

**CABINET – 11 DECEMBER 2015**

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN DRAFT -  
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**PART A**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek the approval of the Cabinet for a response to the draft North West Leicestershire Local Plan which has been produced by North West Leicestershire District Council.

**Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that;
  - a) The detailed comments on the draft North West Leicestershire Local Plan as set out in the Appendix to this report, be submitted to North West Leicestershire District Council as the views of the County Council;
  - b) The key comments set out in paragraphs 22 to 33 of the report be drawn to the attention of North West Leicestershire District Council.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

3. To ensure that the County Council provides appropriate input at this key stage in the Local Plan process, so that issues of importance for the County Council are clearly expressed and influence the shape and content of the Local Plan.

**Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

4. Officers have prepared a comprehensive response to the consultation which needs to be submitted to North West Leicestershire District Council before the end of the consultation period on 30 November 2015; it will be made clear that these comments are subject to approval by the Cabinet on 11 December 2015.
5. In March 2016 the District Council will consider the publication version of the Local Plan. An examination into the Local Plan is scheduled for September 2016, which would enable adoption of the Local Plan by the District Council in September 2017.

## **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

6. In recommending a County Council response particular consideration has been given to the Local Plan's:
  - Consistency with the provisions of the County's Waste Development Documents and Mineral Development Documents;
  - Consistency with the County Council's Strategic Plan 2014 to 2018 and Enabling Growth Plan (March 2015);
  - Consistency with the Leicester and Leicestershire's Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (2014);
  - Impact on the County Council's ability to implement any service or infrastructure it provides,
  - Impact on the County Council's interests as land and property owner; and,
  - Impact on the County Council's role as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Leicestershire.

## **National Context**

7. The Government has made significant changes to how planning operates at a national and local level. The Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have brought into operation a system which places greater emphasis on local decision-making, removes the regional tier and reduces the extent of national planning guidance.
8. The NPPF, published in March 2012, sets out a streamlined approach to national planning policy to empower local authorities and local communities to make decisions about the sustainable development of their area through local and neighbourhood plans. Emerging Local Plans will need to align with these objectives.

## **Regional Context**

9. The Localism Act gave the Secretary of State power to revoke Regional Plans, and the East Midlands Regional Plan, published by the Secretary of State in March 2009 was revoked on 12 April 2013. The Localism Act introduced a Duty to Co-operate which applies to all local authorities and a number of other agencies. The Duty to Co-operate is the mechanism for agreeing strategic issues that go beyond individual local authority boundaries.
10. Work has recently begun on the preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan to 2050 for Leicester and Leicestershire; this will greatly assist joint working on strategic planning matters.
11. The local planning authorities and the County Council work closely with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) to ensure planning policies and proposals are aligned with sub-regional economic priorities set out in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

## Previous Decisions on the North West Leicestershire Local Plan

12. On 23 July 2012 the Cabinet agreed comments on the NWL Core Strategy pre-submission version which included key comments on transport, scale of housing provision and green infrastructure.

## Resource Implications

13. There are no resource implications arising from this report.

## Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. County Councillors representing Electoral Divisions in North West Leicestershire:

Mr N J Rushton CC, Mr J G Coxon CC, Mr T Pendleton CC, Mr S D Sheahan CC, Miss Heather Worman CC, Dr T Eynon CC, Mr M Wyatt CC, Mr L Spence CC.

## Officers to Contact

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## **PART B**

### **North West Leicestershire Local Plan – Draft for Consultation**

15. In early 2014 North West Leicestershire District Council established a cross-party Local Plan Advisory Committee to work with its officers on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the district. The Advisory Committee considered several reports which included the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), an update on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), affordable housing, settlement hierarchy, town centre boundaries and limits to development. The draft Local Plan was then considered by a special meeting of North West Leicestershire District Council on 15 September 2015.
16. The draft Local Plan focuses growth on Coalville, bringing investment into the town and supporting the investments being made to improve Coalville. It also supports the delivery of jobs throughout the district, and contains a range of policies to protect key environmental assets such as the National Forest and the Coalville/Whitwick Green Wedge.
17. The draft contains proposals for a higher scale of growth for housing than indicated by the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for North West Leicestershire set out in the SHMA. The draft Local Plan proposes 535 dwellings per annum (a total of 10,700 dwellings over the plan period 2011 to 2031), whereas the OAN is 350 dwellings per annum (a total of 7,000 dwellings over the plan period 2011 to 2031). This is because the District Council has considered other key evidence (including the proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) near to East Midlands Airport which could create 7,400 jobs) and concluded that, whilst it would be unreasonable to expect all the people employed at the SRFI to live in North West Leicestershire, additional housing needs to be provided to maintain the balance between jobs and homes.
18. Given the significant number of planning permissions granted, or resolved to be granted, in recent years the amount of dwellings still to be provided for in the Local Plan is approximately 1,500 dwellings. This will mostly be dealt with via allocations at Ashby and Coalville.
19. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by all of the local authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (L&L HMA) in late 2014 which confirmed that each local authority could meet its own OAN as identified in the SHMA up to 2028, and that the local authorities would continue to work together to support the preparation of Local Plans post-2028.
20. In view of the deviation from the agreed MoU and under the Duty to Co-operate discussion has taken place with the other L&L HMA authorities to ensure they are comfortable with the level of housing provision proposed in North West Leicestershire.

