

## 1. Preamble

- 1.1. The Labour Opposition Group on North West Leicestershire District Council (Labour Group) maintain that there is an urgent need to have a certified Local Plan in place as soon as possible. The previous Local Plan certified in 2002 has now become out of date in many cases, leaving uncontrolled speculative development indefensible against current infrastructure deficiencies, decent long term planning for the District and the wishes of our communities.
- 1.2. The Labour Group have been engaged with the Council's Scrutiny Panel known as the Local Plan Advisory Committee (LPAC)
3. The Labour Group submissions to the Inquiry aim to draw the Inspectors attention to a number of deficiencies with the Council's submission which should be rectified before the Local Plan is certified by the Secretary of State.

## 2. General Infrastructure Principles

1. Our submission in response to Economic Growth Zones and Housing Growth (paragraphs 7.6, 8.6 & 9.20) highlights our concerns at developing large employment growth areas without provision for decent 24/7 transport provision and corridors. The most glaring omission is between the southern housing growth areas in the south and the northern employment area at East Midlands Airport (EMA). In addition the Council's submission does not highlight the need for off road cycle and pedestrian facilities between the growth areas.
2. The Labour Group wish to highlight the lack of costing detail not only for the significant highway improvements required to deliver the plan. We consider that the Plan will be difficult to deliver if the growth areas are locked up with traffic congestion for most of the day.
3. Infrastructure costing should consider 'construction inflation' to 2031.
4. We argue that the Council policies, external to the Local Plan, that enable developers to transfer 'Affordable Home' developer contributions in the 'Coalville Urban Area' to a 'Highway Funding Pot', is not viable. This action will skew the demographic base of the Local Plan, attracting incomers to new communities whilst failing to provide for the existing low-paid settled residents of North West Leicestershire (NWL).
5. The Labour Group considers that the above can be rectified with a firm commitment to develop transportation corridors for all in the new Local Plan.
6. Hugglescote Crossroads. The Labour Group objects to the inclusion in paragraph 9.25 'that Hugglescote Crossroads require improvement' Leicestershire County Council are the Highway Authority and on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 its Cabinet resolved "that any improvements could not be afforded and are not required".
7. In contrast, there is a demand for a A511 Bardon Road (BRBP) Coalville by pass. The A511 at this point takes inter-urban traffic through a residential area. The Highway Authority has indicated that a BRBP cannot be justified – and any argument must be taken via that authority. However, there is no restriction on NWL providing suitable routes in its Local Plan to protect a line for a bypass.

## **2. Rail Infrastructure Policy IF5**

- 2.1.** The Labour Group are pleased that NWLDC intend to undertake further studies into the possible re-opening to passenger use for the Leicester to Burton rail line (National Forest Line).
- 2.2.** HS2 & possibly the new East Midland rail franchise will be discussed at the Inquiry. The Labour Group feels that the Local Plan needs to highlight new opportunities for rail based passenger use in NWL.

## **3. Other Infrastructure Issues Policy IF1**

- 3.1.** The Labour Group consider that issues such as flooding are not being taken into specific detailed scrutiny in the Council's submission. Surface water flooding of homes and communities throughout NWL in recent weeks has raised further alarm that there will be insufficient capacity to cater for new demand until 2031.
- 3.2.** Broadband & Mobile Device infrastructure. North West Leicestershire is not unique for poor mobile telecommunications and broadband provision. We accept that the County Council are attempting to improve the situation, however people & business moving into our new developments will expect 21<sup>st</sup> Century communications. The Local Plan must highlight this issue and provide detail on 'low spots' for urgent rectification – with perhaps a developer contribution.

## **4. Settlement, Coalescence and Community Separation – Policy En5**

- 4.1.** The Labour Group are pleased that NWLDC have clearly identified a clear 'area of separation' between the communities of Coalville and Whitwick. Maintaining clearly defined settlement separation between communities and local authority boundaries provides community cohesion, coalescence & identity.
- 4.2.** The Labour Group are concerned that other clearly defined 'areas of separation' are not identified in the submission. The issue is left to a vague possibility of the exercise being carried out at a Neighbourhood Plan stage. Neighbourhood Plans rely on community volunteers fundraising for expertise and finding the number of hours to carry out consultation etc.
- 4.3.** The Labour Group consider that identifying 'areas of separation' should be undertaken by the primary planning authority within the context of the Local Plan.

## **5. Social Housing Provision & Poorly Balanced Housing Mix for an Aging Population – Policy H6**

- 5.1.** The 2011 Census indicated that there were around 16,930 people in NWL whose day to day activities are limited by disability. This is an increase of 11% since the 2001 Census. Demographic change suggests that this figure will increase during the Plan Period.
- 5.2.** NWLDC needs to re-examine its low number of single storey (bungalow) provision in the submission & provide locations for its provision within our town centres.

## **6. Heritage Assists - Policy Ec13**

- 6.1.** Protection and restoration should apply to all heritage assets in NWL. Currently sites of heritage interests are not noted within the submission.
- 6.2.** The Local Plan should be the catalyst to aid the community interpret the past and that heritage can provide a foundation for its future.