

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2014

Title of report	DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
Contacts	<p>Councillor Trevor Pendleton 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To outline for members the suggested approach in respect of the Development Strategy for the Local Plan
Council Priorities	<p>These are taken from the Council Delivery Plan:</p> <p>Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge</p>
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	None.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	At this time there is uncertainty regarding the amount of new development which will need to be provided for as part of the Local Plan and so it is suggested that to allow for this a flexibility allowance be applied. In this way the potential for the plan to be found unsound should be minimised
Equalities Impact Assessment	None
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	The Report is Satisfactory
Consultees	Local Plan Project Board
Background papers	National Planning Policy Framework which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications?topics%5B%5D=planning-and-building Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment which can be found at www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/shma_5_year_housing_land_supply
Recommendations	THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: (I) NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTION TO HAVE A FLEXIBILITY ALLOWANCE; (II) NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTED SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY; AND (III) NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALLOCATING SITES

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A key issue for the new Local Plan to address is that of what the development strategy ought to be. Any development strategy will comprise of a number of elements:
- A settlement hierarchy which defines the different levels and roles of settlements across the district in order to guide the location of new development, whether this is determined as part of the local plan or in determining a planning application;
 - Allocation of amounts of development to different settlements and;
 - Allocation of specific sites for development
- 1.2 All local plans have to be supported by a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) to demonstrate what account has been taken of sustainability issues in preparing the plan and to show what the likely impacts of the plan will be in sustainability terms. The SA/SEA identifies a number of objectives covering a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues against which the sustainability credentials of the local Plan can be assessed. As part of the SA/SEA process it is necessary to consider all reasonable alternative options when preparing policies and strategies.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to:

- Consider what options there might be for the settlement hierarchy;
- Identify the suggested settlement hierarchy and possible scale of housing growth and
- Establish some key principles to help guide considerations in respect of the allocation of sites

1.4 Before looking at the possible options it is necessary to consider what scale of development should be planned for.

2.0 SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

2.1 In respect of housing, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provides the starting point and the key piece of evidence in respect of future housing needs. Members will recall that this has suggested a requirement figure for the district of 350 dwellings each year for the period 2011 to 2031, a total of 7,000 new homes. This is what has also been agreed as part of the Memorandum of Understanding which has been agreed with all of the Housing Market Area (HMA) authorities.

2.2 Notwithstanding the Memorandum of Understanding, it is considered that at this time it would be prudent to apply a flexibility allowance to the SHMA figures. A flexibility allowance is suggested to allow for the possible non-delivery of sites which are currently in the pipeline and which may come to light as part of ongoing evidence gathering.

2.3 In considering what a suitable flexibility allowance might be, it is suggested that this should as a minimum be 20% of the overall SHMA requirement of 7,000 dwellings. The figure of 20% reflects the NPPF which requires a 20% additional provision where a local authority has a track record of persistent under-delivery. However, the SHMA considered a number of scenarios with the highest figure for the district being 478 dwellings each year. This is 37% higher than the figure preferred by the SHMA.

2.4 On balance it is suggested that the most prudent approach would be to assume a flexibility allowance of 30%, slightly below the maximum level of housing suggested in the SHMA; i.e. 2,100 dwellings or a total of 9,100.

2.5 It should be noted that such a flexibility allowance is for planning and testing purposes at this stage only to enable officers to make progress in drafting the Local Plan and there will be an opportunity at a later date to decide the actual provision to go into the plan in the light of the information at that time.

2.6 Such information will include the provisions of other strategies. As is noted in the SHMA, the SHMA 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*”.

2.7 Furthermore, paragraph 158, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out 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 In terms of economic growth potential, Members will be aware that the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) has produced a Strategic Economic Plan which was principally prepared as a bidding document for funding from government. It is understood that this may be subject to a review which will potentially provide different economic projections. In addition, the Council is currently consulting on a Local Growth Plan.
- 2.9 It has become apparent from recent reports in the planning press that whilst documents such as the Strategic Economic Plan were primarily intended to assist with bidding for government funding, Planning Inspector's are attaching some weight to their statements about future economic growth when considering what is the appropriate level of housing that should be provided for as part of Local Plans.
- 2.10 in view of the above figures for the Local Plan may, therefore, need to be adjusted to reflect any changes in the Strategic Economic Plan or Local Growth Plan.
- 2.11 When a requirement for employment land has been established it is considered that it would also be prudent to build in a flexibility allowance to the employment land requirement as well.
- 2.12 It should be noted that the issue of housing and employment numbers should not be approached with such a degree of exactitude as to be unreasonable (i.e. not one dwelling more than the requirement), instead there will be a need to be flexible to ensure proper planning (for example, when allocating sites that any boundaries are logical rather than being determined arbitrarily to provide the exact numbers required).

