

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Chairman)

Councillors R Adams, G A Allman, R Ashman, R D Bayliss, R Blunt, R Canny, J Clarke, N Clarke, J Cotterill, J G Coxon, D Everitt, T Eynon, F Fenning, J Geary, S Gillard, T Gillard, L Goacher, D Harrison, J Houlton, R Johnson, G Jones, J Legrys, S McKendrick, K Merrie MBE, T Neilson, T J Pendleton, P Purver, V Richichi, N J Rushton, A C Saffell, N Smith, A V Smith MBE, M Specht and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Ms C E Fisher, Mr G Jones, Mrs M Meredith, Mrs M Phillips and Miss E Warhurst

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Boam, G Houlton and D J Stevenson.

T Gillard informed members that Councillor D J Stevenson was absent due to him being called into hospital for a serious operation. He expressed best wishes to him on behalf of all members.

The Chairman hoped that Councillor D J Stevenson would make a swift recovery. He requested that a letter be sent from the Council sending best wishes from all members.

30. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

31. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that his wife had completed a charity bike ride from London to Brighton, a total of 54 miles. He thanked all members and colleagues who had helped, donated and supported her in this event.

The Chairman announced that his charity meal taking place on 17 September was sold out.

The Chairman referred to the numerous events which had been attended by himself and his deputy over the last few weeks.

32. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made reference to the Syrian crisis and the quote in the local news. He commented that the situation in Syria was unprecedented in our lifetime in Europe, and he had said that the Council would be on standby to help, as he felt it was right to do so. He added that this matter was being led on by the Government and would need co-operation with the County Council to provide for the needs of any refugees coming into the area. He added that he would provide updates as necessary.

The Leader referred to his previous announcement in June in respect of the bid to Government in conjunction with the County and City Council to create a combined authority, with a view to bringing about improvements in transport and planning. He advised that this was work in progress, and the next stage was a public consultation starting in the next few weeks. He added that more detail would be available to members as this work progressed.

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The Leader reiterated the commitment of the administration to helping businesses grow in the area. He advised that he had met with three of the major employers in the District since June, and the theme for all three was the same, in that they all felt growth was happening, they were short of key staff, and they wanted to work with the Council to tackle those needs. They also welcomed the link with the County Council to connect people in Coalville to the jobs in Castle Donington. He added that they were keen to work with colleges to make sure we produced people that had the skills to help these businesses to grow.

Councillor T Neilson echoed the Leader's comments in respect of the situation in Syria and stated this was a human tragedy. He stated that the Labour group fully stood by the Leader's commitment, should the Council be called upon to assist. He added that the announcement on the combined authority was welcome and he looked forward to receiving more detail as the work progressed.

The Chairman echoed the Leader's views on the tragedy in Syria.

Councillor G A Allman sought to make a statement unrelated to the announcements made and was reminded by the Chairman to confine his comments to the matters contained in the address.

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder made reference to the renaming of the A453 as Remembrance Way and had been privileged to attend the official opening of the new dual carriageway. He commented that this was a major project, costing £170 million in total. He highlighted that the project had taken two years to deliver, and had been delivered ahead of schedule, including the provision of 7 new bridges, which was a remarkable feat. He highlighted the improvements this had brought about.

Councillor J Legrys welcomed the formal naming of the A453 as Remembrance Way. He referred to some comments made on Twitter about the number of people killed in Afghanistan, which he found distasteful. He sought assurances from the Portfolio Holder that the proposal to plant poppy seeds along the route would proceed.

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder assured members that the planting of poppy seeds along the route had already taken place.

The Housing Portfolio Holder provided members with an update on the Decent Homes Improvement Programme, as promised at the previous meeting. He reported that of the 608 which had been identified as falling into non-decency, works had already been completed within budget on 374 properties, with an average time of 5.5 days. It was hoped that the remainder would be completed by the end of 2015 and members would be kept informed of progress. He added that a customer satisfaction survey had been circulated to those tenants who had had works completed. The return rate had been exceptionally high at 61% showing a satisfaction rate of 95%.

33. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

34. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor N Clarke put the following question to Councillor R D Bayliss:

“In light of the recent High Court decision in respect of R Hardy v Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, in which, it was ruled unlawful to take disability living allowance (DLA) into account as an income when assessing discretionary housing payments (DHP's), is

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this Council planning to review its policy when assessing DHP's for those in receipt of DLA?"

Councillor R D Bayliss gave the following response:

"The High Court decided that a local authority's decision to take the care component of disability living allowance (DLA) into account when assessing a discretionary housing payment (DHP's) was unlawful. The Court has decided to quash the local authority decision and ordered them to make a fresh one.

Following the ruling by the high court we have amended our calculations for DHP cases (income versus essential expenditure) to exclude the care component of Disability Living Allowance as a form of income, thus giving those in receipt of this benefit a greater chance of qualifying for additional help. This has been implemented from 1 April 2015 for all new claims as well as renewals".

Councillor N Clarke reiterated that this issue had been raised by a member of the public at Council and subsequently had been debated at Policy Development Group. He reminded members that the Council had refused to change the policy at that time. As a supplementary question, he asked if the Portfolio Holder considered that this decision not to change the policy relating to DHP had put the Council at unnecessary risk of incurring costs.

Councillor R D Bayliss stated that he did not believe this decision had put the Council at unnecessary risk, as the provisions of the Act at that time were quite ambiguous. He stated that the Council had established a policy based on an interpretation of the provisions the act. He commented that he was pleased that this had now been tested in court and he awaited advice on whether any further action was required.

35. MOTIONS

No motions were received.

36. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

37. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015.

It was moved by Councillor J Bridges, seconded by Councillor J Cotterill and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38. UPDATE TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Councillor N J Rushton presented the report to members.

Councillor J Geary made reference to the issue he had raised previously in respect of procedure rule 9 relating to smoking in the building, which had been deleted, and whether the legislation would cover the use of e-cigarettes.

Councillor N J Rushton stated that he would undertake to provide a written response to Councillor J Geary on this matter, and assured members that this would be duly considered if it had been missed.

It was moved by Councillor N J Rushton, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The amendments to the Constitution set out in paragraph 3 and appendices 1-3 of the report to Policy Development Group be approved.
- b) The Head of Legal and Support Services be authorised to make those agreed amendments to the Constitution and re-issue the document.

39. DRAFT NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

The Chairman clarified the process he intended to follow during consideration of the report as below:

Councillor Pendleton would speak to the report, and would hand over to Steve Bambrick, Director of Services, who would give a presentation. The Director of Services would then answer any technical questions arising from the presentation. The debate would then follow. Members were reminded that the usual rules of debate would apply and each member would have 5 minutes in total to speak. Members were also reminded that the usual rules in respect of the duration of meetings would apply. The Chairman would be ensuring that the procedure rules were adhered to throughout the meeting to provide all members who wished to speak a fair opportunity to do so. Members were advised that once the debate had concluded, a vote would then be taken on each recommendation in turn.

Councillor T J Pendleton introduced the report to members. He stated that he was delighted to be recommending the draft Local Plan and he was pleased to have reached the point where the Council could agree this future blueprint for consultation. He made reference to the amount of work that went into preparing such a document and stated that this had been a positively prepared plan, which sought to provide growth to all parts of the district. He stated that he made no apology for focussing on development in Coalville, as this was the district's main town and was a key Conservative priority. He stated that delivering growth in Coalville would bring investment to the town and support the investments being made to improve Coalville. He added that the plan would also deliver important jobs in the district, which would provide for the needs of the residents and safeguard prosperity for future generations. He urged members not to be fooled by those who would argue that this was a developer's charter. He reminded members that as a responsible Planning Authority, it was recognised that the Council must provide and plan for the needs of the district, and adhere to government guidance, or the plan would not be found to be sound. He added however this did not mean development at any cost, as there were some very valuable environmental assets within the district, and the Local Plan contained strong policies to protect these assets, such as the countryside, the National Forest and the green wedges. He commended the preparation of the plan through the cross-party Local Plan Advisory Committee, which had been supported by some excellent external advisors, Malcolm Sharp and Simon Stanion. He thanked them for their support throughout this process and referred members to the advice note prepared by them which gave assurance on the process so far. He concluded that throughout the consultation process the Council would remain alert to any necessary changes. He commended the draft Local Plan to members and expressed confidence that delivering it would leave a strong legacy and a prosperous district.

