

## **COUNTESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL**

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## **RESPONSE TO BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN 2026**

### **CHAPTER 1 Introduction (paragraph 1.16)**

#### **COMMENTS**

The Parish Council does not consider the Local Plan sound in that there have been significant changes affecting the District since the Regulation 18 process was carried out in 2019 and subsequently 2021. Therefore, Parish Councils and residents will have responded based on the situation at that point in time. The Parish Council therefore considers that the baseline data for the Local Plan is therefore not current.

The Parish Council is being asked to comment on a plan to 2038 however, within another five years the plan will be defunct.

The Parish Council is deeply concerned that the District Council did not issue consultation letters to every property in the District. It would appear that only randomly addresses were selected and the Parish Council does not understand the rationale of that.

#### **REQUIRED OUTCOME**

The District Council should provide detail of criteria of the selection for the number of properties that were written to notify residents of the consultation process.

### **CHAPTER 3 (paragraphs 3.5, 3.6, 3.10, 3.11)**

#### **COMMENTS**

##### **Policy S1: Location and Growth Strategy.**

Whetstone Pastures is on land that would, should it be developed, be considered to have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and the Policy states that windfall developments would be given priority (page 20 of the draft Regulation 19 document. 3.11 states that the Whetstone Pastures development is to protect existing communities from excessive growth and coalescence. The Parish Council would strongly disagree as it will not protect Countesthorpe which will be directly impacted by the Whetstone Pastures development due to a lack of commitment for infrastructure to direct the development away from Countesthorpe.

## **Policy S2: Strategy for Housing (paragraphs 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.21)**

The Parish Council fully recognises the statutory requirement for the District Council to adopt an up-to-date plan and establish a robust five-year housing land supply. However, the Parish Council strongly objects to the inclusion of sites BLA038, BLA036, BLA037, COU046, COU47 and WHE031 which appear to have been brought forward via speculative applications during the period in which the previous Local Plan was out of date. The Parish Council considers the Local Plan in relation to the Countesthorpe, are a case of being a 'developer-led' Local Plan and that it is formalising previously speculatively submitted sites to meet housing targets even though the sites are poorly located for strategic growth.

The Parish Council is concerned that the inclusion of these specific sites represent a reactive approach to plan making rather than a strategic, plan-led spatial vision. Incorporating sites primarily because they are the subject of historic or delayed speculative applications undermines the integrity of the site selection process. The plan should dictate where sustainable development occurs, rather than retrospectively regularising unsuitable sites that happen to have developer interest.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, a Local Plan must be justified (the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives) and effective (deliverable over the plan period). The Parish Council contends that the inclusion of these sites fails these tests for the following reasons:- Failure of Comparative Assessment: There is no robust evidence demonstrating that these sites are superior to reasonable alternative sites in more suitable locations. As part of the call to site process carried out in 2025, only seven sites were identified as unsuitable for development across the district.

The Parish Council questions 3.21 Table 2 Housing Position Statement by Settlement 2025 in that Countesthorpe is listed as being included in the Principal Urban Area (PUA) and not with the Larger Villages in the extended PUA as per page 23 of the Blaby Local Plan Regulation 19 Proposed Submission. It considers that this will open Countesthorpe up to unjustified additional large-scale residential development. However, if Countesthorpe is now being considered a part of the Principal Urban Area, then it should have a higher eligibility as part of the sequential testing for the Leisure and Tourism facilities.

## **Policy S4: Site Allocations for Housing. (paragraphs 3.33, 3.34)**

The Parish Council does not agree that the allocation of housing numbers focuses on community need. Neither is it justified or in line with government policy.

The process for the Local Plan did not take into account the potential outcome of the Local Government Review, even when it acknowledges itself in the Local Plan s11.

