

BLABY PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
held in Virtual Meeting by Zoom at 7pm on Tuesday, 9th March 2021

PRESENT: Mr G Harding (Chairman)

Mrs M Broomhead, Mrs S McFadden, Mr P Muton, Mr M Wareham, Mrs S Skeemer, Miss M Small & Mrs V Jepson (Manager).

P.471 **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence are received from Cllr Mr P Akroyd, the reason for which is approved.

P.472 **2. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT – None.**

P.473 **3. REPORTS FROM BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

a) **20/1320/HH – 31 New Street, Blaby:** - Two storey and single storey side and rear extension and internal and external alterations. **APPROVAL**

b) **20/1278/HH – 62 Grove Road, Blaby:** - Single storey side extension, single storey rear extension and replacement garden building. **APPROVAL**

P.474 **4. PLANS FROM BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

a) **20/1322/FUL – 43 New Street, Blaby:** - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 7 dwellings with associated access, garaging, parking and landscaping. **COMMENTS:** The plan for the properties themselves look okay but we do have the following comments concerning this plan: -

1 This site is not identified in the Blaby Neighbourhood Plan as development land for housing. Blaby has already exceeded its requirements for housing in the current local plan and has also provided 2 potential reserve sites if an additional need for new housing is identified.

2 The site in question forms part of an area of land which is currently designated for recreation. The site comprises the Blaby Social Centre (village hall) a tennis club and the local bowl's club. Development of the site will encroach into this space.

3 The exit from the new development is adjacent to the access from a small existing development (Harvey Close) both of which come out on the bend where New Street joined West Street. This creates a potential accident hazard.

4 New Street is a fairly congested road the egress of which onto Enderby Road is blind due to parked cars. West Street's exit onto Enderby Road also has sight difficulties.

5 The proposal to demolish one half of a pair of semi-detached houses to provide access to the new development creates a potential hazard for the occupiers of the remaining property.

P.475 **5. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

a) **2021/0054/01 – 10 Bay Car Park Extension – Foxfield SEMH School (Formerly Oakfield Short Stay School), Hospital Lane, Blaby LE8 4FE:-**
Application Number 2020/Reg3Mi/0190/LCC – Having taken into account all the comments Leicestershire County Council received and the relevant planning issues, they have approved permission and a decision notice has been issued.
COMMENTS: No Comments.

P.476 **6. REPORTS FROM BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL, RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA – None.**

P.477 **7. PLANS FROM BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL, RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA – None.**

P.478 **8. TO CONSIDER THE BLABY LOCAL PLAN DOCUMENT CONSULTATION**
All members have been issued with correspondence from Blaby District Council regarding the Blaby Local Plan Options Document Consultation.
AGREED: The following response is to be submitted to the consultation: -

Report on Blaby District Council's Local Plan sites assessments paper.

Before going on to consider the proposals in detail, the point should be made that in view of the significance of this document and the fact that Blaby Parish is a significant stakeholder in the process it is disappointing that you did not see fit to have some preliminary discussions with the Parish which could have helped shape this document and could have ensured those with local knowledge of the area, provided much needed local input into the process.

The Plan needs as I am sure you are aware to consider a number of key issues, which are further emphasised in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Firstly, the importance of maintaining the separation of the different village and town communities. It is a key policy of the NPPF as spelt out in the section on Green Belts that development which joins up separate communities so that they lose their unique identity should be avoided. Policy 7.9 of the Blaby Neighbourhood Plan emphasises the importance of such separation by requiring new development to be focused within the settlement boundary.

Secondly on the principle of sustainable development, new development should be so located as to avoid significant increased car usage and should facilitate walking and cycling.

Thirdly Blaby's current infrastructure is already stretched and in some cases at capacity and while some additional housing capacity may be accommodated, large scale development, such as is envisaged in some of the sites, would overwhelm the current capacity and would also destroy the unique nature of Blaby village. The Neighbourhood Plan identified reserve sites for just over 100 houses, which was identified by residents as being reasonable, bearing in mind the previous larger scale development in the village. The numbers anticipated in the site assessment document, would if brought to fruition, destroy the character and nature of the village. The current population of the village is around 8,800, the planned housing would add just short of 6,000 extra residents, changing the nature of the settlement from a large village to a medium sized town.

Fourthly, it is our understanding, based on current caselaw that the use of the word reasonable in Planning terms, should be based on weighing up the issues that are for and against the development and deciding which factors are the most significant. In deciding, albeit with the caveat that “further consideration is necessary”, that all of these proposals are “reasonable”, is difficult to accept, as will be shown in our detailed response to each proposal.

Fifthly, whilst we recognise the need for additional housing is a key Government policy, it is hard to imagine how an additional 2000 houses could possibly be considered reasonable or sustainable, despite your policy to concentrate housing in the PUA. What is your realistic target for new homes in the PUA, bearing in mind the recently published proposals at Whetstone Gorse?