## Context for Comments relating to County Council Landholdings

21. The comments in the Appendix include a consideration of the effects of the proposals on County Council landholdings and property assets in North West Leicestershire.

### **Key Comments**

22. Key comments are summarised below, and detailed comments are included in the Appendix.

### Transport

23. It is unclear how the 20% affordable housing Coalville Urban Area contribution has been aligned with the Coalville Contribution Strategy to date. It is understood that affordable housing and transport infrastructure contributions have been balanced out to enable the transport infrastructure required for growth to be delivered but there appears to be no mention of this in the draft Local Plan.

24. There is no reference to the Kegworth bypass. It is understood this is a developer led scheme associated with the strategic rail freight interchange (Roxhill development); given this is a significant piece of infrastructure it is considered it should be included in the Local Plan.

25. It is considered that Appleby Magna should not be identified as a 'Sustainable Village' due to its remoteness, lack of hourly bus service and lack of employment.

26. It is noted that land at Money Hill and land off Smisby Road is being considered for development as a whole and this is supported as it will enable more options to be considered for access.

### Education

27. A site is already secured for a new primary school in Ashby; however the Council requests the reservation of a further site for a new primary school if a further 1000 homes are to be provided at Money Hill, given the scale and location of the Money Hill area in relation to Ashby town.

### Planning Obligations

28. Additional wording to Policy IF1 (Development and Infrastructure) is suggested to refer to library facilities and civic amenity facilities (waste/recycling). It is considered that further reference should be made to CIL and the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

### Minerals

29. There is concern that Policy S4 (Countryside) seeks to cover minerals and waste development which it is considered is best addressed in the County Council's Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

## Economic Growth

30. The proposed scale and location of growth for housing and employment which focuses on the Coalville Growth Corridor and the East Midlands Enterprise Gateway growth areas is supported.

## Assets

Note: The following comments are made by the County Council's Asset Management Group in relation to its position as a landowner.

31. The County Council's main land interests it seeks to promote are the former Forest Way, Waterworks Way, Coalville; the industrial portfolio in Coalville; Station Road, Ibstock; Heather Lane, Ravenstone; Ramscliffe Avenue, Donisthorpe; and Hill Street, Donisthorpe.
32. The substantial development already committed at Coalville and Castle Donington is noted, and it is logical to direct some of the additional housing to Ashby given its wide range of services and facilities. A flexible approach is needed to enable opportunities to be brought forward within other settlements in the hierarchy. Consideration should also be given to positively take account of brownfield sites.
33. Consideration of the allocation of employment sites needs to reflect the potential loss of existing development and allocated employment sites to HS2. Flexibility is required to allow alternative potential sites to be brought forward in advance of HS2 to secure long term employment opportunities within settlements, in particular, in relation to the County Council portfolio, the site at Burton Road, Measham to compensate potential loss of existing sites on the Repton Road development including Huntingdon Court.

## Equality and Human Rights Implications

34. Through their policies, Local Plans have significant implications for disadvantaged people living in Leicestershire. By seeking to ensure economic growth is secured and an appropriate provision of affordable homes is made, the County Council can, through its representations, contribute to the needs of disadvantaged groups.

## Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018

[http://www.leics.gov.uk/leics\\_strategic\\_plan.pdf](http://www.leics.gov.uk/leics_strategic_plan.pdf)

Report to the Cabinet – 16 March 2015 - Enabling Growth Plan -

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004360/AI00043150/\\$6EnablingGrowthPlan.docA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00004360/AI00043150/$6EnablingGrowthPlan.docA.ps.pdf)

Report to the Cabinet – 23 July 2012 – Local Development Framework Consultation

[http://politics/Published/C00000135/M00003587/AI00031908/\\$Inorthwestleicsldfconsultation.doc.pdf](http://politics/Published/C00000135/M00003587/AI00031908/$Inorthwestleicsldfconsultation.doc.pdf)

Report to North West Leicestershire District Council on 15 September 2015 - Local Plan, Draft for Consultation  
<http://ow.ly/Vju17>

**Appendix**

North West Leicestershire Local Plan Draft for Consultation - Leicestershire County Council response