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Planning application 25/0818/HYB – Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby – Hybrid planning application comprising: (i) Full application for the demolition of Keepers Farm House with its associated outbuildings and construction of 77no. dwellings including 20 affordable units and 320m2 of commercial floorspace (Class E), means of access and ancillary works; and ii). Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for up to 268 dwellings including 67 affordable units, 8.47 Ha of land for the creation of a Country Park

Countesthorpe Parish Council objects to this application for the following reason:-

Whilst this application falls within Blaby, the impact on Countesthorpe will be significant, as should the application be successful there will only be one field of separation between Countesthorpe and Blaby.

LOSS OF GREEN WEDGE – AREA OF SEPARATION – CS14

Whilst the Parish Council acknowledges that the applicant has made efforts to retain the area of separation between the parishes of Blaby and Countesthorpe, it has concerns about the significant erosion of the green wedge as its whole purpose is to prevent urban sprawl and maintain separation between settlements and the character of the area. The proposed Country Park should offset any loss of wildlife habitat as building on green wedge will result in a loss of flora and fauna.

One of the three reasons made by the District Council refusing the application for the development of the Blaby golf course, is that the need for housing does not negate the loss of Green Wedge between Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone.

The scale of development and number of proposed dwellings, far exceeds what was adopted in the Blaby Parish Neighbourhood Plan Policy BNP6 which states that the land would be allocated as a reserve site for approximately 55 dwellings, with the proposal of this development being significantly beyond that figure. 24 dwellings have already been built under planning application 17/0302/FUL. This development would likewise, inappropriately encroach upon the designated Green Wedge leading to the further undesirable coalescence of Blaby with Whetstone and Countesthorpe. This would fundamentally undermine the Green Wedge's strategic objectives by failing to preserve its open and undeveloped character, disrupting vital green networks, and diminishing existing public access for recreation, therefore conflicting with Policy DM2 of the Blaby District Council Local Plan Delivery DPD.

There is also significant concern that the open space and country park have not been included in the initial stages of the development. There is therefore risk that the developer (or any future developer should the land be sold at a later date) can be granted initial planning approval and renege on its proposal to retain the open space at a later date. Therefore, there should be a condition at Outline stage that planning permission is based on the indicated area of open space being retained as an area of separation and green wedge between the parishes of Countesthorpe and Blaby in perpetuity at this initial application stage.

COUNTRY PARK ELEMENT

The Parish Council would support the enhancement of the existing entrance off Winchester Road. As mentioned with reference to the convenience store, the Parish Council would consider whether there should also be an area for off road parking for park users to prevent parking on Winchester Road and the residential areas of the Keepers Farm development. The Parish Council would insist that there be conditions on the application that the area of Country Park is retained as public open space and area of separation between Blaby and Countesthorpe in perpetuity.

VISUAL IMPACT

The Parish Council asks that the existing hedgerow be retained, or replaced, as necessary in its current position to retain the existing visual street scene approaching Countesthorpe from the direction of Blaby. Also to obscure the visual impact of the proposed convenience store from Winchester Road.

HOUSING SUPPLY IN LOCAL PLAN

The Parish Council notes that both Countesthorpe and Blaby Parish have exceeded their requirement for housing in the current plan period. Noting that annual housing figures relate to completed builds, the Parish Council has concerns that the District Council will continue to approve speculative applications and end up over subscribing to the housing need. Approved applications in Countesthorpe currently totals 396, with a further 407 awaiting approval which equates to 803 dwellings in Countesthorpe alone.

CONVENIENCE STORE

The Parish Council would ask that there be condition of planning use to ensure that the proposed convenience store is retained for that purpose. The Parish Council would request that it have designated car parking, and that no parking enforcement be permitted so that the parking can also be used for residents wishing to visit the proposed country park facilities, and also to prevent vehicles parking on Winchester Road. It would be anticipated that the convenience store would attract, not only residents, but also from passing through traffic.

The Parish Council would like clarification as to whether there are flats proposed above the retail facility, and if so, is this included into the dimensions of the retail facility dimensions.

SUSTAINABILITY – CS1 AND CS24, CS4 AND CS6

Recently approved applications in Countesthorpe include 170 dwellings on Land off Foston Road (already under construction), 185 dwellings off Willoughby Road and 41 dwellings Gillam Butts (both awaiting commencement), totalling 396 new dwellings.