1. BLA007 Land North of Grove Road. This site in the Council's view is marginal but we would have considerable concerns over the Air Quality issues, and the bridging the Green Wedge, in effect joining up Blaby and Whetstone. Also, a similar application on this site was previously refused, so what has changed to make it now possibly acceptable?
2. BLA025 No comments on this one,
3. BLA030 No comments on this one
4. BLA031 Land North of Hospital Lane. This proposal includes the area of Local Green Space as designated in the Blaby Neighbourhood Plan, although the developer suggests that no development would take place within the LGS and indeed suggests possible improvements to the Long Walk, this is particularly concerning and suggests a lack of understanding of the LGS and the Long Walk. The Parish Council would be particularly concerned at changes to this historic site. The access to the site off Hospital Lane is difficult. The development is not within the settlement boundary and further is separated from the village by the LGS which means it is in effect a separate settlement. Again, this one is marginal but the main reason against this development is due to it being seen as opening up all of the land north of Hospital Lane.
5. BLA032 Land at Glebe Farm. It is hard to envisage how this site could be considered as sustainable development, for a number of reasons;
 - a. The land is currently used as a golf course which makes it potentially important from a biodiversity perspective.
 - b. The golf course provides important recreational facilities and is popular with local residents.
 - c. The development is entirely within the Green Wedge.
It is therefore concluded that this is NOT reasonable.
6. BLA033 Land at Keepers Farm. This proposed site is in the Green Wedge and its development would mean there was no separation between Blaby and Countesthorpe, which again threatens the integrity of both settlements. The houses would be a considerable distance from Blaby village centre and both Primary schools. The proposed provision of a country park is a benefit, but it would need to also come with a considerable monetary contribution for its ongoing maintenance. A further 300 plus houses would put additional strain on local facilities, in particular, primary schools, and doctor's surgeries.

7. BLA034 Land North of Hospital. How this proposal could be seen in any sense of the word reasonable, it is impossible to understand. It is too big, it is separate from the village, it would in effect join Blaby with South Wigston. It has no public transport links, it is not suitable for walking and cycling, it is a loss of valuable agricultural land and it is part flood plain. It is not big enough to be self-sufficient, but it would put impossible strain on Blaby's facilities and infrastructure. The suggestion that this could be partially overcome by the provision of an additional primary school is too little too late, where do all the children go in the meantime? This proposal should not be subject to further development it is fundamentally unsuitable and unsustainable.
8. EBLA02 Land off Lutterworth Road. This employment site is probably deserving of further investigation, but it does have some serious problems some of which could be overcome. The close proximity of the site to residential properties does could give rise to significant noise problems and could severely reduce the type of uses on the site. Also, the site is in the Green Wedge and outside the settlement boundary.

In conclusion although this is early in the process the Parish Council has severe reservations about some of these proposals and we would hope these comments will lead to some significant amendments to them.

As well as the above comments concerning specific sites in Blaby there a number of additional comments relating to the plan in general and the proposed garden village at Whetstone Pastures: -

1. Why does it appear that Blaby and Harborough are taking the lion's share of the Leicester unmet housing need? This means that significant new development is required to meet this need while other districts are unaffected.
2. Will there be a public consultation on the allocation of unmet housing or employment?
3. As we understand it Leicester has not yet verified its unmet housing need, so it is too early for Blaby to incorporate this requirement in the current version of the Local Plan?
4. This proposed new M1 junction (20a) is likely to lead to traffic travelling north towards Leicester to leave here rather than head to the more congested junction 21 leading to an increase in traffic onto the already heavily congested A426, bringing additional traffic to Blaby and through Glen Parva.
5. How will Blaby ensure that large strategic sites are truly sustainable?

P.479 9. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Willoughby Waterleys Residents Association – Presentation

All members have been issued with a copy of the Willoughby Waterleys Residents Association presentation document from the meeting held on the 17th February 2021.

Cllr Mr Harding & Cllr Mrs Broomhead attended this meeting.

AGREED: Cllr Mr Harding will issue a report with additional comments which is to be added to the Local Plan document consultation reply.

b) Proposed Development at Enderby Road Streetworks

Re: Proposed 5G Telecommunications Installation for H3G UK

Proposed development at ENDERBY ROAD STREETWORKS, ENDERBY ROAD, BLABY, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE8 4FH (NGR E: 456268, N: 297823)

Members are issued with a letter and drawings in respect of the proposed telecommunications installation at the above site.

AGREED: It is suggested a crash barrier should be added around the cabinet for safety.

c) Blaby District Council – Neighbourhood Planning Update – March 2021

Members have been issued with a letter regarding the Neighbourhood Planning update for designated Neighbourhood Planning areas within Blaby District.

AGREED: No Comments.

d) Enforcement List of Cases for February.

All members have been issued with a copy of the District Councils enforcement cases for Blaby:-

- **16 Dundee Road, Blaby** – Erection of a fence in excess of 1 metre in height adjacent to the highway.
- **18 Welbeck Close, Blaby** – Demolition of garage and building works taking place.
- **37 Westfield Close, Blaby** – Car repairs business in operation.
- **Green Acres / The Paddocks, Hospital Lane, Blaby** – Construction of a brick bungalow.

P.480 **10. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA**

a) Glyn's Super Whippy – Street Trading Consent

Members are asked to consider a Street Trading Application for Consent from a company trading as Glyn's Super Whippy. They wish to use a van to sell hot & cold drinks and ice cream deserts, in various locations within the Blaby District, Monday to Sunday, from 12 midday - 7pm.

AGREED: No Comments.

b) Climate Communications Trial

All members have been issued with correspondence from the Climate Emergency Support Programme.

The following members are part of the Councils Climate change working party and will report back to this committee with any updates: -

- Cllr Mr G Harding
- Cllr Mrs M Broomhead
- Cllr Mr P Mutton

P.481 **11. CHAIRMANS TIME**

Thank you all for attending.

MEETING CLOSED: 7.20PM