

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor J G Simmons (Chair)

Councillors P Lees, D Bigby, D Everitt, J Legrys, P Moulton, C A Sewell, L Windram, A C Woodman and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors A Barker, K Merrie and S Sheahan

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

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor R Morris.

15 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

16 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

17 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor A Woodman and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18 NEW LOCAL PLAN - PROPOSED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATIONS

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report.

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager passed over to the Principal Planning Officer to present part of the report.

A Member expressed his opposition to the proposed housing allocation at Meadow Lane due to ecological concerns, the likelihood of increased congestion, and how the development might impact a nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Another Member was concerned with the proposals for the west of Whitwick. He felt the proposed provision of amenities and infrastructure for the size of development was insufficient. He was also concerned about access, and any potential impact on the Area of Separation between Whitwick and Coalville.

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager agreed that development west of Whitwick would be on a significant scale. However, consultations about the amenities and infrastructure required to support this potential development had not been completed. At this stage the intention is to explore whether this site could be developed out in a comprehensive manner.

A Member asked whether the Freeport and associated infrastructure provision were included as allocations and in response the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager set out their technical and strategic thinking around the freeport within the Local Plan drafting process. He then advised the Member that it was realistic to assume that additional infrastructure would be phased as part of the development.

A Member expressed concern about plans to approve sites which had previously proved unviable; if they once again proved unviable the allocations would have to be redistributed elsewhere throughout the district.

An amendment to the recommendations was proposed by a Member in relation to the removal of the proposal to allocate land at Meadow Lane, Coalville for housing development due to the impact it would have on a nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest, the loss of mature trees and the impact on local roads. The amendment also referred to the need to defer for the moment pending further consideration the allocation at the west of Castle Donington, due to concerns about potential impacts on local heritage sites.

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that the planning grounds to reject development at Meadow Lane were considered to be weak and would possibly be rejected by the Inspector at Examination. Furthermore, if the amendment was approved, a replacement allocation would likely have to be found from within the Area of Separation, most likely at Broom Leys Farm, though this would require further assessment. With regards to the concerns around heritage sites around Castle Donington, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that some research on this had already been carried out but there was perhaps more to examine if the Committee wished him to do so.

The amended motion was moved by Councillor M Wyatt and seconded by Councillor L Windram.

The Chair requested a recorded vote, as detailed below.

RESOLVED THAT:

That Meadow Lane be not allocated for housing development because of the impact on the Coalville Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest, destroying this part of the Charnwood Forest, the loss of mature trees, the impact on local roads, particularly the junction of Meadow Lane and Leicester Road but also the increased risk to children going to and from Castle Rock School.

To replace this site officers are asked to:

- 1) Investigate the potential for delivering more housing on brownfield sites around Coalville town centre as part of the Council's Regeneration Strategy.
- 2) Look again at the potential for allocating land elsewhere in Coalville.
- 3) Defer consideration of the proposed allocation at West of Castle Donington to enable further consideration to be given to the potential impact on heritage matters.

The Chair advised that this matter would be deferred and officers would come back to the January meeting with revised proposals to take account of the committees' views.

Motion to defer the recommendation (Motion)	
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor Dave Bigby	Against
Councillor David Everitt	Against
Councillor John Legrys	Abstain
Councillor Peter Mout	Against
Councillor Carol Sewell	Against
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Andrew Woodman	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Councillor Kenny Horn	For
Carried	

19 NEW LOCAL PLAN - LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report.

A Member welcomed the plan but queried the role of ward Member consultation in the Limits to Development process and suggested that he would welcome contributions from every Councillor and a forum to do this.

In response, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that the appropriate mechanism would be for members to respond to the public consultation process as this would be more transparent.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor D Bigby and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Limits to Development review document in Appendix A be agreed for the purposes of consultation.

20 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN - POLICIES

The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager presented the report.

A Member was acutely concerned with the plan to allow self-builds outside of limits to development in certain circumstances. He noted that it was contrary to an initial policy agreed by the Local Plan Committee for consultation in March 2023. In response, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that these changes reflected statutory constraints imposed by Central Government and the need to avoid decisions of the Council being successfully appealed on a frequent basis.

In response to a Member asking how often self-build sites ended up as developer sites, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised that one of the things which was key was securing the self and custom builds with a legal agreement to tie them down as much as possible within the permission granted.

A couple of Members commented on the need to provide the required Gypsy and Traveller sites within the next Local Plan, and that this must be financially and strategically supported by other local authorities within Leicestershire. The Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager accepted that discussions with other local authorities within Leicestershire on providing services for Gypsies and Travellers would be wise and discussions down the line would be had.

Following a discussion on self-build housing, the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager advised on the statutory definitions of self and custom build housing. He added that it was possible to allocate specific sites for self-build although it was an issue to be considered further down the line.

A Member circulated a suggested amendment to the recommendations in relation to self and custom builds. Following a debate, and advice from the Legal Advisor, Members felt a deferral of that element be more appropriate to allow further time to consider whether a change to the policy would be appropriate. This will be addressed in a report which the Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager will bring before the committee in January, and Members will consequently have a further opportunity to consider and discuss the matter.

It was moved by Councillor A Woodman, seconded by Councillor M Wyatt and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. The approval of the draft policy in respect of self and custom build as set out at Appendix A for the purposes of public consultation be deferred so to be reconsidered at the next meeting.
2. The intention to assess in more detail the potential for using negotiated stopping to address the temporary accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.04 pm