The total number of dwellings proposed in the Local Plan exceed the government's requirement for new builds. The government's target is 539 dwellings per annum, whereas the Local Plan accounts for 659 dwellings per annum (11,195 in the plan period). There is potentially risk for speculative applications and overdevelopment. This higher number leaves the opportunity for smaller sites and with lower hierarchy to not take place and there to be risk of speculative housing developments towards the end of the plan period. **Countesthorpe has already exceeded its housing supply in the existing local plan period, and that excess figure should have been taken into account when setting the target figures affecting Countesthorpe.**

The Parish Council would expect that the cumulative effect of these developments be taken into account. Strategic sites over 500 dwellings and / or over 25 hectares of employment land will be required to prepare a Strategic Masterplan to be submitted with an outline planning application covering the whole of the allocated site area. Exceptionally, developments under 500 dwellings will be considered significant if there are site-specific complexities and sensitivities that require a masterplan-led approach. In some circumstances a Strategic Masterplan may also be required to consider the cumulative effects of more than one site to support a co-ordinated and integrated approach to place-making and design.

When the Parish Council has objected to major planning developments within Countesthorpe, it has said that its preference would be for larger sustainable sites. It is therefore dissatisfied that the sustainable developments in the draft plan are unlikely to be started until the end of the new plan period, and that additional sites have been identified within Countesthorpe itself. This results in, again Countesthorpe taking additional housing without the benefit of improved facilities to serve the residents.

The Parish Council has already set out its objection to the development of Peatling Road, due to poor access through the village via, and also the loss of open countryside.

The Parish Council does not consider the allocation of housing development to be justified in that it primarily focuses on the areas of Countesthorpe, Blaby and Whetstone yet there is no firm commitment for service and infrastructure services. With little commitment to development across the district, and reliance on up and coming garden villages, there is the same potential for what happened in the current plan period, that the public urban extension of Lubbesthorpe could not deliver housing targets and therefore resulted in speculative applications in Countesthorpe.

Current planning permissions should be built before further applications are considered and more land lost to development. It is not acceptable for developers to 'bank' planning permissions

The Parish Council's view is that infrastructure such as new roads, highways improvements, and steps to reduce the impact of increased vehicular traffic on existing settlements should come before development.

The plan does not demonstrate the required soundness regarding infrastructure delivery, as there are no concrete commitments for expanding these essential services to mitigate the impact of new developments.

#### **Policy S5: Site Allocations for Local and Strategic Employment Uses (paragraphs 3.35, 3.36)**

The Local Plan does not include an overarching district-wide policy on the control of commercial-to-residential conversions. The Parish Council would seek to protect existing employment opportunities and retail within Countesthorpe.

Item 1.11 of the draft Local Plan, it is acknowledged in the Local Plan that Countesthorpe is lacking in employment facilities, which therefore supports the Parish Council's questioning of the level of hierarchy given to Countesthorpe.

#### **Policy S8: Strategic Site – Whetstone Pastures (paragraphs 3.37, 3.76, 3.78, 3.81, 3.83, 3.86, 3.88)**

The Parish Council does not consider that this element of the Plan is achievable based on the reliance of other organisations.

The timescale for the proposed Whetstone Pastures development is not expected to be started until years 11-15 of the Local Plan Period. That means that there is a potential of 4112 dwellings that will be built in the area of Countesthorpe and Blaby with no supporting infrastructure or services.

There are elements highlighted as concerns regarding the site for employment, because of the gas pipeline, etc and more investigation is needed to the site. Similarly, the developer has indicated that the employment element of the site is towards the end of the scheme. Therefore, the Parish Council has concerns that, if the employment element of the scheme does not come to fruition, then there will not be the associated motorway link and the site would then be used for additional housing. The result would be no-alternative route out of the site heading north, other than onto the Lutterworth Road. This is confirmed in item 3.86 of the Blaby Local Plan – Regulation 19 Proposed Submission which states that the delivery of a motorway junction will not be delivered in the Plan Period to enable mitigation of the development.

It is in fact stated on page 49 that the focus of the site is for active travel and connectivity to the nearby settlements of Countesthorpe and Whetstone.

The Parish Council notes item 3.91 in that green routes are to be provided to enable walking and cycling. However, at the public consultation event hosted by Tritax, it was indicated that there were no plans to make improvements to the narrow road network in the area, such as Hill Lane, as they were not in the land ownership.

