisited when the apportionment report is complete.

East Midlands Freeport.

- 5.18 The East Midlands Freeport was designated by the government in March 2021. The designation covers three locations, one of which is centred on East Midlands Airport within North West Leicestershire. Some 100Ha of land to the south of the A453/J23a of M1 and to the immediate east of Diseworth is included in the Freeport designation. This same land has been promoted for employment-related development in the Council's SHELAA (site reference EMP90).
- 5.19 A purpose of the Freeport designation is to incentivise business and enterprise. Businesses locating to the Freeport will benefit from a package of financial benefits. As some of the incentives are due to cease in 2026, there is pressure to develop the site quickly.
- 5.20 The Strategic Growth Plan identifies East Midlands Airport and its immediate area as a major employment opportunity and it forms part of the broad 'Leicestershire International Gateway' area. Additionally, the site's Freeport status must be given significant weight as a statement of government policy when considering the site allocations for this new plan. Similarly, the development proposed would generate very substantial direct and indirect economic and employment benefits which will be important factors in the scheme's favour.

- 5.21 In designating the Freeport, however, an assessment of the planning merits of the site was not undertaken by the government; in effect it is an economic designation. The acceptability of the proposal in planning terms is a matter for this new Local Plan and/or a planning application balanced against the above considerations.
- 5.22 From a planning point of view the following are key planning considerations (although there are also more):
- Highways/transport – in view of the site’s location and the level of traffic that could be generated, it will be important to understand the likely impact on the road network, including both J23a and J24 of the M1. As noted elsewhere in this report transport evidence has been commissioned to support the plan with a specific focus on the northern part of the district. This will consider the impact of this site on its own, but also in conjunction with the proposed new settlement (SHELAA reference IW1) and land west of Castle Donington (SHELAA reference CD10). It will also identify any mitigation measures required as part of any development.
 - There is the potential for harmful affects upon the Diseworth Conservation Area, particularly if development was to come right up to the edge of the village, to correspond with the Freeport designation, which could erode its legibility as a standalone settlement within its rural context.
 - In terms of potential impact upon the landscape, it is considered that the scale of the proposed development would result in harmful impacts which would detract from the rural setting of Diseworth.
 - There is the potential for adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby residential properties.
 - Other potential concerns relate to impact on biodiversity, flooding and drainage and the operation of East Midlands Airport.
 - The exact nature and extent of development impacts will depend upon the details of the proposal and the site’s design and layout.
- 5.23 In addition to the above site-specific concerns, and as noted above, the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Warehousing apportionment study has yet to be completed. Its findings will need to be considered as they will have a bearing on the selection of location/s for strategic warehousing for the new Local Plan. The Council will also need an up-to-date understanding of the progress made by all the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities towards meeting the need identified in the 2021 study.
- 5.24 At this time, faced with these significant concerns and uncertainties, officers are not yet in a position to make a firm recommendation that the Freeport site should be proposed for allocation or, conversely, that it should be rejected at this stage. The expectation is that these issues will have been resolved, one way or another, by the time Regulation 19 Plan is being produced (likely to be late 2024/early 2025). If the issues are satisfactorily addressed, then this could mean a recommendation to allocate the site at that point. However, introducing such a significant proposal late in the plan process is not without risk.
- 5.25 To address this risk, and to provide an opportunity to gather the views of the public and stakeholders, it is considered important that the site features in the forthcoming consultation in some form.
- 5.26 Having regard to the concerns outlined above, officers consider that potential impacts on Diseworth, particularly in terms of heritage, landscape and amenity, would be likely to be

unacceptable based on the current extent of the designated Freeport land. At this stage it is suggested that a smaller site be consulted upon as a 'Potential Location for Strategic Distribution'. The recommended site boundary and proposed policy included in the proposed consultation document at Appendix A reflects these concerns.