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Councillor J Bridges stated that he was happy to have worked on the Local Plan Advisory Committee and he commended the officers have done a splendid job getting us to this point. He thanked officers.

The Director of Services gave a presentation to members highlighting the background of the Local Plan preparation and the process so far. He highlighted that the Local Plan period would go up to 2031 with a start date of 2011. He reiterated that the importance of having an up to date Local Plan was to be able to resist unwanted development. He referred to the Local Plan Advisory Committee, the purpose of which was to guide the Council in the development of the Local Plan. He added that the final decision would rest with the full Council.

The Director of Services reported that a number of consultation processes had been undertaken, including with parish and town councils on the revised Limits to Development and Town Centre Boundaries. He added that the draft Local Plan was also supported by a significant evidence base.

The Director of Services stated that external advisors had been engaged in the preparation of the draft Local Plan and he referred to their statement and conclusion which set out their view as to the likelihood of the draft Local Plan being found sound and how far Council had complied with the Duty to Cooperate.

The Director of Services advised that the Duty to Cooperate was a legal test of the draft Local Plan, and was the very first hurdle whereby the Inspector must be satisfied that the council had actively cooperated with other local authorities. He explained that arrangements were in place with other local planning authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area to agree the housing requirements through a Memorandum of Understanding. He advised that other neighbouring authorities outside of Leicestershire had also been consulted as the council was proposing to adopt a figure which was higher than that suggested in the Memorandum of Understanding.

The Director of Services made reference to the risk management arrangements which had been put in place. He commented that there would always be risks associated with any project of this nature, and advised that a project board had been established to regularly review and monitor risks. He added that there was a major risk in relation to changes in government guidance or plan appeal decisions which could have implications for the draft Local Plan. He advised that the project board were monitoring these risks and would continue to do so.

The Director of Services stated that a key issue in the draft Local Plan was the number of houses within the district being planned for. He pointed out that a significant number of the houses being planned for up to 2031 already had planning permission. He explained that the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment set out that approximately 7,000 new homes would be required in the district up to 2031, and 1,700 had already been completed since 2011. He advised however that consideration needed to be given to the fact that the district was a significant area for economic growth in Leicestershire and the East Midlands, and he highlighted in particular the significance of the proposal for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange in the north of the district, which was expected to create an additional 7000 jobs in the area. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that, in preparing the Local Plan, there was an adequate balance between housing growth and jobs growth, as there was significant evidence across the country that where local authorities had not taken account of jobs growth, their Local Plans had been found not to be sound, and there have been a number of Local Plans that had been rejected because of that. He explained that, as a result of taking account of the expected jobs growth, the advice was that the appropriate number of new homes that should be planned for in the Local Plan was around 10,700 new homes.

The Director of Services advised that planning permission had already been granted for over 10,700 new homes since 2011, however consideration needed to be given to how many of those would be deliverable. He explained that officers estimated that around 9,000 of these would be delivered within the plan period, which would leave a shortfall of approximately 1,600 homes to be provided in the plan in order to meet the overall requirement to the end of the plan period. He highlighted the 3 sites which were proposed to be allocated to meet this shortfall, the key site being the Money Hill site to the north of Ashby de la Zouch. He explained that the site at Measham would be included as a reserve site, as permission had already been granted at the Measham Waterside site, however the delivery of this site could potentially be jeopardised by the HS2 proposals. Finally the land at Waterworks Road was a small site which was currently allocated in the existing Local Plan and it was proposed to carry forward that allocation.