3.0 SETTLEMENT HIERACHY

- 3.1 As noted above as part of the SA/SEA process it is necessary to consider all reasonable alternative policy options. This does not mean all options, but only those which can be considered to be reasonable.
- 3.2 The following sections consider what these options might be and starts with some context from the now withdrawn Core Strategy.

What did the Core Strategy propose?

- 3.3 In the now withdrawn Core Strategy the following settlement hierarchy was proposed (Policy CS7):
- Coalville Urban Area – where most new housing and employment would be located;
 - Rural Centres: Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham – where most of the remaining housing and employment would be located;
 - Sustainable Villages (defined as those which had access to five of eight essential services) – where small scale housing and employment development would be allowed ;

- Rural Villages – where development would be restricted to that to meet a local need and
- Countryside

3.4 The Core Strategy was prepared having regard to the provisions of the then Regional Plan which included a requirement for “most” new development to be directed to the Coalville area. As the Regional Plan has now been revoked there is no longer a need to do this.

What are the options?

3.5 In considering reasonable alternatives it is also necessary to have regard to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) when considering the most appropriate policy approach to take in a local plan. 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 make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable”.*

3.6 The following settlements have the best range of services and facilities and/or serve a hinterland which suggests that these settlements should be to towards the top of any settlement hierarchy (in alphabetical order);

- Ashby de la Zouch;
- Castle Donington;
- Coalville urban area
- Ibstock;
- Kegworth and
- Measham

3.7 In terms of the remaining settlements, there are differences in respect of the level of services and facilities available within different settlements. For example, some may have a primary school but no shop; some may have employment but no public transport. It is considered that having regard to the provisions of the NPPF as outlined above, it remains appropriate and reasonable to distinguish between settlements in terms of their sustainability credentials. Further work will need to be undertaken to agree this, but for the purposes of this report the terminology used in the Core Strategy (i.e. sustainable villages, rural villages etc) will be used.

3.8 Notwithstanding the fact that the Regional Plan with its significant emphasis upon directing development to the Coalville area (identified as a Sub Regional Centre) has been revoked, it remains the case that the Coalville Urban Area (including Hugglescote, Thringstone and Whitwick) is the largest settlement within the district (population as at 2011 Census was

estimated to be 36,800) and that it has the most comprehensive range of services and facilities.

- 3.9 It is considered, therefore, that any settlement hierarchy should recognise this and accordingly should designate the Coalville Urban Area as the Principal Town to which 'the largest amount of development' should be directed. Note that this is not the same as the former Regional Plan which referred to 'most' development (implying at least 50% of all development). The exact amount of development would need to be determined once the overall settlement hierarchy is agreed.
- 3.10 Beneath the Principal Town there could be Rural Centres (as in the Core Strategy) or Main Towns and then Rural Centres. The approach in the Core Strategy of having just Rural Centres reflected the then Regional Plan which did not distinguish between settlements outside of the Sub Regional Centres such as Coalville. Some consultation responses to the Core Strategy had suggested that either Ashby and/or Castle Donington should be recognised as being different to the other Rural Centres due their size and/or range of services and facilities available.
- 3.11 There is merit in considering such options as part of the Local Plan. Ashby is significantly larger in population terms (12,380 as at the 2011 Census) than any of the other settlements outside of the Coalville Urban Area and also has an extensive range of services and facilities. One option, therefore, could be to identify Ashby as a Main Town on its own.
- 3.12 Whilst Castle Donington does not have as large a population as Ashby (6,350 as at the 2011 Census), it does have a good range of services and facilities (with the possible exception of secondary education which currently only goes to age 14) but, as with Ashby, it provides a significant number of employment opportunities within and close to it. However, there are also some significant infrastructure issues, such as highways, which need to be addressed. Therefore, it too could be identified as a Main Town alongside (rather than instead of) Ashby although it has to be recognised that there is no scope for additional development beyond what the Council has already resolved to approve.
- 3.13 None of the other larger settlements are so populous or have such an extensive range of services and facilities that they could be considered as Main Towns.
- 3.14 Beneath Main Towns and/or Rural Centres there could then be sustainable villages and rural villages.
- 3.15 Whatever hierarchy is chosen, the potential for growth would be greater in a settlement which is in a higher order settlement than a settlement beneath it, although the scale of any growth may differ from another settlement in the same category.
- 3.16 It is also appropriate to have regard to the scale and distribution of new housing which has already been permitted or resolved to be approved, as any development strategy will need to be deliverable. Table 1 below sets out these figures. It should be noted that the completions cover the period to 31 March 2014, whilst those for permissions and resolutions are up to 30 September 2014. It should be noted that the resolution for the development of 450 dwellings at Measham Waterside is not included in the figures due the uncertainty associated with the delivery of the site as a result of HS2.

