

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2015

Councillors C Large, J Legrys, V Richichi and S Sheahan

In Attendance: Councillor R Johnson

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr D Gill, Mrs M Meredith, Ms K Mills, Mr I Nelson and Mr J Newton

In the absence of the Chairman, nominations were sought to elect a Chairman for this meeting only.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor V Richichi and

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor C Large be elected as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

Councillor C Large took the chair.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R D Bayliss and J Bridges. At the meeting, Councillor J Legrys gave apologies on behalf of Councillor D De Lacy.

48. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

49. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor S Sheahan and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

50. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED THAT:

The Terms of Reference be noted.

51. LOCAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS

The Director of Services presented the report to members. He explained that this was the starting point for discussions about the designations that the Advisory Committee were going to be recommending to Council as part of the Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Team Manager gave a presentation to members outlining the likely designations in the Local Plan.

Councillor S Sheahan commented that he felt bamboozled by the bland glossary of terms and limited explanation. He expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which the report had been put together.

Councillor J Legrys stated that from his point of view, 99.9% of the issues highlighted were fairly uncontroversial. He expressed some concerns in respect of the area of separation, and he agreed that this needed to be defined at the neighbourhood plan stage. He stated that he could not agree to the definition of the area of separation, particularly in respect of paragraph 2.5 of the report. He commented that this was a highly contentious issue and questioned whether this should be discussed at this time within weeks of an election. He felt that these points needed to be discussed with the new Council in May. He stated that he had been lobbied hard in respect of the area of separation at Packington. He expressed concern that there was no proper area of separation between Albert Village and Woodville. He added that the issues at Hugglescote and Ellistown required discussion with local people. He stated that he could not support paragraphs 2.3 and 2.5 of the report as there needed to be discussions at a much more local level with parish and other councils. He felt that areas of separation needed to be defined. He stated that he would take the professional advice from officers, but felt that Councillors needed to discuss this in detail and he felt the report was particularly premature.

The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that the issues surrounding the areas of separation could be addressed through neighbourhood plans, and it was not necessary to define them in the Local Plan. The advice from officers was that it was not considered necessary to do so at district level, with the exception of the Coalville/Whitwick area of separation. He added that neighbourhood plan groups could consider this if they wished to.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sheahan, the Planning Policy Team Manager advised that a neighbourhood plan group would need to be established in the area concerned to have an input on the areas of separation. He advised that there were only 2 groups currently set up, however more could be established.

Councillor V Richichi asked what strength would be afforded to the neighbourhood plan. The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that once approved, it would become part of the development plan.

Councillor J Legrys referred to a particular appeal where the inspector had said the neighbourhood plan could be ignored; the Secretary of State threw this out on appeal.

Councillor C Large echoed many of the previous comments made. She stated that she was personally unhappy with completely removing the area of separation policy. She added that she had not appreciated the neighbourhood plan option. She felt that defining the area of separation in the neighbourhood plan would remove another hurdle and would not afford the same level of protection and she could see no reason why the policy could not also be retained. She felt that this would leave the door open for developers.

The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that identifying all the areas of separation would make the Local Plan more detailed.

Councillor J Legrys stated that he was happy to retain the area of separation policy. He added that he could not agree with the proposal at paragraph 2.5 of the report, as he felt this was best left for the new Council to consider after the elections in May.

Councillor C Large stated that she would like to see a specific policy in respect of Donington Park Race Circuit alluding to the activities there being mostly related to racing.

She commented that she would not like to see its use watered down, particularly in light of the recent application regarding auctions being held at the site.

The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that the aim would be to retain a policy similar to what was currently in place.

Members discussed the recommendations before them and particularly expressed concerns regarding paragraph 2.5 of the report. It was considered that more detail was needed on this issue.

The Director of Services highlighted the recommendations were to note and comment on the designations. He suggested that further information in respect of areas of separation be brought before the Advisory Committee at a future meeting after the elections in May.

RESOLVED THAT:

The suggested designations to be included in the Local Plan be noted.

52. LOCAL PLAN - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Director of Services presented the report to members. He referred to the report at a previous meeting on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which this report expanded upon.

The Planning Policy Team Manager added that the SCI was the starting point, but as this was a generic document, it was necessary to go into more detail in the Local Plan. He advised that this was still work in progress and would be updated as work on the Local Plan progressed. He advised that the document attempted to set out who would be targeted and how they would be engaged. He added that options were also being investigated as to how young people could be engaged.

Councillor S Sheahan asked if the plan had been drawn up with consideration being given to the Council's Community Engagement Strategy. The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that he would be working in conjunction with the Community Focus Team who had drawn up the Community Engagement Strategy.

Councillor S Sheahan moved that the recommendation be amended to add the words 'taking into account any relevant considerations from the Community Engagement Strategy'. This was seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

Councillor J Legrys commented that whatever the policy said, it would always be wrong for somebody. He stated that he was happy to go along with the proposals as a starter for ten; however he felt that the policy needed to be member led given his experience with the Core Strategy. He felt that members needed to put their heads on the block, explain the proposals and be accountable. He added that he took exception to officers taking the blame. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the emphasis being placed on web based communication, as there were a number of his constituents who had no access to the internet and they were being excluded. He felt that alternative methods of communication needed to be devised to engage with people who could not access the internet. He added that this was why the strategy should be Councillor led, as they would be the community leaders within their wards. He welcomed the inclusion of the students at Stephenson College, however he would like to see the pupils included at King Edward VII and other relevant schools, as he would like to hear their views.

Councillor S Sheahan endorsed the comments regarding members taking full responsibility in their community leadership roles. He added that he felt there was still work to be done on partnership working with officers.

Chairman's initials

Councillor C Large echoed the comments regarding community leadership. She stated that she attended Parish Council meetings to give updates on the Local Plan and felt that all members should be willing to do so and answer questions. She also agreed that the next generation should be involved in the consultation.

The Director of Services advised that members' comments had been noted and would be taken into account and developed.

RESOLVED THAT:

The proposed Community Engagement Plan in respect of the draft Local Plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.11 pm