The Director of Services highlighted the need to demonstrate that the affordable housing need for the district could also be met. He explained that the estimated need was 212 affordable homes per year, which equated to 60% of the overall housing requirement. He added however that the policies within the Local Plan needed to be deliverable, and from the viability assessments, a policy of 60% affordable housing would clearly not be deliverable. He highlighted the proposed affordable housing targets in the draft Local Plan which had been set to reflect the value of the land within the district and the likely viability of developments coming forward.

The Director of Services highlighted the requirement to meet the needs of all sections of the community, and one of the key sections the council needed to make provision for was gypsies and travellers. He highlighted that there were no sites allocated at this stage in the draft Local Plan, as it was proposed to prepare a separate allocations document to bring forward sites to meet the needs of this section of the community.

The Director of Services explained that the council was required to undertake an assessment of the overall need for new employment land within the district and was required to allocate sites where there may be a shortfall. He stated that the evidence suggested that there was a need for 96 hectares of employment land to the end of the plan period, however the council had already met this requirement through the granting of planning permissions. He added however that one important aspect that needed to be taken account of in the provision of employment land was 'churn', whereby employment land was lost to other uses. He advised that the council needed to demonstrate to an inspector that we have a flexible enough approach to accommodate the fact that some existing sites may be lost to other uses. He explained that as a result, it was proposed to allocate an additional 16 hectares of employment land as part of the Money Hill development, in order to meet the overall shortfall in the district for employment land over the plan period.

The Director of Services advised that the Local Plan contained policies which set the retail hierarchy, and any new major retail proposals in the district would normally follow this hierarchy. He explained that Coalville was the main town and this was where the focus would be for major retail developments, followed by Ashby de la Zouch, and then the other town centres of Castle Donington, Kegworth and Measham. He added that the policies within the plan would direct new retail developments where appropriate to Coalville. He explained that existing evidence suggested that there was no additional requirement for any more floor space for convenience shopping, and as such there were no new food shopping sites allocated, however a need had been identified for 7,300 sqm of comparison shopping. He advised that the draft Local Plan proposed a number of options for allocating additional floor space to meet the retail shortfall, with the preferred site being the land off Wolsey Road on the edge of Coalville town centre.

The Director of Services explained that the Local Plan would be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which would seek to provide infrastructure associated with

new developments. He advised that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan would need to be finalised by the time the Local Plan was eventually submitted. He explained that this delivery plan would seek to ensure that where new development was proposed, it delivered the necessary levels of infrastructure. He added that infrastructure provided by others was also taken into account so that on balance, the appropriate level of infrastructure was provided to support all the new development proposed in the Local Plan.

The Director of Services highlighted the proposal to maintain the Green Wedge between Coalville and Whitwick in the Local Plan as an Area of Separation. He added that the Local Plan contained policies to protect the River Mease Special Area of Conservation, and to protect and enhance the character of the National Forest and the Charnwood Forest.

The Director of Services highlighted the policies on climate change and sustainable construction and design within the Local Plan, which would consider how the carbon footprint of the district could be reduced. He also highlighted the policies for reducing flood risk and locating developments outside of flood risk areas, and making sure new developments could promote sustainable drainage systems.

The Director of Services referred to the focus on transport, and explained that new developments would need to continue to contribute towards transport infrastructure going forward. He highlighted the key strategic improvements that the Local Plan would seek to continue to fund, such as the significant improvements to J22 of the M1, J13 of the A42, and the A511 corridor. He added that these key improvements would support the growth that is proposed in the Local Plan. He pointed out that the Local Plan continued to contain a policy that supported the reinstatement of the Leicester to Burton line for passengers, should there be a viable business case proven.

The Director of Services advised that it was proposed to undertake a period of public consultation commencing on 28 September 2015, and an engagement plan would guide the consultation being undertaken. He outlined the timetable, which was subject to the agreement of Council. He highlighted that there was still a lengthy process to go through before the Local Plan could be adopted, and any changes in circumstance would need to be taken account of.