Table 1 – housing provision

Settlement	Completions 2011-14	Planning permissions	Resolution to grant planning permission	Total
Coalville	249	1,320	922	2,491
Ashby	112	823	145	1,080
Castle Donington	153	147	895	1,195
Ibstock	181	369	142	692
Kegworth	131	183	181	495
Measham	52	85	20	157
Rest of District	152	525	218	945
Total	1,030	3,452	2,392	7,055

3.17 Having regard to the above factors the following two options are presented for further consideration at this time.

Option A	Option B
Coalville (Principal Town)	Coalville (Principal Town)
Ashby/Castle Donington/Ibstock/Kegworth/Measham (Rural Centres)	Ashby/Castle Donington (Main Towns)
Sustainable Villages	Ibstock/Kegworth/Measham (Rural Centres)
Rural Villages	Sustainable Villages
	Rural Villages

3.18 A further option which officers have considered is that of a new Settlement. However, it is not clear that there would be sufficient development required to justify a new settlement. In addition, this option is not being promoted by any landowner/developer and so at this time deliverability of such an option within the plan period is considered to be unlikely. Thus this option is not considered to be a reasonable option and is not taken any further forward.

Consideration of Options

3.19 Each of these options is considered below. It should be noted that this consideration is based on a planning judgement and that all the options would also need to be considered assessed against the SA/SEA.

Option A

3.20 This option represents a continuation of that proposed as part of the withdrawn Core Strategy. It recognises the fact that Coalville is the largest settlement in the district with the greatest range of services and facilities. It also recognises that the Rural Centres do perform a different role to other settlements across the district. However, it can be argued that it fails to adequately reflect the role and function that some of the other larger settlements outside of Coalville play in meeting the needs of local communities whilst also

over emphasising Coalville's role and function. The housing provision figures in Table 1 illustrate this.

Option B

- 3.21 This option recognises the important role played by Coalville, but also recognises that Ashby and Castle Donington are different to the other larger settlements outside Coalville in terms of population size (Ashby has the second highest population after the Coalville Urban Area whilst Castle Donington is the third largest in population terms) and the range of services and facilities available. For example, the retail capacity study demonstrates that Ashby has a strong town centre with a hinterland that covers a large part of the south-west of the district whilst Castle Donington provides significant employment within and close by which draws people from a wide area that goes beyond the district.
- 3.22 As with option A this option recognises that the Rural Centres perform a different role to other settlements.
- 3.23 Of the two options, it is considered that option B more accurately reflects reality than option A, for example as illustrated in respect of the current distribution of housing as set out in Table 1 and so it is suggested that this should be, subject to the outcome of any assessment as part of the SA/SEA, the settlement hierarchy in the Local Plan.

What might the settlement hierarchy look like in terms of scale of growth?

- 3.24 Having regard to section 2 of this report where it was concluded that a 20% flexibility allowance should be made and working on the basis of option B, table 2 below sets out (for illustrative purposes) possible housing growth ranges for each of the settlement categories. The minimum figure is the rounded total in Table 1 whilst the maximum figure allows for the additional 20% referred to above and has had regard to the distribution of existing planning permissions and resolutions (as set out in Table 1) and the potential scope for development having regard to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.
- 3.25 It will be noted that no range is presented for Castle Donington because, as already noted, there is no scope for additional development beyond what the Council has already resolved to approve.
- 3.26 It should be stressed that at this time these figures, particularly the maximum figures have no status and that Members are not being asked to agree these figures which are for testing and planning purposes only.

Table 2 – possible distribution of housing

Settlement	Minimum	Maximum
Coalville	2,500	3,200
Ashby	1,100	1,350
Castle Donington	1,200	1,200
Ibstock	700	800
Kegworth	500	650
Measham	150	600
Rest of District	950	1,300
Total	7,100	9,100

4.0 ALLOCATION OF SITES – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 In considering the identification of the most appropriate allocations it will be necessary to have regard to a range of factors, including:

- What existing commitments there are and how these are distributed;
- Deliverability;
- In respect of housing land, the ability to contribute towards maintaining a 5-year supply of housing land;
- How allocations might contribute towards other possible plan objectives;
- Normal planning considerations including visual impact, highways etc;

4.2 All potential allocations will need also to be subject to SA/SEA as referred to earlier in this report.

4.3 It would also be appropriate to consider the allocation of a site (or sites) which numerically are more than required but which would then a) allow some flexibility to bring forward a development in the event that build rates elsewhere do not meet expectations and b) allow for proper long-term planning of infrastructure rather than incremental provision.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2014

Title of report	AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Contacts	<p>Councillor Trevor Pendleton 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To advise members of the intention to include a policy in the Local Plan in respect of affordable housing and to outline what matters such a policy might include.
Council Priorities	<p>These are taken from the Council Delivery Plan:</p> <p>Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge</p>
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	None
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	The National Planning Policy Framework requires that the full objectively assessed need for affordable and market housing be met. A policy in respect of affordable housing is required to ensure that the Council is complying with this requirement.
Equalities Impact Assessment	None
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	The Report is Satisfactory
Consultees	Local Plan Project Board
Background papers	National Planning Policy Framework which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications?topics%5B%5D=planning-and-building Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment which can be found at www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/shma_5_year_housing_land_supply
Recommendations	THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOTES: (I) THE NEED TO INCLUDE A POLICY IN THE LOCAL PLAN IN RESPECT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING; AND (II) NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE POSSIBLE CONTENTS OF SUCH A POLICY AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) NPPF requires that we meet “the *full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework...*”.
- 1.2 It also requires that where a need for affordable housing has been identified then policies should be set to meet this need on-site “*unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified*”. Policies for affordable housing “*should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time*”.
- 1.3 Therefore, a key issue for the new Local Plan to address is that of the provision of affordable housing.
- 1.4 As with all of the policies in the Local Plan, it will be necessary for any policies in respect of affordable housing to be supported by a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) to demonstrate what account has been taken of sustainability issues in preparing the plan and to show what the likely impacts of the plan will be in sustainability terms. The SA/SEA identifies a number of objectives covering a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues against which the sustainability credentials of the local Plan can be assessed. As part of the SA/SEA process it is

necessary to consider all reasonable alternative options when preparing policies and strategies.

- 1.5 In addition to SA/SEA, the Local Plan needs to be subject to viability testing in order to ensure that the various policies and proposals, particularly those which place a cost upon a development (such as affordable housing), would not make development unviable. Such testing can only take place when all of the policies for the Local Plan have been drafted.
- 1.6 It will be necessary to develop and test, against both the SA/SEA and viability, matters such as the targets and thresholds for affordable housing. However, identifying any specific figures at this time would not be appropriate in view of the lack of certainty and therefore, this report does not set out any specific details but sets out a framework for possible policies.
- 1.7 It should be appreciated that whilst the planning system has an important role to play in securing the provision of affordable housing, primarily as part of general housing development, it is just one means of doing so. The Council can assist with the provision of affordable housing through a variety of roles. For example, making sites available to housing associations for them to develop specifically for affordable housing; providing financial support to help realise developments as well as the potential for the Council itself to build new affordable housing.

2.0 WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

- 2.1 Any policy needs to be based on robust evidence. In respect of affordable housing this was covered as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This follows the requirement in the NPPF to “*Address the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes*”.
- 2.2 The SHMA identified that in North West Leicestershire the estimated level of annual need for affordable housing for the period 2011-2031 was 212 dwellings. To put this in context, the highest overall housing requirement suggested in the SHMA up to 2031 was 350 dwellings each year. The affordable housing need equates to about 60% of the overall housing need, although it should be noted that based on the advice of G L Hearn (the SHMA authors) the affordable housing figure is not a subset of the overall requirement figure.
- 2.3 In assessing the need for affordable housing the SHMA identifies that need can either be newly arising (from those households who will form over the period being assessed or from existing households falling into housing need) as well as existing households already in need. The largest amount of need is generated from newly arising households.
- 2.4 In considering affordability the SHMA had regard to information about income levels and how these compared to house prices and rents. Amongst its findings in respect of North West Leicestershire were:
 - Median house prices were about £140,000;
 - Median monthly private rental was about £520;

