

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2015

Title of report	<b>LOCAL PLAN – UPDATE</b>
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Purpose of report	To provide the Advisory Committee with an update in respect of the preparation of the new Local Plan.
Council Priorities	These are taken from the Council Delivery Plan:  Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	None
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	A risk assessment of the project has been undertaken. As far as possible control measures have been put in place to minimise these risks, including monthly Project Board meetings where risk is reviewed.
Equalities Impact Screening	The Local Plan will need to be subject to an Equalities Impact Screening before the final plan is agreed in 2016
Human Rights	None

Transformational Government	Not applicable
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is Satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is Satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	On the advice of external solicitors, the report is Satisfactory.
Consultees	Local Plan Project Board
Background papers	<p>Reports to Local Plan Advisory Committee which can be viewed at <a href="http://minutes-1.nwleics.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=251&amp;Year=0">http://minutes-1.nwleics.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=251&amp;Year=0</a></p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework which can be found at <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications?topics%5B%5D=planning-and-building">www.gov.uk/government/publications?topics%5B%5D=planning-and-building</a></p> <p>Leicester and Leicestershire HMA Employment Land Study (PACEC) - January 2013 which can be found at <a href="#">Evidence Base Documents - North West Leicestershire District Council</a></p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement which can be found at <a href="#">Statement of Community Involvement 2015 - North West Leicestershire District Council</a></p>
Recommendations	<p><b>A) THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOTES AND COMMENTS ON</b></p> <p><b>(i) THE PROPOSED LOCAL PLAN HOUSING REQUIREMENTS;</b></p> <p><b>(ii) THE OPTIONS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION IN THE LOCAL PLAN;</b></p> <p><b>(iii) THE PROPOSED LOCAL PLAN SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY;</b></p> <p><b>(iv) THE PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARIES;</b></p> <p><b>(v) THE PROPOSED APPROACH TO DEFINING THE LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT AT PACKINGTON.</b></p> <p><b>B) THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGREES TO AN ADDITIONAL MEETING ON 29 JULY 2015 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN.</b></p>

	<b>C) THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGREES TO CANCEL THE MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR 16 SEPTEMBER 2015 AND 18 NOVEMBER 2015</b>
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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 A Local Plan Advisory Committee (LPAC) was established at the meeting of Council on 25 February 2014 to work with officers on the preparation of a new Local Plan.
- 1.2 Since being established the LPAC has met on eight separate occasions and has considered reports in respect of:
- Scope of a document to replace the Core Strategy (18 March 2014);
  - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Statement of Community Involvement (29 April 2014);
  - Local Plan timetable, Strategic Housing Market Assessment (3 June 2014);
  - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (update), Risk Management, Plan Period update and Limits to Development (9 September 2014);
  - Review of Town Centre boundaries (15 October 2014);
  - Development Strategy, Affordable Housing and Statement of Community Involvement (12 November 2014);
  - Town Centre boundaries and Limits to Development updates and recent Local Plan examinations (17 February 2015);
  - Local Plan designations and Local Plan community engagement (4 March 2015)
- 1.3 All decisions on the Local plan are reserved for Council. The draft Local Plan will be considered by a special meeting of Council on 15 September 2015.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of those matters previously considered by the Advisory Committee.

## **2.0 HOUSING REQUIREMENTS**

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the “*Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing.*”. It also advises that Local Planning Authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs across a housing market area through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market assessment (SHMA).
- 2.2 Reports to the 3 June 2014 and 9 September 2014 meetings of the Advisory Committee noted that a SHMA had been undertaken jointly with the other local planning authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA). The SHMA had suggested an objectively assessed need (OAN) for North West Leicestershire of 350 dwellings each year for 2011 to 2031 (i.e. a total of 7,000 dwellings).
- 2.3 A Memorandum of Understanding (attached at Appendix A of this report) was signed by all of the HMA authorities in late 2014 which confirmed that each authority could meet its own OAN as identified in the SHMA up to 2028 and that we would continue to work together to support the preparation of Local Plans post 2028.