- 5.27 The decisions at Regulation 19 stage will be subject to the outcome from the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Warehousing apportionment study identifying a need for additional strategic B8 in North West Leicestershire, together with addressing the various concerns outlined above. The proposed policy allows for this.

J11 A/M42

- 5.28 At the Development Options and Policy Options stage (January 2022) it was identified that new development at the J11 M/A42 location could capitalise on the profile of Mercia Park with the potential to share infrastructure. The emerging spatial strategy agreed by Local Plan Committee reflects this:

Allocate employment land at Coalville, Ashby and Castle Donington/East Midlands Airport, at the Local Service Centres and at a 'new', expanding employment location at J11 M42.

- 5.29 As outlined, the matter of strategic warehousing is subject to a number of uncertainties including around the role and suitability of the designated Freeport site as described above.
- 5.30 All the SHELAA sites which are potentially suitable for strategic B8 uses have been appraised as part of the detailed site assessment work described elsewhere in this report. This work is on a site-by-site basis and does not factor in wider issues (such as the outcomes of the apportionment study) which may also influence the final selection of site/s for inclusion in the Plan.
- 5.31 Based on the assessment of all the potential sites, officers' view is that land to the north of J11 A/M42 is a suitable site for allocation (SHELAA site EMP82). The site is approximately 28Ha and comprises a wedge -shaped parcel of agricultural land contained by the A42 to the east, the A444 to the west and by field boundaries to the north. The Mercia Park development faces the site to the west.
- 5.32 In the same vein as the Freeport site, it would be pragmatic to include this site in the forthcoming consultation as a 'Potential Location for Strategic Distribution'. This will mean its merits can be tested through wider public consultation in advance of a future decision on the necessity for a site allocation in this location. A proposed policy and site plan are included in the document in Appendix A.
- 5.33 It is important to note that this issue is not presented as a straightforward choice between these two locations in the draft consultation document. Depending on the resolution of the outstanding matters, the recommendation at Regulation 19 stage could be that allocation of one site is justified, or both sites or, indeed, neither site or even a different site entirely.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The sites proposed to be allocated for housing and employment as set out at Appendix A, together with the policies agreed by Local Plan Committee at its meeting on 18 October

and those matters covered elsewhere in this report, comprise the draft Local Plan prepared under Regulation 18. In addition, a variety of supporting documents will be published including those referred to at paragraph 3.5 of this report.

- 6.2 The intention is that all of these will be consulted upon starting in early January 2025. The consultation will be for a period of six weeks. This will include some form of direct public engagement in a number of locations, most likely in the form of an informal roadshow/exhibition during an afternoon and evening. Members will be provided with more details when they are available. In addition, those on the Council's consultation database will be contacted directly to be made aware of the consultation and other means will be used to publicise the plan.
- 6.3 The consultation responses will be reported back to a meeting of this committee in due course. Exactly when will partly depend upon the nature and volume of responses received.
- 6.4 All policies will need to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Any suggested changes arising from the SA will be considered alongside responses to the proposed consultation. In addition, a Viability Assessment of the plan together an Infrastructure Delivery Plan will need to be prepared.
- 6.5 As members have been previously advised, the government intends that plans being prepared under the current regulations will need to be submitted for Examination by the end of June 2025. The final version of the plan (referred to as the Regulation 19 plan) will need to be agreed by a meeting of Council towards the end of 2024/ early 2025 if this deadline is to be met.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Insert relevant Council Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for businesses and helping people into local jobs - Developing a clean and green district - Local people live in high quality, affordable homes - Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	The National Planning Policy Framework requires that plans meet the development needs of their area.
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:	Detail any impact the decision will have on customers
Economic and Social Impact:	The decision, of itself, will have no specific impact. The new Local Plan 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 new Local Plan as a whole will aim to deliver positive environmental and climate change impacts and these will be recorded through the Sustainability Appraisal.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	A number of the policies have been the subject of previous consultation. Where this is the case it is highlighted in the report. All the proposed policies will be subject to consultation. 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 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk