

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

30 July 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION: LOCAL
PLAN STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To agree the County Council's response to Bolsover District Council's (BDC) consultation on its Local Plan Strategy Proposed Submission document (LPSPS).

(2) **Information and Analysis** BDC's LPSPS sets out the overall vision, objectives and policies for the District up to the year 2031 to achieve communities that are "more sustainable, prosperous, safe and healthy". The LPSPS has been prepared taking into account four previous consultation stages, including Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options (April 2010), Housing Requirement for Bolsover (October 2010), Revised Preferred Options – Proposed Bolsover North Strategic Allocation (March 2011) and Proposed New Housing Target for Bolsover (July 2011). Officer technical comments were submitted to BDC at each consultation stage. This is the final stage of consultation on the Bolsover Local Plan before it is subject to an Examination in Public held by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Inspector is required to consider whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant Regulations and is 'sound'.

Overall, the LPSPS proposes to:

- provide between 5,000 to 6,000 additional dwellings, mainly at Bolsover (2,000), Clowne (575), Shirebrook (600) and South Normanton (750);
- provide 185 hectares for employment-generating uses, including at South Normanton (52 hectares), the former Coalite site (46 hectares) and Shirebrook (27 hectares). Priority would also be given to such uses at Bolsover, Creswell and Tibshelf with continued enhancement of Barlborough Links, Markham Vale, Shirebrook South, Castlewood and South Normanton as strategic employment zones;
- expand the town centres of Clowne and Shirebrook;
- protect the former Clowne railway station, improve the highways

infrastructure and pedestrian/cyclist links between Barlborough and Clowne, and increase Green Infrastructure at South Normanton;

- protect the North East Derbyshire Green Belt, important open spaces and the wider settings of Bolsover Castle and Creswell Crags;
- protect tourist facilities and infrastructure including Bolsover Castle, Creswell Crags, Hardwick Hall, Stainsby Mill, Pinxton Canal and the multi-user trails network;
- encourage the use of renewable energy sources, in particular suitable locations for large scale wind power development; and
- seek to reduce pollution associated with the M1 motorway and improve water quality in watercourses in the Doe Lea catchment and those draining to Clumber Park.

Local Member Comments

Derbyshire County Council Members with electoral divisions in Bolsover District have been consulted, including Councillors Coyle, Dixon, McGregor, Moesby, Stockdale and Western.

Councillor Coyle – Member for South Normanton and Pinxton

- The main concerns are the potential impact of the proposed level of new growth for South Normanton and Pinxton on capacity at local schools and the highway network, including Glebe Junior School, The Brigg Infant School and The Green Infant School.
- The additional school place provision required as a result of the 675 new houses at South Normanton and 275 houses at Pinxton may need a new school. Education funding is already limited in the County and so he is concerned to ensure that developer contributions will be needed to fund new school places necessitated by the new housing growth.
- There are concerns about the traffic implications of the proposed levels of new development particularly on the B6019 Alfreton Road. This road is already congested and planning permission has already recently been granted by Amber Valley Borough Council for 500 new homes on the Outseats Farm site at Alfreton, which will worsen matters. Any proposed development to the west of South Normanton adjacent to the B6019 would worsen the congestion situation further.

Councillor Dixon – Member for Bolsover South

In her role as the Local Member for Bolsover South, Councillor Dixon has outlined concerns that:

- The “Bolsover North” and the “Bolsover East” proposed residential developments cover green field sites and would compromise the unique

Magnesian Limestone landscape, which was recognised as needing protection from unsightly development in Derbyshire Labour's 2013 manifesto "a Fair Deal for Derbyshire".

- The Magnesian ridge needs protecting against unsightly development, such as wind farms.
- The road infrastructure in Bolsover in the vicinity of the proposed Bolsover North development is already at gridlock at peak times.

Councillor Moesby – Member for Tibshelf

- The scale of housing growth proposed for Tibshelf and Newton is considered appropriate.
- The main concern relates to the potential future use of the existing secondary school in Tibshelf, which is soon to be replaced by a new secondary school to accommodate 750 pupils. The Local Plan indicates that the site of the old secondary school could be used for education / employment and community uses. It is considered that employment use of the site would be unacceptable because it is close to an area of 19th and 20th century housing, has a poor access and it would generate significant traffic which could have an impact on highway safety. Accessibility by public transport to the Sawpit Industrial Estate is good so there is no real need for employment use on the school site.
- This school site would be better used for housing to meet most of the new growth of 225 houses proposed in the Plan. This could generate Section 106 contributions for further education provision and other improvements.
- The scale of housing growth proposed at Newton is acceptable and an existing development at Cragg Lane for about 50 dwellings will provide for most of the future housing growth of the village. There are few other development sites within the confines of the village.

Councillor Stockdale – Member for Shirebrook and Pleasley

Shirebrook

Overall Strategy

- Shirebrook should be designated as a regeneration priority area with higher levels of housing growth and priority given to attracting new investment.

Housing Issues

- There are concerns about the deliverability of housing land to the south of Shirebrook due to alleged land banking.
- There needs to be investment in new affordable housing in Shirebrook and more allocated for local people, particularly at Shirebrook Model Village.
- There is concern about the impact on existing extra care homes in Shirebrook of the plan to build another at Langwith Junction. The County Council is planning an extra care home but more warden controlled bungalows are needed to free up 3 bed housing for families.
- Shirebrook has above national average numbers of elderly people and, whilst we will all need support to some degree later in life, there is more urgency to get investment to create jobs for young people.

Employment Issue

- There needs to be a policy in the Local Plan that encourages local businesses, particularly major companies, to recruit more local people for new jobs.

Traffic and Parking

- The Local Plan does not make reference to the traffic and highway safety problems which exist in Shirebrook.
- Station Road and Langwith Road junctions have significant traffic and highway safety problems and improvements to these junctions needs to be recognised in the Plan as being a priority.
- There are an excessive number of large vehicles travelling through Shirebrook, particularly associated with Brook Park Industrial Estate and Sports Direct.
- There are traffic and parking problems around the Market Square, which is a result of the lack of enforcement. There are also problems around Ashbourne Street due to buses and taxis parking on the street, which disrupts traffic movements as this should be a clearway. There is a need for new crossing points on Main Street and Central Drive. None of the traffic issues above are recognised in the Local Plan but should be.
- The proposed Glapwell Bypass is unlikely to go ahead. If developed, it would have had beneficial impacts on the local area in attracting more jobs to the area. Highway improvements within Shirebrook, therefore, need to be identified in the Plan as a priority. The need for Travel Plans to be submitted for new developments also needs to be recognised as a priority.

Public Transport

- When it was first opened the Robin Hood railway line and railway station brought significant benefits to local people and was very well used, particularly for people getting to work. However, services have been cut back and there is no Sunday service anymore. The need to address this issue should be identified in the Local Plan with a view to improving services to and from Shirebrook on the line.
- Bus services in Shirebrook are not regular enough, particularly to Mansfield where there is no Sunday service. It is a particular concern that there are no concessions / day rider tickets available on buses in Shirebrook. These issues need to be recognised in the Local Plan with improvements to public transport accessibility encouraged.

Town Centre Issues

- The Local Plan does not acknowledge that proposals for the new large Tesco store in Shirebrook town centre are no longer going ahead, which is a major blow to the town generally and particularly to the town centre. There is, therefore, an urgent need to improve the area around the Market Square, which should be a priority in the Plan. Similarly, the whole town centre needs to be improved and enhanced to make it more attractive to shoppers and bring more trade into the town.

New Houghton

- The Plan's proposals for residential and employment growth in New Houghton are supported.
- However, the Plan needs to recognise that there are very limited services and facilities in the village, which will need to be improved to support new growth. Similarly, bus services are also limited and will need to be improved. As in Shirebrook, the town has also been neglected through a lack of past investment.

Councillor Western – Member for Barlborough and Clowne

- Councillor Western has recently met with officers of the County Council and BDC to discuss concerns about the potential highways impacts of new growth proposed at Clowne, particularly on the town centre and Station Road. Highway improvements are required on Station Road and discussions have taken place about a number of potential solutions.

Officer Comments

A full copy of the proposed submission documents is available to view at www.bolsover.gov.uk/new-local-plan.html?start=3. Overall, the LPSPS is considered to be sound, although there are two main issues relating to:

- i) the proposed “aspirational” and “minimum” housing targets; and
- ii) the approach taken to landscape character, renewable energy and green infrastructure.

a) Housing

i) Housing Target

Policy LP5: Housing Provision and Location proposes a district wide ‘aspirational’ housing target of 6,000 dwellings (300 per annum (pa)) and a ‘minimum’ target of 5,000 (250 pa) for calculating its five year housing land supply. There may be opposition from developers to a target for calculating the District’s five housing year land supply that is lower than the aspirational target. The target of 300 dwellings pa would be the most appropriate in the context of the key aim in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to boost significantly housing supply. This approach is not being taken by other local planning authorities (LPAs) in the County and, as such, BDC is advised to consider a single target, preferably of 300 dwellings pa.

With respect to Bolsover, the analysis given in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 on population projections indicates that a much lower housing target is appropriate than the former East Midlands Regional Plan’s (EMRP) target of 400 dwellings pa. The projections used were based on the 2008-based Sub-National Population and Household Projections, which indicated a housing requirement of 281 dwellings pa between 2008 and 2031. More recent projections, based on the 2010-based Sub-National Population Projections, indicate 283 dwellings pa between 2011 – 2031. The target of 300 rather than 400 dwellings pa is therefore supported.

ii) Housing Supply Backlog Issue

Figure 13 on page 57 sets out how the target of 6,000 dwellings would be delivered with the base date of 2011 to 2031. However, Planning Inspectors at recent Local Plan Examinations in Public (EIPs) have advocated LPAs to include any backlog or shortfall of housing provision from the base date of the Plan compared to the EMRP requirements in the assessment of the housing target. Although now revoked, the former EMRP was the development plan from March 2006 to March 2013. BDC may need to assess completions for this period against the former EMRP requirement of 400 dwellings pa and include any shortfall in the housing target up to 2031. This approach is being adopted by most other LPAs in Derbyshire.

iii) Windfall and Distribution of Housing

The distribution of housing in Policy LP5 is justified by the evidence; the growth identified for Clowne, Shirebrook and South Normanton is broadly appropriate and would provide for sustainable patterns of development.

iv) Affordable Housing

The flexible approach to requirements in Policy LP6: Housing Choice is supported because it is based on the size and location of the development site and evidence on viability, which is considered reasonable and justified.

v) Gypsies and Travellers

It is welcomed that paragraph 6.18 recognises that a new Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is being commissioned (led by the County Council) and that BDC will use it to assess its requirements. The overall approach of Policy LP7 is supported.

vi) Distribution of Housing Growth

The LPSPS proposes that Bolsover would accommodate up to one third of the housing growth (2,000 dwellings). This is justified by BDC, in terms of the principles of sustainability and the results of the Sustainability Appraisal. In identifying the most suitable areas for growth in and around Bolsover, the LPSPS indicates that the most suitable locations are to the north and east of the town in preference to the west because:

- i) the ancient core of the town around the Castle is on top of a limestone ridge;
- ii) land to the east of the ridge is relatively flat and more easily developable than the western slopes with less landscape impact; and
- iii) there is better access to the town centre, primary and secondary schools and public transport.

The LPSP acknowledges that the main drawback to housing development in this location is that it is mostly good quality agricultural land. It is considered regrettable that the most suitable land identified for such development is Grade 2, although it is recognised that this may be the only potential option given the environmental constraints.

b) Retail

Policy LP21 suggests that the former Coalite site would accommodate bulky goods comparison shopping in a single large unit or units of 'over 4,000 sq. m' and that a minimum of 4,000 sq. m of floorspace would be acceptable in a single or range of units. This is contrary to the Bolsover Retail Capacity Assessment, which indicates up to an additional 3,000 sq. m net floorspace over the Plan period. The allocation for retail development, therefore, is not supported.

c) Employment

Whilst the early release of employment land at the former Coalite site may have an impact upon the take-up of land at Markham Vale, it will provide more opportunities and choice for businesses to develop locally and enhance job creation.

d) Landscape

Green Infrastructure (GI) should have a separate policy rather than be included in Policy LP15: GI Biodiversity and Greening because of its wide remit ranging from open space to accessibility and the wider countryside.

The importance of protecting the Magnesian Limestone escarpment and ridge from harmful development is recognised in the LPSP at Para 8.10. However, the methodology used to define less constrained zones for large scale wind power development appears to result in locations being identified at the southern end of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau where there are significant environmental constraints, e.g. Hardwick Hall and Park. BDC is requested to consider assessing locations suitable for large wind turbines within the Magnesian Limestone Plateau based on a 'landscape-led' approach rather than a 'constraints-led' approach. A 'constraints-led' approach potentially would focus turbine development on a few small sites where the overall impact of the development could be significant. A 'landscape-led' approach, utilising the Landscape Character Types identified in the Derbyshire landscape character assessment, would allow for a more strategic approach where an entire landscape area could be assessed for this type of development.

In light of BDC's methodology used and the nomination bid for World Heritage Site status at Creswell Crags, Policy LP18 causes concern with regard to the promotion of large-scale wind turbine development that could affect areas of the Magnesian Limestone landscape. It is crucial to ensure that the final policy wording which defines suitable locations is appropriate and sufficiently robust. A new second paragraph in Policy LP18 could be included to give clarity: "The Council will ensure that such potential locations do not impact on the established character of the landscape, or features of significance to the natural and built environment (such as Barlborough Hall, Bolsover Castle, Hardwick Hall and Park, Markland Grips, Pleasley Vale and Creswell Crags [and any other such features identified by Bolsover District Council] and their settings)". Policy LP21: Bolsover, final bullet point, refers to respecting 'the setting of and views out from Bolsover Castle.' The policy should also address the potential impact of the former Coalite site in views towards the Castle, and in the approach to Bolsover along the A632. Redevelopment there could have a significant impact on the setting of Bolsover Castle that needs to be mitigated.

d) Transport

Housing and employment generating uses proposed at Shirebrook and South Normanton, and at Creswell, Pinxton and Whitwell, if on single sites, could have significant traffic and transportation impacts. The County Council is keen to work with Bolsover District Council to address these highway infrastructure issues through the Derbyshire Infrastructure Plan and Developer Contributions Protocol.

Travel plans for developments and area wide travel plans could reduce private car use. This depends, however, on the ability of BDC to monitor and enforce such travel plans. Travel Plan measures (Smarter Choices), and their monitoring and enforcement, should be funded by developer contributions appropriate to the impacts on the transport network caused by the development.

Paragraph 5.15 refers to potential extensions to the Robin Hood Line. However, given that Sunday services have been withdrawn due to recorded poor loadings, it is unlikely that any of the proposed rail improvements are deliverable within the LPSPS period.

e) Infrastructure

BDC has been actively involved in the preparation of the Derbyshire Infrastructure Plan (DIP), which identifies the following strategic infrastructure projects that are critical to deliver the proposals of the LPSPS and helpfully reflected in BDC's Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan:

- proposed new secondary school at Tibshelf;
- increased highway capacity at Bolsover, Clowne and South Normanton;
- significant expansion to primary school provision on the Bolsover North Strategic Site;
- expansion of existing primary schools at Clowne, South Normanton, Barlborough, Creswell, Pinxton, Tibshelf and Whitwell;
- expansion of existing secondary schools at Bolsover, Shirebrook, Clowne and South Normanton;
- protection and enhancement of the Derbyshire Greenway Network;
- roll-out of super-fast broadband; and
- delivery of the Clay Cross Household Waste Recycling Centre (in North East Derbyshire but could serve households in the southern part of Bolsover).

It is welcomed that Policy LP4 sets out what infrastructure is required to deliver the Local Plan and explains the role of developer contributions. The policy states that planning obligations will be sought on a case by case basis, guided by BDC's Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan. BDC will need to assess each planning application in light of the most recently available data on

infrastructure and service capacity, in consultation with the County Council, in line with the Developer Contributions Protocol.

Contributions will be sought, where they are necessary and relevant for transport, utilities, municipal waste, water, education, health, emergency services, community facilities (including libraries), leisure facilities and green infrastructure. The policy and supporting text clarifies that infrastructure will be funded via Section 106 planning obligations and that BDC is not proposing to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy. The support for critical infrastructure and the clarity provided by this policy regarding delivery is supported.

Part F of the LPSPS seeks to ensure that housing provision addresses the needs of all sectors of the community. In delivering this part of the Spatial Strategy, the Local Plan reflects the growing need for extra care accommodation across the District. The County Council, working closely with BDC, would like to see affordable extra care within reach of each local population. BDC is asked to reflect the County Council's plans to provide a balanced model of extra care and residential care within the district in its Local Plan.

(3) **Financial Considerations** There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The recommendation in this report is made in the context of the County Council's responsibilities and services under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file 2104 by the Planning Services Manager. Officer contact details – Chris Massey, extension 39805.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member authorises officers to respond to Bolsover District Council on its Local Plan Strategy Proposed Submission, as set out in the report.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services