

Email to Conservative Councillors

From: Simon Atha <SimonAtha@boyerplanning.co.uk>

Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 1:09 PM

To: CLLR J SIMMONS <JENNY.SIMMONS@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR P LEES <PAUL.LEES@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR R MORRIS <RAY.MORRIS@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR A WOODMAN <ANDREW.WOODMAN@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>

Cc: Olivia Price <OliviaPrice@boyerplanning.co.uk>

Subject: EXTERNAL: Local Plan Committee – 17th January 2024

Dear Councillors,

Local Plan Committee – 17th January 2024

I write to you as the Conservative Members that sit on the Council's Local Plan Committee. I am the planning agent on behalf of Redrow Homes East Midlands who are the developer promoting Land at Meadow Lane, Whitwick as a housing allocation in the new Local Plan.

As you will be aware at the last committee meeting on 15th November, a motion was put forward by the Lib Dems to remove Land at Meadow Lane, Whitwick as a proposed housing allocation from the new Local Plan and to ask Officers to consider alternative sites instead. This motion was narrowly voted in favour of and carried. Whilst we appreciate the Conservatives have formed a ruling alliance with the Lib Dems and support was given to that motion, there are significant implications for the Council by not allocating Land at Meadow Lane for the Area of Separation that we wanted to take the opportunity to highlight in advance of Wednesday's meeting.

Officers advised that the planning grounds to remove the allocation at Meadow Lane were considered to be weak and would likely be rejected by the Inspector at Examination. In addition, replacement allocations would need to be found from within the Area of Separation, such as Broom Leys Farm. We would support your Officers assessment of there being weak grounds to remove Land at Meadow Lane, as it scores very highly in the Council's own independently produced Sustainability Appraisal that informs the site selection process.

As you will see from your agenda for Wednesday's committee meeting, Broom Leys Farm is now proposed as a housing allocation, alongside other brownfield sites within the Coalville regeneration area. Whilst we are supportive of brownfield sites coming forward, it is clear that despite these numbers and Broom Leys Farm now being put forward as an allocation there is still a significant shortfall of houses being planned for against the Council's housing requirement.

We have significant concerns with Broom Leys Farm being allocated instead of Land at Meadow Lane. It has been a longstanding policy of the Council that has been supported by all political parties (including the former Conservative administration) to maintain the Area of Separation between Coalville and Whitwick. It is evident that this policy is valued by residents across the district and its loss has been fought over and defended. The allocation of Broom Leys Farm would open the door to the future loss of land within the Area of Separation, either through the Local Plan process or by speculative planning applications. The Council have historically successfully defended appeals at Public Inquiry in relation to the Area of Separation and have been backed by the Secretary of State in a decision at Land North of Stephenson Way in 2012.

Our request to you as Members of the Local Plan Committee would be to consider revisiting the allocation of Land at Meadow Lane as it would prevent the need for the allocation of land within the

Area of Separation and maintain the Council's longstanding policy for this to be kept open as a gap between Coalville and Whitwick.

To assist in that decision making process I attach a Vision Document that sets out how Land at Meadow Lane could come forward in a positive and well-planned way, without impact on existing residents and would deliver significant planning benefits that are detailed below:

- **Delivery of Highway Junction Improvements** – There is an opportunity to provide a new highway through the site to alleviate junction safety issues at Leicester Road/Meadow Lane. This significant public benefit would assist existing and future residents and ensure safer access to the Castle Rock school and support active travel. We would improve and enhance the bridleway that runs across the site which is important for recreation for local residents.
- **Enhancement of the neighbouring SSSI** – The site abuts the Coalville Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the west and would provide contributions to the management of the SSSI and to expand the habitat area into the site. Currently the site is of agricultural use which is of low ecological value. By creating new habitat adjoining the SSSI will allow for better movement corridors for species and significant biodiversity net-gains.
- **On-site Provision of Community School Facilities** – The development would deliver additional school facilities on the site or via a contribution to enhancing existing facilities at the Castle Rock School. This could include provision of a MUGA, enhanced playing field provision, sporting facilities, community facilities or improvements to the school environment itself.
- **Delivery of much needed market and affordable housing** – The site would help to deliver up to 400 new homes which would assist in meeting the Council's housing requirement. The site would also deliver a minimum of 20% affordable housing to accord with policy and would involve first homes, shared ownership and affordable rent to meet the requirements of those in need on the Council's waiting list.
- **High Quality Design and Building Standards** – Homes delivered to Redrow's high quality principles of design, focused on creating places that offer social and environmental benefits for new and existing communities delivering a healthy, happy place to live.
- **Creation of a landscape led place** – Existing landscape features on site would be retained and enhanced with new planting, creation of play and open space that contributes to the National Forest.
- **Provision of infrastructure** – Contributions towards local health facilities, school places, sports facilities, libraries, civic amenity and the local area would all be delivered as part of the development of the site.