The detail for the proposal of the Whetstone Pastures development set out on Page 50, acknowledges that it expected that traffic from the development will travel through Countesthorpe rather than the A426. As part of a consultation process, Tritax had indicated that the initial access to the site would be via the A426 with limited access onto Willoughby Road, such as a bus route only. The Parish Council would ask that this is the case.

The Parish Council would expect that measures be taken to ensure that any development to south of Countesthorpe, does not increase the fluvial surface water flooding to Countesthorpe and Whetstone, as referred to in its response to Policy CC3, Water Quality, Supply and Wastewater.

The Parish Council is aware of residents' claims that there is an area within the site where historically there was an outbreak of Anthrax. The Parish Council would therefore seek the District Council's assurances that the developer carry out the necessary soil tests.

The Parish Council objects to the allocation of Whetstone Pastures under Policy S8 on the grounds that its delivery is inextricably linked to the construction of a new M1 Junction 20a. The Draft Local Plan fails to present a viable, secured, and funded commitment from National Highways or the Department for Transport confirming that Junction 20a will go ahead.

By proceeding with an allocation of this magnitude (4,000–5,000 dwellings and 4 million sq. ft. of logistics space) without guaranteed strategic highway infrastructure, the Plan fails the test of being Effective. It introduces an unacceptable risk of incomplete delivery, rendering the long-term master plan unviable from the outset.

It is understood that initial housing delivery can begin prior to the motorway junction opening. This assumption represents a critical failure in the Council's highway impact data, making the plan Unjustified. Without direct access to the M1 via Junction 20a, commuter traffic and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) generated by both Whetstone Pastures and the Stoney Stanton Strategic Development Area will be forced onto the secondary and rural road network. Specifically, Willoughby Road—which acts as a vital artery linking these allocation zones to local settlements like Countesthorpe and Willoughby Waterleys—will experience severe, unmitigated traffic displacement.

Willoughby Road is entirely unsuited for a massive uplift in daily vehicle movements. It features narrow rural stretches, alignment hazards, and pinch-points passing through historic village centres. To approve a plan that inevitably defaults vast volumes of strategic traffic onto a minor rural network without ring-fenced, fully funded mitigation measures violates NPPF paragraph 115 regarding severe cumulative impacts on the road network.

**Policy S12: Land South of Whetstone – Strategic Development Site (paragraph 3.152, 3.154)**

The Parish Council is concerned about the sustainability of the proposed employment area to the south of Whetstone, WHE031, in that that vehicles travelling in an easterly direction across the county will invariably travel through Countesthorpe.

**Policy S16: Green Wedges (Paragraphs 3.186)**

In light of the fact that the appeal for the development of the Blaby Golf Course has been upheld, the Parish Council strongly opposes the inclusion of sites BLA032, BLA037 and BLA038 being identified as development sites in the Local Plan, as these now eradicate the Green Wedge and area of separation between the Blaby and Countesthorpe and therefore not consistent with the Green Wedge Policy. The sites selected in Blaby and Countesthorpe for the Local Plan allow future risk of speculative applications removing any area of separation between the three settlements, as there has not a sufficient buffer of Green Wedge allocated in the Local Plan. Also, the repositioning of the football club facility, should it be off Winchester Road, would mean that the site would not be considered Green Wedge according to the response of the Planning Inspector when responding to the Blaby Golf Course Application.

The Parish Council believes that the assessment of these particular sites should have been taken into consideration of the Planning Inspector's views that the Golf Course site cannot be considered Green Wedge or an area of separation between Countesthorpe and Blaby parishes. There are other sites within the District that are identified as suitable for development (with only 7 of the sites submitted as part of the Call for Sites process not being considered suitable), and not included in the Local Plan which would therefore be more suitable for development. As a consequence of its approval, the housing numbers relating to this application will mean that a number can be reduced from any other suggested sites in Blaby. The Parish Council would not support the development of land to the East of Lutterworth Road as mentioned previously, the erection of Green Wedge and increased traffic on Winchester Road.