- 2.4 Whilst the SHMA identified the OAN for each authority it also noted that the OAN figures *“provide a ‘policy off’ assessment of housing need. In translating this into housing targets in development plans, the commissioning local authorities will need to consider whether there is a case for adjusting the level of housing provision to align with their evidence regarding local economic growth potential and to address where relevant any unmet needs from adjoining authorities”*.
- 2.5 For clarification the reference to policy-off means that no account has been taken of any possible policy constraints which could affect the future provision of housing; it represents an objective assessment of future needs based on an analysis of predicted growth only.
- 2.6 The Memorandum of Understanding notes that *“In determining their housing target over the relevant plan period each authority will take account of all relevant evidence”*.
- 2.7 This reflects the advice at paragraph 158 of the NPPF that local planning authorities should ensure that their assessments of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals.
- 2.8 As advised at the meeting of the Advisory Committee on 12 November 2014 it is necessary, therefore, to consider whether there is any other evidence which suggest that the housing requirement suggested in the SHMA should be adjusted, up or down.
- 2.9 The employment requirements to be met in the Local Plan are derived from a study undertaken by the Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) on behalf of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) in 2013. The Charnwood Local Plan which has recently been through examination similarly used this study for its employment requirements.
- 2.10 The PACEC study provides a forecast of the likely change in the number of jobs in the B Use Classes (i.e. That is those uses which fall within the B Use Class of the Use Classes Order 2015).
- 2.11 In respect of B8 Uses (Storage or distribution) the PACEC study predicts an increase of 3,400 jobs.
- 2.12 Members will be aware that there is currently a proposal for the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) west of Junction 24 of the M1 and north of East Midlands Airport (the East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange). This envisages the creation of about 7,400 jobs, mostly in the B8 Use Class.
- 2.13 Clearly not all of the jobs created by the East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange would be over and above that forecast by PACEC. Some of the jobs would be included within the PACEC forecast of 3,400 jobs for the B8 Use Class. The question as to how many is clearly open to debate, but it has been assumed that 5,000 of the 7,400 jobs projected for the development (about 66% of all of the jobs) would be additional to that forecast by PACEC.
- 2.14 This is still significantly more jobs in the B8 Use Class than that forecast by PACEC study. It is considered therefore, that whilst permission has not yet been granted for this development (and there is no guarantee that it will be forthcoming), it would be prudent to

consider a greater number of jobs in the B8 Use Class than that forecast by the PACEC study when considering future housing requirements particularly as the Council has stated its support for the East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange proposal.

- 2.15 Before considering this further, members should also be aware that in February 2015 the Department for Communities and Local Government published new household projections based on 2012 data (the SHMA was based on the 2011 interim projections). These suggest that in North West Leicestershire as at 2031 there would be 44,000 households, compared to 44,802 in the 2011 projections and just over 46,000 suggested by the SHMA.
- 2.16 This suggests that the SHMA may have overestimated the future need. However, it should be appreciated that forecasting is not an exact science and it can be seen that forecasts do vary through time. Furthermore, the household projections are merely trend based and do not take account of any local factors which could suggest higher or lower growth than contained in the national household projections. As outlined above there is a potential for the proposed development of the East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange (if approved) to impact upon future housing requirements to a greater or lesser degree.
- 2.17 Notwithstanding the latest household projections, officers are of the view that it would be prudent in view of the economic growth issues outlined above to propose a higher housing requirement than that suggested in the SHMA and agreed as part of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 2.18 It is suggested that to do this the Local Plan should seek to ensure that future growth in housing and jobs remain consistent with that which existed in 2011, the start date for the Local Plan. To do this a measure known as job density has been used.
- 2.19 Job density is a measure of the balance between jobs and people of working age in an area used by the Office for National Statistics. Under this the number of jobs in a defined area is compared to the number of people of working age (16-64) where a figure of 1 would mean there is one job for each working age person in that area. Anything above this would represent in commuting for work whilst anything less than 1 represents out commuting.
- 2.20 As at 2011 (the start date for the Local Plan) the job density was estimated as being 0.92. Officers have estimated that using the population forecasts in the SHMA that this increase in jobs over and above that forecast in the PACEC study would result in a job density of 1.06.
- 2.21 To maintain the job density at 0.92 as in 2011 would require a bigger working age population than that suggested by the SHMA and this in turn will result in more households and so more housing required. It is estimated that rather than 7,000 as suggested in the SHMA that a figure of about 10,700 dwellings would be required.
- 2.22 Therefore, for the reasons outlined above it is proposed that the draft Local Plan should seek to make provision for about 10,700 dwellings between 2011 and 2031.
- 2.23 In view of the deviation from the agreed Memorandum of Understanding it is necessary under the Duty to Cooperate for discussion to take place with the other HMA authorities to ensure that the other authorities are comfortable with level of housing provision in North

West Leicestershire. Officers have begun these discussions and it is not anticipated that there will be any significant issues as a result of the discussions

- 2.24 Whilst recognising that a requirement of 10,700 dwellings is a higher housing requirement than that identified in the SHMA the impact on the Local Plan is not as significant as might be supposed. This is because as a result of the fact that the Council has over the last couple of years granted or resolved to grant planning permission for a significant number of dwellings the amount of dwellings which would remain to be provided for in the Local Plan would only be about 1,500.

### **3.0 AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- 3.1 The Advisory Committee meeting of 12 November 2014 considered a report in respect of affordable housing. The report set out possible approaches to be taken on this matter (for example, whether the amount of new affordable housing sought as part of new housing should be the same across the district or whether it should vary between different settlements).
- 3.2 The meeting did not reach a consensus on this matter. Therefore, in order to consider as wide a range of options as possible the options set out at Appendix B of this report are currently the subject of assessment as part of the Sustainability Appraisal and Viability Assessment which the Local Plan is required to be subject to anyway.
- 3.3 Notwithstanding the fact that these assessments have yet to be completed it is considered that it would be appropriate for the Advisory Committee to consider the various options set out in Appendix B and to advise on what their preference would be. When the draft Local Plan is then considered at a future meeting of the Advisory Committee (see section 7 below) members can reconsider this issue in the light of the results of these assessments.

