

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

NOTE OF MEETING WITH PLANNING INSPECTORATE

9 May 2016

Whitwick Business Centre Coalville

In attendance

Steve Bambrick – Director of Services and Deputy Chief Executive	North West Leicestershire District Council
Jim Newton – Head of Planning and Regeneration	North West Leicestershire District Council
Ian Nelson – Planning Policy Manager	North West Leicestershire District Council
Katie Mills – Planning Policy Team Leader	North West Leicestershire District Council
Malcolm Sharp – external advisor	North West Leicestershire District Council
Simon Stanion – external advisor	North West Leicestershire District Council
Jeremy Youle – Planning Inspector	Planning Inspectorate (PINs)
Ken Taylor – Local Plans team	Planning Inspectorate (PINs)

JY outlined that purpose of his visit was to provide some informal advice to officers regarding the emerging North West Leicestershire Local Plan. As part of the arrangement he was provided by PINs with one day to look through the Local Plan so that he could identify possible issues for discussion, but it should be appreciated that he hadn't had time to go in to great depth and his views might not reflect those of the Inspector ultimately appointed to undertake the examination.

Discussion took place around a number of issues as set out below

Housing requirements and possible implications arising from publication of Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) during examination

SB outlined why NWLDC was keen to press on with the Local Plan and outlined the range of external advice which had been sought and the results of work undertaken for the council by Justin Gardner Consulting (JGC).

JY thought that preparation of the HEDNA need not in itself hold up the preparation of the Local Plan, although he recognised that it was not risk free. To help an Inspector at the examination it was important to:

- explain why we are continuing to bring plan forward in advance of HEDNA. Identify specific planning benefits of this whilst recognising the ideal situation would be to base the current housing requirement on the OAN identified in the HEDNA;
- make sure that the HEDNA makes clear what the distinction is between results using the current methodology and that being suggested by the Local Plans Expert Group methodology;
- explain why alternative assessments put forward are considered to be flawed;
- further engagement with neighbouring authorities in relation to the JGC Report even if those authorities do not finally agree with our approach. We need an audit trail of attempts to

explain and share with those authorities our approach and the reasons for it, and of our attempts to reach agreement. This is essential in terms of demonstrating compliance with the legal DtC;

- need to make as clear as possible the distinction between the OAN and the housing requirement figures;
- need to acknowledge in the Local Plan that there is a piece of sub-regional work taking place which could change things

As a general point JY felt that it would be useful to provide some analysis of windfalls, possibly in a background paper, so as to help demonstrate what flexibility there is in terms of supply. In addition, information regarding the likely amount of affordable housing which it is anticipated would be delivered in the plan period would be appropriate. He also felt that the plan should identify specifically those housing sites with planning permission or a resolution as this would provide greater certainty.

In respect of 5-year supply JY noted that the plan was currently silent on this issue and whether a rolling five year supply could be maintained over the plan period. If this is not to be expressed in the plan itself, it will at least need a background paper.

Policies map

It was suggested that it should be made clear in the text that the policies map replaces all of the designations on the current adopted Local Plan proposals map.

Provision of sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

It was explained that work on a separate allocations document to identify sites was already underway. JY advised that need to make clear to an Inspector what has happened and what is planned so that the Inspector can be reassured that the issue is going to be addressed.

Wind energy

The approach which it was proposed to take was outlined. JY considered that if the council wanted to it could leave out the policy entirely or alternatively leave it in and see what happened at examination.

Provision of retail sites

The approach which it was proposed to take was outlined. JY advised that NPPF sets out the idealised situation and just need to explain why it is that no sites are being identified and what evidence there is behind this. Need to be clear which town we want additional provision to go to, assuming there is a preference.

Open space

JY noted that PPG17 study not updated but didn't feel this was a reason to delay preparation of Local Plan. Need to clarify why a 50 house threshold was being proposed.

Parking policy

JY queried what is meant by 'adequate'? Why is there a reason to control parking – highway safety, amenity?

Design

Do all points need to be satisfied?

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

JY advised that PINs no longer insist on this policy as it merely repeats the NPPF.

Area of Separation

JY queried whether it was the intention that the policy be worded so restrictively? If so then need to explain why this is.

Infrastructure

It was explained that an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) was being prepared. It would identify any shortfalls in provision of infrastructure, some of which would need to be addressed by means other than S106's due to the fact that vast majority of development is already in place. JY advised that need to explain how the IDP links to Local Plan. JY queried the use of the word 'where appropriate' in respect of policy IF4.

Modifications to plan

JY outlined the process for making modifications and re-iterated need to ensure that ask Inspector to make main modifications if the Inspector considers these are required to make the plan sound.

Examination

JY advised that need to remember that Inspector and others will not have the same level of knowledge of the district or the plan so need to try to make sure that provide all the necessary explanations as simply as possible.