We would strongly encourage you at the Local Plan Committee meeting to consider re-visiting Land at Meadow Lane as a suitable housing allocation that would avoid the need for sites from the Area of Separation to come forward.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions in relation to Land at Meadow Way please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Simon Atha
Associate Director

Email to Labour Councillors

From: Simon Atha <SimonAtha@boyerplanning.co.uk>

Sent: 15 January 2024 13:11

To: CLLR D BIGBY <DAVID.BIGBY@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR D EVERITT <DAVID.EVERITT@NWLeicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR P MOULT <PETER.MOULT@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR C SEWELL <CAROL.SEWELL@nwleicestershire.gov.uk>; CLLR J LEGRYS <JOHN.LEGRYS@NWLeicestershire.gov.uk>

Subject: EXTERNAL: Local Plan Committee – 17th January 2024

Dear Councillors,

Local Plan Committee – 17th January 2024

I write to you as the Labour Members that sit on the Council's Local Plan Committee. I am the planning agent on behalf of Redrow Homes East Midlands who are the developer promoting Land at Meadow Lane, Whitwick as a housing allocation in the new Local Plan.

As you will be aware at the last committee meeting on 15th November, a motion was put forward by the Lib Dems to remove Land at Meadow Lane, Whitwick as a proposed housing allocation from the new Local Plan and to ask Officers to consider alternative sites instead. This motion was narrowly voted in favour of and carried.

Officers advised that the planning grounds to remove the allocation at Meadow Lane were considered to be weak and would likely be rejected by the Inspector at Examination. In addition, replacement allocations would need to be found from within the Area of Separation, such as Broom Leys Farm. We would support your Officers assessment of there being weak grounds to remove Land at Meadow Lane as it scores very highly in the Council's own independently produced Sustainability Appraisal that informs the site selection process.

As you will see from your agenda for Wednesday's committee meeting, Broom Leys Farm is now proposed as a housing allocation, alongside other brownfield sites within the Coalville regeneration area. Whilst we are supportive of brownfield sites coming forward, it is clear that despite these numbers and Broom Leys Farm now being put forward as an allocation there is still a significant shortfall of houses being planned for against the Council's housing requirement.

We have significant concerns with Broom Leys Farm being allocated instead of Land at Meadow Lane. It has been a longstanding policy of the Council that has been supported by all political parties to maintain the Area of Separation between Coalville and Whitwick. It is evident that this policy is valued by residents across the district and its loss has been fought over and defended. The allocation of Broom Leys Farm would open the door to the future loss of land within the Area of Separation, either through the Local Plan process or by speculative planning applications. The Council have historically successfully defended appeals at Public Inquiry in relation to the Area of Separation and have been backed by the Secretary of State in a decision at Land North of Stephenson Way in 2012.

Our request to you as the opposition to the Alliance on the Local Plan Committee would be to consider putting forward an alternative motion to restore the allocation of Land at Meadow Lane that would prevent the need for allocation of land within the Area of Separation and maintain the Council's longstanding policy for this to be kept open as a gap between Coalville and Whitwick.

To assist in that decision making process I attach a Vision Document that sets out how Land at Meadow Lane could come forward in a positive and well-planned way, without impact on existing residents and would deliver significant planning benefits that are detailed below:

- **Delivery of Highway Junction Improvements** – There is an opportunity to provide a new highway through the site to alleviate junction safety issues at Leicester Road/Meadow Lane. This significant public benefit would assist existing and future residents and ensure safer access to the Castle Rock school and support active travel. We would improve and enhance the bridleway that runs across the site which is important for recreation for local residents.
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- **Provision of infrastructure** – Contributions towards local health facilities, school places, sports facilities, libraries, civic amenity and the local area would all be delivered as part of the development of the site.

We would strongly encourage you at the Local Plan Committee meeting to consider re-visiting Land at Meadow Lane as a suitable housing allocation that would avoid the need for sites from the Area of Separation to come forward.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions in relation to Land at Meadow Lane please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Simon Atha
Associate Director