- Ratio of income to house prices was between 5.67 (median house prices) and 6.27 (lower quartile house prices);
- Indicative income level to required afford lower quartile purchase price was £34,300 and lower quartile rent £19,000;
- Mean income was £32,464 and ;
- Median income £24,692

2.5 The key point to note is that both the mean and median income levels were below that required to be able to purchase a property, although they were above the level required to rent.

2.6 To provide some form of context as to who may be in need of affordable housing, based on information obtained from the NHS careers website, a fully qualified nurse could be expected to earn up to about £28,000, whilst those with some form of specialism or responsibility for others could earn up to about £34,500. For a newly qualified teacher the Department for Education reports that salaries would be in the range of about £22, 500 up to £32,200 whilst the starting salary for a police constable is reported as being about £23,300 to £26,000.

3.0 WHAT MIGHT A POLICY ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING INCLUDE?

3.1 As noted already it is not proposed to include any specific details at this stage, but instead to provide a framework for future policy development and an indication of possible policy approaches.

Any policy on affordable housing will need to include details in respect of:

- Targets and thresholds
- Split between different tenure types;
- Dwellings sizes required and
- Preference for nature of provision

Targets and thresholds

3.2 For clarification, a target would be the amount of affordable housing sought on individual sites (for example 20% of all development on a particular site) whilst the threshold would establish the number of dwellings above which affordable housing would be sought. These could be either the same across the district or varied. The advantages and disadvantages to these approaches are considered below.

Same target and threshold across the district

Advantages

- Simple to understand, fixed policy position district-wide;
- Reduced negotiations on individual schemes;
- Potential for developers to build in viability into their costing as there would be a fixed policy position

Disadvantages

- Dependant on the target, locations where there is the potential for larger housing developments would also be a larger proportion of affordable housing - this could result in an uneven distribution of affordable housing across the district;
- Dependant on the threshold there could be a reliance on exceptions sites being developed for affordable housing in the more rural areas;
- Lacks flexibility

Varied targets and thresholds across the district

Advantages

- Would be the same kind of policy structure as there is currently;
- Would allow for affordable housing to be delivered more evenly – i.e. threshold could be tailored to allow more affordable housing where there are smaller development sites;
- Could take more account of viability – targets and thresholds could reflect land values across the district;
- Provides more flexibility in terms of how it is applied

Disadvantages

- Likely to increase the time taken for negotiations on individual proposals;
- Could result in developers seeking lower provision as this is considered acceptable elsewhere.

3.3 On balance it is considered that having varied targets and thresholds would be the most appropriate approach as it provides greater flexibility and would more accurately reflect the different circumstances which exist across the district from a housing market perspective.

3.4 In terms of a target, based on the information from the SHMA this could be up to 60%. However, such a level of provision would raise significant issues in respect of both viability and deliverability. Therefore, any target will be significantly less than 60%.

3.5 In terms of thresholds, the NPPF does not provide any guidance on this, but the Government has announced that it will consult on proposals to limit the threshold of developments above which affordable housing (and other infrastructure) can be sought to developments of 10 or more dwellings only. If this proposal is confirmed then the options available to the Council will be restricted accordingly. This matter will be kept under review in developing policies.

Split between tenure types

3.6 The SHMA identifies that in North West Leicestershire 70% of those households who cannot afford market housing can only afford social rent or below; 11.9% can afford between social rent and 80% market rent and 18.1% can afford 80% market rent.

3.7 The SHMA suggests that this information should be used alongside any local evidence to determine an appropriate tenure split. This matter is currently being looked in to.

- 3.8 It will also be necessary to consider what possible role the Council may have to play in directly providing new housing itself, rather than relying upon the private sector or the register providers.

Dwellings sizes required

- 3.9 The SHMA provides guidance in respect of the possible mix of affordable housing that will be needed.
- 1 bed – 30-35%
 - 2 bed – 35-40%
 - 3 bed – 20-25%
 - 4+ bed – 5-10%
- 3.10 It goes on to suggest that this evidence should be used alongside any local evidence to determine an appropriate mix of dwellings sizes.
- 3.11 This matter is currently being looked in to alongside work in respect of tenure as referred to above.