The Director of Services explained that once the Local Plan was submitted, an independent inspector would be appointed who would consider whether the Local Plan was sound. He advised that the first task they would need to undertake would be to consider whether the Council had complied with the Duty to Cooperate.

The Chairman then invited members to ask any technical questions arising from the presentation of the Director of Services.

Councillor N Clarke sought clarification on the district council's view on fracking, as this was not mentioned in the draft Local Plan. The Director of Services advised that this was a matter for Leicestershire County Council as the minerals planning authority, and was not an issue for the Local Plan. He added that the district council did not have a formal policy on fracking.

Councillor M B Wyatt made reference to the previous plan which had supported the protection of land for the Bardon relief road. He asked if there was provision for this in the draft Local Plan. In respect of the land off Waterworks Road, he highlighted the area of open space which was between 3 different wards. He asked if this could be classed as an area of separation. The Director of Services advised that it was a matter for the council to decide what land should be allocated as. He advised that this piece of land was not currently designated as an area of separation, but was classified as open space, and as

such there were policies that would protect this land. In respect of the Bardon relief road, the draft Local Plan did not allocate the site at Bardon Grange, because this was a site with existing planning permission, and the associated infrastructure was already contained within the planning permission.

Councillor A C Saffell made reference to the nominal totals of the expected number of houses to be built in settlements in the previous Core Strategy, the total for Castle Donington being 1,400. He compared this with the total number of houses from permissions granted in Castle Donington which totalled 1200. He highlighted the Limits to Development shown on the plan and pointed out that there was barely any space for extra development. He asked if the Council would be seeking to permit sites outside the Limits to Development in order to be able to meet the target. He commented that the Limits to Development were always being stretched and questioned how firm the Local Plan would be. The Director of Services pointed out that the existing Local Plan had an end date of 2001 and the Limits to Development within that plan were drawn with a view to the plan being able to meet the needs of the district up to that date. He added that once the end date of the plan had passed, development had to be accommodated which had not been accounted for. He explained that the Limits to Development were also out of date, which was why developments beyond the Limits to Development often had to be accepted when the Local Plan was not up to date. He added that the purpose of having an up to date Local Plan was that to be able to take account of the needs of the district to a certain date and set to boundaries accordingly. He clarified that this did not mean to say that it could be guaranteed that the Limits to Development would never be breached as all of the circumstances needed to be considered, however the council would be in a much stronger position to resist unwanted development with an up to date Local Plan. He concluded that the reason why members felt that there had been extensions to the Limits to Development was due to the fact that a Local Plan was currently being utilised that had gone beyond its end date.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that the figures did not seem to add up. He added that the target of 30% affordable housing would never be delivered in Castle Donington, and felt that this figure needed adjusting. The Director of Services emphasised that the affordable housing target in the draft Local Plan was the target that would be applied to any future developments that were granted, and could not be applied retrospectively to those permissions that already existed. He added that it was a matter of fact that a significant number of permissions had already been granted under the policy that applied at that time. He stated that going forward, the new policy would apply in order to achieve a figure that was somewhere near delivering the overall level of affordable housing requirement. He added that it was accepted that this need would not be met, because in order to do so, 60% of all houses would need to be affordable, and this was not viable.

The Chairman then invited members to move on to the debate.

Councillor J Legrys thanked officers for the work and conversations with the Labour Group in respect of the draft Local Plan. He also thanked the Chairman in his position of Chairman of the Local Plan Advisory Committee for allowing people such as Councillor A C Saffell to put forward their views on the draft Local Plan. He thanked Malcolm Sharpe in particular for the conversations and help he had given him in understanding the process. He stated that this was not our plan, but was the Administration's plan. He added that the Local Plan could have been very different, particularly with the interventions of former Councillor C Large who had made suggestions about how the strategy could be different, however he felt these suggestions were not listened to. He stated that the Labour Group considered that this draft Local Plan was simply a slightly altered version of the failed developer-led Core Strategy. He felt that the draft Local Plan lacked the vision and strategy to deal with infrastructure, placing overwhelming new housing on existing communities such as Money Hill, Hugglescote and Castle Donington. He added that the Labour Group did not welcome the idea of putting all the employment in the north of the