### **4.0 SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY**

- 4.1 The issue of settlement hierarchy was considered at the meeting of the Advisory Committee on 12 November 2014. There was no consensus reached on this issue with some members expressing concern about having a hierarchy and other members questioning the position of some settlements in the hierarchy.
- 4.2 Amongst the 12 principles set out in the NPPF is that planning should:
- *“take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it”.*
  - *“actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable”.*
- 4.3 Officers have considered the concerns raised by members and are of the view that having regard to the range of services and facilities available in individual settlements that the suggested settlement hierarchy set out below represents a sustainable pattern of development consistent with the aims of the NPPF to deliver sustainable development.

- Principal Town – Coalville Urban Area;
- Key service centre – Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington;
- Local Service Centre – Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham
- Sustainable Villages
- Small Village

## **5.0 TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARIES**

- 5.1 The issue of suggested Town Centre boundaries was considered at the meeting of 15 October 2014.
- 5.2 Following the meeting in October officers undertook consultation with the relevant town and parish councils, town teams and neighbourhood plan groups about the suggested boundaries.
- 5.3 A further report was considered at the meeting on 17 February 2015 which set out the comments received to the consultation and the suggested response which included amendments to the boundaries of Ashby de la Zouch and Kegworth town centres.
- 5.4 The Advisory Committee recommended to Council that the Town Centre boundaries for Measham and Kegworth be agreed. In respect of Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville and Ibstock the Advisory Committee asked officers to have a further look at these.
- 5.5 Officers have further reviewed these Town Centre boundaries and have identified some further amendments in respect of Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington. The plans attached at Appendix C show the boundaries as originally proposed and as now proposed to be amended.
- 5.6 No further changes are recommended in respect of Coalville or Ibstock but for completeness these are also attached at Appendix C.

## **6.0 LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 The issue of proposed limits to development was initially considered at the meeting of 9 September 2014. The Advisory Committee agreed to prepare draft Limits to Developments for a number of settlements and for officers to hold a workshop for all members to discuss these
- 6.2 A workshop was held on 9 October 2014 at which members were presented with draft Limits to Development and invited to comment and make suggested amendments.
- 6.3 Following the workshop officers undertook consultation with the relevant town and parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups about the suggested boundaries.
- 6.4 A further report was considered at the meeting on 17 February 2015 which set out the comments received to the consultation and the suggested response which included amendments to the Limits to Development of a number of settlements (Ashby de la Zouch, Diseworth, Heather, Ibstock, Moira and Packington).

- 6.5 The Advisory Committee recommended to Council that the suggested Limits to Development be agreed for all settlements except for Packington.
- 6.6 In respect of Packington, the Advisory Committee was concerned that as drafted the Limits to Development included two sites where the Council had resolved to grant planning permission for housing development but were now the subject of legal challenges. These legal challenges have now been concluded and as a result the two planning applications are scheduled to be reconsidered by Planning Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2015. At this time it is proposed to exclude these two sites from within the Limits to Development (as set out at Appendix D of this report). However, should Planning Committee agree to permit one or both of these applications it would be appropriate to amend the Limits to Development accordingly. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting on this matter.

## **7.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 As noted earlier it is proposed that the draft Local Plan will be considered by full Council at its meeting on 15 September 2015.
- 7.2 Before the draft Local Plan is considered by Council it is proposed that the Advisory Committee be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft Local Plan. To do this it is proposed to hold an additional meeting of the Advisory Committee for late July (29 July is suggested).
- 7.3 Subject to the agreement of Council, it is proposed to consult on the draft Local Plan between 28 September 2015 and 30 November 2015.
- 7.4 There are two meetings of the Advisory Committee currently scheduled for 16 September 2015 and 18 November 2015. In view of the fact that these will be during the consultation period it is suggested that the two meetings be cancelled. At this stage it is envisaged that responses to the consultation will then be considered by the Advisory Committee at its scheduled meeting on 20 January 2016 with a view to Council agreeing a final plan at its meeting on 22 March 2016.
- 7.5 An engagement plan will be developed for the consultation. This will have regard to the Council's approved Statement of Community Involvement and will provide opportunities for individuals and organisations to comment on the draft Local Plan. The engagement plan will be included as part of the report to Council.
- 7.6 Prior to the draft Local Plan being considered by Council officers will be in attendance at the following community events to raise awareness of the Local Plan and the forthcoming consultation I.
- Heart of the Forest, Measham – 20 June 2015
  - Picnic in the Park, Coalville – 28 June 2015
  - Music in the Park, Castle Donington – 5 July 2015
  - Jim's Tractor Run, Ashby de la Zouch – 26 July 2015 (jointly with Ashby Neighbourhood Plan group)