Preference for nature of provision

- 3.12 As noted the NPPF advises that provision for affordable housing should normally be made on-site unless off-site can be justified. In the absence of any evidence to suggest otherwise it is considered that this should be the approach taken in any policy on affordable housing in the Local Plan.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2014

Title of report	STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Contacts	<p>Councillor Trevor Pendleton 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To outline for members the responses to the recent consultation in respect of a new Statement of Community Involvement.
Council Priorities	<p>These are taken from the Council Delivery Plan:</p> <p>Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge</p>
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial/Staff</p> <p>Link to relevant CAT</p> <p>Risk Management</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessment</p> <p>Human Rights</p> <p>Transformational Government</p>	<p>The production of a new Statement of Community Involvement will be met from within existing staff and financial resources.</p> <p>None</p> <p>A failure to engage effectively and constructively in the preparation of the Local Plan and in determining planning applications could leave the Council vulnerable to challenge. Having an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement will help to minimise this risk.</p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement will need to be subject to an equalities impact assessment.</p> <p>None</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	Consultation responses, copies of which are held by the Planning Policy Team in room 102.
Recommendations	<p>THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOTES:</p> <p>(I) THE RESPONSE TO THE RECENT CONSULTATION IN RESPECT OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT; AND</p> <p>(II) THAT A NEW STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET AT ITS MEETING ON 9 DECEMBER 2014</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will recall that at the 29 April 2014 meeting of the Advisory committee a report was considered in respect of the need to prepare a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.2 The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council will involve the local community, businesses, key organisations and others in preparing its Local Plans, other important planning documents and in processing planning applications.
- 1.3 The Advisory Committee agreed that:
- a) The Council prepare a new Statement of Community Involvement; and
 - b) A further report on the possible content of the new Statement of Community Involvement be brought to a meeting of this Advisory Committee
- 1.4 A further report to the Advisory Committee of 3 June 2014 noted that it was proposed to undertake a consultation in respect of the new Local plan and the SCI in the summer of 2014.

2.0 CONSULTATION ON STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 Consultation on the Local Plan and the SCI was undertaken between 20 June and 19 September 2014.

- 2.2 As part of the consultation key stakeholders were notified of the Council's intention to prepare a new SCI and views were sought on a range of matters. In addition, a short consultation document (Appendix B) was placed on the Council's website and the consultation was promoted as widely as possible. Leaflets and posters were distributed via the Community Focus Team and in local libraries. In addition, the consultation was widely promoted on the NWL DC website and through social media.
- 2.3 Officers also attended three events to promote the Local Plan and the SCI, these were:
- Heart of the Forest Festival (Measham- Leisure Centre grounds) 21 June 2014
 - Picnic in the Park (Coalville- Coalville Park) 29 June 2014
 - Music in the Park (Castle Donington- Spital Park) Sunday 6 July 2014
- 2.4 A key aspect of the consultation in respect of the SCI was to try and gain a better understanding of how individuals wanted to engage in the planning process, both in terms of the Local Plan but also the determination of planning applications. The consultation document referred to above set out 12 specific questions, which were aimed at different sections of the community including residents, businesses and town and parish councils.
- 2.5 A total of 9 responses were received in respect of the SCI part of the consultation:
- 4 Parish Councils,
 - 3 agencies and bodies and
 - 2 members of the public.
- 2.6 A summary of the responses to each of the 12 questions set out in the consultation document is attached at Appendix A to this report.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 In accordance with the Council's constitution a new SCI will need to be approved by the Council's Cabinet. It is proposed that this will be done at the Cabinet meeting of 9 December 2014.
- 3.2 A revised SCI has not yet been drafted, but attached at Appendix C of this report is the existing SCI. The actual structure and layout of the document will be changed as considered necessary. In addition, the other changes that will be considered include:
- Updates to take account of changes in legislation, regulations and national policies (for example, by referring to Local Plans rather than Local Development Frameworks, revocation of the Regional Plan, reference to Neighbourhood Plans) as well as any local policy changes (for example Council priorities);
 - Reference to how social media will be utilised to enhance consultation and engagement particularly now that the Council no longer publishes the Vision magazine as a means of communication with local communities. Since the existing SCI was adopted there have been significant developments in the field of social media (e.g. Facebook, twitter etc) which provides a different way of communicating and engaging with people. The SCI will need to be consistent with the corporate approach on this matter. Where documents will be made available having regard to

the suggestions made in response to the recent consultation. The current SCI only refers to making documents available at the Council offices and other suitable places. It is considered that it would be helpful to be more specific about the type of places where documents will be available; and

- How the Council will engage in respect of consultation on planning applications, including the use of online consultation which was not available at the time the SCI was adopted and the use of e-consultation with Parish and Town Councils.

