

Title of Report	Local Plan – Potential Area of Separation, Diseworth	
Presented by	Ian Nelson Planning Policy and Land Charges Team Manager	
Background Papers	Diseworth Separation Study New Local Plan - Evidence Base - North West Leicestershire District Council	Public Report: Yes
		Key Decision: No
Financial Implications	The Diseworth Separation Study has been paid for from 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.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	The purpose of this report is to consider whether an Area of Separation or similar be identified at Diseworth as part of the new Local Plan.	
Recommendations	THAT AN AREA OF SEPARATION AT DISEWORTH NOT BE IDENTIFIED AS PART OF THE LOCAL PLAN	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As members will be aware as part of the emerging Local Plan it is proposed to identify land for a new settlement to the south of Isley Walton and the A453. In addition, land to the south-west of J23a of the M1 is the subject of an application to the Planning Inspectorate for large scale employment, referred to as “the Freeport”.
- 1.2 Lying in between these two areas is the village of Diseworth. Officers met with representatives of the Parish Council in August 2024 to discuss the Parish Council’s concerns regarding the scale of the two proposals and in particular the potential impact arising from the new settlement upon the village and whether there was a way to protect Diseworth from any further development in the future.
- 1.3 Following this meeting officers commissioned a study from the consultants who undertook the Area of Separation study between Coalville and Whitwick. They were asked to consider whether there was any merit in considering the designation of an Area of Separation or similar policy approach. The study can be viewed from the links above.
- 1.4 Elsewhere on this agenda consideration is given to the Long Whatton and Diseworth Neighbourhood Plan. At paragraph 4.30 of the Neighbourhood Plan it is stated that “If the proposed new settlement is taken forward, the Parish Council will try to ensure that an area of separation between Diseworth and the new settlement is addressed by the emerging Local Plan”

2 THE STUDY

2.1 The study is split into seven sections:

- Section 1 provides a general introduction to Diseworth and proposals included in the emerging Local Plan and the purpose of the commission.
- Section 2 outlines the outcome from various landscape assessments from national to countywide.
- Section 3 sets out some general considerations
- Section 4 outlines the methodology used to assess the landscape around Diseworth.
- Section 5 provides an overview of the 'candidate' Area of Separation.
- Section 6 provides a detailed assessment of the land around Diseworth which are divided into different parcels (referred to as units).
- Section 7 sets out a summary of the contribution to separation of the different parcels.

2.2 The study identifies nine parcels to the north, south and west of Diseworth and identifies the contribution they make to separation as being primary, secondary or tertiary. Figure 09 of Appendix 01 of the study on page 10 shows the results.

2.3 Only one parcel (parcel B) is identified as making a primary contribution, whilst five are identified as making a secondary contribution and three are identified as being of tertiary importance.

2.4 Section 3 of the report considers the following specific questions:

- Is a separation policy justified?
- Would a separation policy be effective?
- Is a separation policy too restrictive?
- Would a Separation Area be effective in this case?

2.5 Section 3.6 of the report considers the questions outlined above in coming to a recommendation. The report notes that the issue of separation is currently explicitly addressed in proposed policy S3 (Countryside) where it is specifically stated that development will only be supported where:

"it does not undermine, either individually or cumulatively with existing or proposed development, the physical and perceived separation and open undeveloped character"

2.6 The report goes on to state (Paragraph 3.6.2) that:

"This policy wording [as referred to above] ensures that the issue of separation would be taken into consideration in future planning decisions. It is therefore difficult to envisage what greater protection a specific separation policy could provide."

2.7 At paragraph 3.6.5 the report recommends that:

"NWLDC continues to rely on the provisions of the existing countryside policy(S3)"

3 SHOULD THE PLAN INCLUDE AN AREA OF SEPARATION?

3.1 Notwithstanding the recommendation in the study, it is still open to the Council to identify an Area of Separation at Diseworth. Officers are of the view that if an Area of Separation was to be identified then it is considered that it should be restricted to parcel B which is identified as being of primary importance as it encompasses the narrowest section of open land between Diseworth and the new settlement.

3.2 As members will be aware an Area of Separation is currently identified in respect of the open and undeveloped land between Coalville and Whitwick. That area is very different to that around Diseworth as the open areas are surrounded by built development. The land

between Diseworth and the proposed new settlement is very different as it is open and undeveloped. Whilst accepting that the new settlement will change this to some degree, it is considered that a countryside designation remains appropriate. As set out in the study, the issue of separation would still be a legitimate consideration under proposed policy S3 in the event of any planning application being submitted on the land covered by the study. As such, identifying an Area of Separation would not add anything to the proposed policy in respect of countryside.

- 3.3 In the event that any of the land considered in the study is the subject of a planning application, then not only would separation be an important consideration under proposed policy S3, but the study would provide useful evidence to resist development that was considered to undermine the separation of Diseworth from the new settlement.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	- Planning and Regeneration
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	No issues identified
Equalities/Diversity:	No issues identified
Customer Impact:	No issues identified
Economic and Social Impact:	None specifically identified
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:	None
Risks:	<p>If an Area of Separation was to be identified this could be challenged at Examination. It is considered that if such a challenge was successful then it would be unlikely to result in the plan being considered as not sound.</p> <p>Including an Area of Separation at Diseworth could result in requests for other Areas of Separation elsewhere in the district. This would result in resources being redirected from other areas of work, which could impact upon the ability to submit the plan by December 2026.</p>
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