Two applications for a further 407 new dwellings comprising 112 dwellings off Cosby Road and 295 dwellings on land off Peatling Road are awaiting decisions.

Countesthorpe Parish Council would expect the District Council to consider the cumulative effect of this application along with other recently agreed and proposed applications should they all be approved.

Likewise, and for the same reasons, the Highways Authority should consider the cumulative impact on the road network and the potential for the inclusion of the Whetstone Pastures development to be in the new Local Plan. Regardless as to how many years off the Whetstone Pastures development is, the impact on the local road network should be considered at this early stage when considering these smaller scaled applications.

FLOOD RISK

The top north-west corner will be at risk of surface water flooding running off from Winchester Road. According to the Environment Flood Risk Map, which has been backed up by the incidents of flooding across Winchester Road from the direction of the golf course, that area has a high chance of surface water flooding. At periods of high level of rainfall, Winchester Road becomes impassible due to flooding which has contributed to Countesthorpe being cut off. Likewise, the eastern length of the site is shown to be in a high risk surface water flood area. The District Council's own assessment of the site indicates this issue and expects it to be investigated. Until the issue with flooding from the golf course, which is on a separate site, is resolved, there will be no measures to prevent the water running off onto the Keepers Farm site. As at October 2025, the Local Lead Flood Authority has said that there is nothing that can be done to resolve the flooding of Winchester Road. The Parish Council therefore asks that the applicant be requested to contribute to remedial measures to resolve surface water flooding in that area.

The Parish Council supports the Lead Local Flood Authority's comments in response to the Environmental Impact Statement application, should any works need to be carried out to the existing ditches.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

The Transport Assessment does not take into consideration recently approved and pending planning applications in the Blaby and Countesthorpe areas.

The proposed access leading on to Winchester Road is close to the congested area around the Academy which has around 2000 students, and therefore is busy with pedestrian and vehicular traffic at peak times.

The Parish Council notes that traffic surveys have been carried out at the following junctions:-

- Four-arm roundabout: B4114 St Johns / Blaby Road B582 / B4114 Leicester Road / Blaby Road B582
- Four-arm junction: Broughton Road / B581 Broughton Way / Cosby Road / B581 Broughton Way
- Four-arm junction: A426 Lutterworth Road / Station Road / A426 Lutterworth Road / B581 Coopers La
- Three-arm junction: B582 Enderby Road / unnamed road into Enderby Road Industrial Estate / B582 Enderby Road
- Three-arm junction: High Street / Brook Street / The Dicken
- Four-arm junction: A426 Lutterworth Road / Countesthorpe Road / A426 Lutterworth Road / Countesthorpe Road

Any traffic heading in a south-easterly direction would inevitably travel along Station Road through the centre of the village, thus exacerbating existing congestion on this narrow road. The Parish Council notes that there is little reference within the Transport Plan to this potential vehicular movement, and is not referenced at all in the diagrams. Any vehicular traffic would also impact on the staggered junction at Cosby Road/Winchester Road and no evidence has been provided for this.

The Parish Council notes from the data submitted as part of the Peatling Road application shows that the Cosby Road East and West junction off Winchester Road will be over capacity by 2030. The Parish Council therefore would require clarification on measures that will be taken to ensure adequate junction improvements. The previously proposed 'mini-roundabouts' as part of the Willoughby Road application, now seem inadequate, also in light of the Whetstone Pastures proposals.

ACCESS TO SITE

The proposal is for up to 345 dwellings, yet only provides one access to the site. This therefore exceeds Leicestershire County Council Highways' limit of no more than 150 dwellings off one access.

LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Countesthorpe Parish Council reiterates its disappointment that the District Council did not require the applicant to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for this development prior to the application being submitted. The Parish Council would therefore reiterate its comments as part of the consultation regarding the need for an EIA as follows:-

Site Selection – if development is permitted on this site there will be just one field separating Countesthorpe from Blaby and therefore restrict wildlife movement. The detrimental impact, in terms of visual impact, on the existing Country Park must be taken into consideration. This development will create further loss of habitat for wildlife.

The proposal sits within the area of protection of the green wedge being the area of separation between the settlements of Blaby and Countesthorpe. The proposal is therefore contrary to Blaby District Council's own policies in that its preference within its Core Strategy is to protect the District's natural environment, landscape and geology, to improve biodiversity, wildlife habitats and corridors, to minimise the risk of flooding to property, and to prevent the merging of settlements.