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district and all the housing in the south. He accepted however that governments did move the goalposts and case law would change things. He concluded that he would be voting in favour of sending the draft Local Plan out for consultation because he did not believe that voting against this would achieve anything. He commented that the Labour Group believed the electorate must see and be able to comment on the draft Local Plan and have the opportunity to discuss and debate the proposals. He supported the suggestion that Parish Councils be asked to undertake some consultation, however he highlighted that there was a great need for consultation also to be undertaken in the non-parished areas, and he sought assurance that this would be undertaken. He concluded that people felt they were not being listened to, and he sought assurance that the views of the public would be heard, and the direction of the Local Plan altered if necessary.

The Chairman invited Councillor T J Pendleton to respond to the points made by Councillor J Legrys.

Councillor T J Pendleton acknowledged the valid points made by Councillor C Large in respect of local affordable housing, and added that these were listened to, and were going to be included in a supplementary planning document, however a new national policy had subsequently been issued which the council was required to abide by. He added that consultation would continue with the public and there would be plenty of opportunities for people to come and consider the proposals.

Councillor T Neilson sought to raise a point of order in that Councillor T J Pendleton had exercised his right of reply early on in the debate and it was not customary for the mover of a motion to have more than one right of reply.

The Chairman stated that it had been fair to respond to the points raised by Councillor J Legrys at that point and the debate would proceed.

Councillor N Clarke acknowledged that the recommendation was to submit the document for consultation, and felt that this should not be delayed. He stated that the adequate protection of Charnwood Forest was a vital part of the Local Plan, however he felt that the wording in the document did not do enough to protect the area from unwanted development. He referred to the statement that it was not the intention that the regional park should be a barrier to development, and commented that surely this wording invited developers to explore the possibility of building in the forest rather than discouraging it. In respect of the Bardon relief road, he commented that at present the building of the road was not financially viable, although that may not always be the case. For this reason he believed that it was important for the council to remain committed to building the Bardon relief road, as it was desperately needed and wanted, and this should be reflected in the Local Plan. He highlighted the commitment in the draft Local Plan to reinstate the Leicestershire to Burton rail line, which was also financially challenging to achieve, and as such he saw no reason why a similar attitude could not be adopted in respect of the Bardon relief road, which would also be an alternative to making huge alterations to Hugglescote crossroads. In respect of the land off Waterworks Road, he pointed out that this land was currently registered as a community asset, which gave the local community the opportunity to purchase this land if it was to be sold. He commented that although this would not prohibit the development of the land, it complicated the issue, which could be seen as an unnecessary complication by the inspector. He questioned whether it was worth the risk for such a relatively small allocation.

Councillor G A Allman referred to paragraph 4.24 and stated that he did not support the proposed draft Local Plan, as it was totally inappropriate to increase the housing in Ashby de la Zouch by 61%. He added that this would be difficult for the council to justify. He added that had this item not been included he would have been in full support of the draft Local Plan, however due to the aforementioned he was minded to abstain from the vote.

Councillor T Eynon expressed support for Councillor N Clarke's comments on transport infrastructure, particularly in respect of Bardon relief road. She stated that like him, she was not voting to agree that this was a good plan, but to agree that it needed to go out to consultation, in order to make it a better plan. She added that this was not a good plan, at least not for her particular area of interest, which is health infrastructure. She felt that a good plan would recognise that there was a problem. She stated that whilst this Loc Plan was building thousands of new houses, the NHS Better Care plan was proposing to move more patients into overstretched primary care. She highlighted that in June this year, £1.3 million of Section 106 developer contributions for health remained unspent at this council, some dating back to 2003 and at risk of being returned to developers with interest. She also highlighted that NHS England had recently failed to claim £50,000 in Blackfordby that would have contributed to healthcare in Woodville. She hoped that the consultation period would be utilised to develop a sound approach to the delivery of healthcare infrastructure, and if so, she would be pleased to work with this council.

Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he was unable support this draft Local Plan due to its failure to mention or support the construction of the Bardon bypass which was desperately needed.

Councillor R Blunt thanked the Opposition for their support, acknowledging that the threat of housing makes no one comfortable. He stated that there was a huge amount of work yet to be done and he applauded the support for the document going out for consultation.

Councillor T Neilson stated that there were some serious differences of opinion in respect of methodology and detail however he was strongly of the opinion that local residents needed to have the time and opportunity to seriously consider the draft Local Plan. He added that planning was truly a non partisan topic and he hoped it would long remain so. He added that he Labour Group had participated in the Local Plan Advisory Committee on that basis. He believed that it was right for the Local Plan Advisory Committee to consider the results of the consultation to ensure there was full visibility of the process of dealing with that feedback. He referred to the comments made by Councillor T J Pendleton and stated that not only should the changes be made to the Local Plan that were deemed necessary, but also and changes that were positive and would improve the Local Plan. He added that it was vitally important to listen carefully to the public otherwise the Local Plan would be in danger of failing once again. He stated that if a Local Plan was pushed through without the full support of residents, this would dig a hole that could take 30 years to get out of. He stated that the Labour Group supported the recommendation to put the draft Local Plan out for consultation, but would not support this document in a vote to submit it to the inspector.

Councillor M Specht expressed support for the recommendations. He felt that the recommendations in respect of the housing allocation were out of date however given the crisis in the middle east and the commitment given by the government to take in refugees. He commented that he was fed up of nimbyism. He stated that he fully supported the document, and the sooner the Local Plan was adopted, the better.

The Chairman reminded members to confine their comments to the subject matter of the report.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that he hoped this would be a true consultation and not just a public relations exercise. He agreed with Councillor T Neilson that comments should be taken on board, and an explanation given if they were not. He stated that people needed to understand that they were being listened to and that their views were being taken account of.

Councillor T Gillard thanked the officers for their work and thanked the Administration for listening to the people of Whitwick in respect of the Green Wedge. He stated that he and

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past Councillors had campaigned to preserve it and he hoped that would continue. He highlighted that the major influence on this issue had been the Whitwick Action Group, who had lobbied and campaigned and the Administration had listened. He concluded that he supported the document.

Councillor T J Pendleton echoed the comments of Councillor T Gillard and highlighted that every day the council did not have a Local Plan, the Whitwick Green Wedge was seriously threatened. He added that the Administration stood by the commitment given in respect of the Whitwick Green Wedge. He commented that it was difficult to find any more room in Castle Donington for any more houses, and the number of housing that could be allocated near those jobs was finite. He added that Charnwood Borough Council were building 3,500 houses 6 miles away from Castle Donington and Rushcliffe Borough Council were building an additional 4,500 houses and this would take the pressure off Castle Donington and Kegworth in terms of allocating any additional housing. He highlighted the consultation process which had been previously undertaken and reminded members that all the responses had been brought back and any ideas had been changed. He challenged members to go out to their local Parish Council and bring back their thoughts. He also urged members to challenge nimbysism as there was no room for that. He also highlighted that NHS England were actually responsible for the real expansion of GP practices, not this council nor the planning authority. To conclude, he applauded officers for the work they have undertaken so far and he commended the draft Local Plan.

The Chairman then sought to move to the vote.

Councillor T Neilson raised a point of order in that Councillor N J Rushton had not been present for much of the debate and should be excluded from voting.

The Chairman agreed that Councillor N J Rushton had missed a large portion of the debate and therefore would be unable to vote.

The Chairman then moved to the vote. A vote was taken on each recommendation in turn.

It was moved by Councillor T J Pendleton, seconded by Councillor J Bridges and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The minutes of the Local Plan Advisory Committee of 4 March 2015 and 10 June 2015 be received; and
- b) The Draft Local Plan be approved for consultation.

Councillor N J Rushton left the meeting at 7.25pm during consideration of the item entitled Draft North West Leicestershire Local Plan and returned to the meeting at 7.36pm.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.53 pm

Chairman's signature