3.3 Once the SCI is adopted it will provide the framework which will be used for undertaking all future consultations on planning matters

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

LOCAL PLAN GENERAL

1. Are you aware of any organisations which may represent a specific interest that should be consulted?
 - 3 responses suggesting The Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds, Ashby Branch Labour Party and Parish Councils

RESIDENTS

2. Where else could we make hard copies of documents available?
 - 3 responses suggesting a number of locations including Ashby Town Council offices, Tesco Supermarket Ashby, Leisure Centres, Parish Council Offices and Post Offices
3. Do you agree with the suggested methods of engagement? Please suggest others or amendments
 - 3 responses suggesting informative articles in local newspapers, more road shows (for example outside Tesco's in Measham), a clear list of all meetings and information about ward member details should be available on website (easily accessible and not waded through lots of pages on the internet) and in paper form.
4. How would you like to be involved in plan making?
 - 2 responses received which identified taking part in Neighbourhood Plan development, responding to consultations, attending public meetings and through the Parish Council
5. What methods of engagements do you think work best?
 - 2 responses received, one replying that not sure so suggest all methods are used and one which favoured Face to Face meetings

TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS

6. Do you agree with the suggested methods of engagement?. Please suggest others or amendments
 - 2 responses agreed which suggested that the Parish Liaison meetings be increased to 4 times a year with specific meetings around the Local Plan added if required, all email correspondence to be acknowledged and responded to, a list of meetings and Ward Member details should be easily accessible on the website and

Parish Clerks to be advised of Local Plan Advisory Meetings and a copy of agenda and minutes provided.

7. How would you/your organisation like to be involved in plan making?

- 2 responses received which identified taking more notice of Parish/Town Councils when decisions are made, Parish Council's being fully engaged at all levels and through all stages and all information to be sent to Parish Council and in turn will endeavour to attend all meetings, and respond to all relevant parts of the consultation process.

8. What methods of engaging do you think work best?

- 2 responses received which favoured face to face meetings and direct and regular updates from meetings held at the District Council for example, LPAC, removing reliance of updates from ward members or having to trawl website to find information.

BUSINESSES

9. Do you agree with the suggested methods of engagement? Please suggest others, or amendments if you wish?

- 2 responses received one of which supported the suggested approaches and the other stating that it was good to see meetings taking place in the business sector.

10. How would you /your organisation like to be involved in plan making?

- 1 response received which suggested by inviting businesses to meetings

11. What methods of engagement do you think work best?

- 1 response received suggesting fact to face meetings

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

12. Are the consultation methods [suggested] appropriate? Please suggest other ways in which you could be notified of planning applications

- 3 responses received which suggested that whilst the methods were appropriate they could be improved, inform individuals automatically by email of all new planning applications in an area, use parish councils more as the people who live in the community and listen more appropriately to their views when voiced and site notices to be more visible to residents. There was also a comment on the current Pilot scheme for e-consultation with Parish Councils, and paperless planning applications, which it was suggested was not working and makes commenting on the planning applications very difficult. It would suggest that the original consultation methods be re-instated.

OTHER COMMENTS

- The Coal Authority is a specific consultation body which must be consulted on development plans.
- The Local Planning Authority has defined responsibilities regarding Neighbourhood Development Plans which should be set out in the SCI. Many SCIs now refer to the obligations set out for consultation in the 2012 Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulations. Under Schedule 1 this lists the prescribed consultation bodies, which include The Coal Authority.
- not all parish councils have offices at which plans can be viewed
- When responses from statutory consultees are received, the Council should post these immediately on their website along with the application details.
- Viability appraisals are critical in the determination of planning applications and there will be occasions when the public interest is such that it is reasonable and appropriate to make the details of viability appraisals generally available for public scrutiny. Therefore NWLDC must warn developers that any viability appraisal may be placed in the public domain, which is something, addressed in the Environmental Information Regulations.