Countesthorpe Parish Council objects to any loss of Green Wedge or area of separation between itself and Blaby/Whetstone. Countesthorpe should be retained as a settlement with its own identity. There is a sufficient supply of sites identified within the Local Plan to not necessitate there being sites used that would erode Green Wedge. (The total figure of potential development in the plan period 6-10 years exceeds the housing requirement for the District significantly, ie years 6-10 of the plan period would only need to provide 3,295 dwellings. Should

the Keepers Farm development proceed the Parish Council would therefore expect for the associated open space between Blaby and Countesthorpe to be retained in perpetuity.

The Parish Council supports COU045 not being included as developable land, as previously objected to the application as it would result in a loss of a defined area of separation between Countesthorpe and the proposed Whetstone Pastures.

A major concern for the Parish Council is as to why the area to the north of the proposed Whetstone Pastures has not been allocated a Green Wedge rather than an area of separation. The Parish Council strongly supports the principle of preventing the coalescence of Countesthorpe and the proposed Whetstone Pastures, however it objects to the designation of the intervening land as an 'Area of Separation' and that it should be redesignated as Green Wedge. To ensure the long term future of this boundary, this Policy (Area of Separation) should be amended to explicitly safeguard the Green Wedge functions, ie, preventing the physical and visual merging of the two settlements, maintaining the distinct identity of Countesthorpe and by imposing clear limits on the either the potential expansion of the Whetstone Pastures development or, should the Garden Village not come to fruition in the required timescale, further speculative planning applications being submitted to the south of Countesthorpe. This is a particular concern as an area of it, although not currently specified as part of the Whetstone Pastures housing development, but falls within the ownership of the same scheme, thus giving less protection against the expansion of the Whetstone Pastures development.

The Parish Council objects to the inclusion of BLA038 within the plan. It understands that there are plans to use developer contributions to reposition the Whetstone Athletic Football Club to the east of the land between the Lutterworth Road and Winchester Road, which appears to be in an effort to retain a Green Wedge between Countesthorpe and Blaby. Whilst this would contribute 525 dwellings as part of the Local Plan, there are at least 24,458 potential dwellings from other sites located in the call to sites process. Secondly, more recently, development contributions have mainly contributed towards either football facilities or for projects to support the Highway's Authority's schemes. The Parish Council has been raising concerns for many years with regard to the adverse impact of vehicular activity at the Countesthorpe Road/Lutterworth Road junction, and this kind of development should be contributing towards improvements to that section of the highway.

**Policy S17: Areas of Separation. (paragraphs 3.188, 3.190)**

A major concern for the Parish Council is as to why the area to the north of the proposed Whetstone Pastures has not been allocated a Green Wedge rather than an area of separation. The Parish Council strongly supports the principle of preventing the coalescence of Countesthorpe and the proposed Whetstone Pastures, however it objects to the designation of the intervening land as an 'Area of Separation' and that it should be redesignated as Green Wedge. To ensure the long term future of this boundary, this Policy (Area of Separation) should be amended to explicitly safeguard the Green Wedge functions, ie, preventing the physical and visual merging of the two settlements, maintaining the distinct identity of Countesthorpe and by imposing clear limits on the either the potential expansion of the Whetstone Pastures development or, should the Garden Village not come to fruition in the required timescale, further speculative planning applications being submitted to the south of Countesthorpe. This is a particular concern as an area of it, although not currently specified as part of the Whetstone

Pastures housing development, but falls within the ownership of the same scheme, thus giving less protection against the expansion of the Whetstone Pastures development.

## **REQUIRED OUTCOME**

There should be no further development within Countesthorpe as the plan data is not based on the cumulative impact of recent applications and results in an unsafe and unsustainable highway network.

Clarity at this point of the process as to highway infrastructure and routing to direct increased vehicular traffic through Countesthorpe from the proposed Whetstone Pastures development, in particular how it will be controlled to reduce the level of traffic travelling north via Willoughby Road, and likewise the staging of the proposed development as to which areas of the site would be developed first. The prime access to the site should be Lutterworth Road.

Existing approved planning developments should be enforced to provide the development as approved and not be able to change and adjust throughout the development period.

More clarity in the report as to why these sites were selected over other sites which had also been identified in the call to sites process as being suitable for housing.

For site BLA038 to be removed from the plan as its development will result in the loss of Green Wedge.

For the area to the south of Countesthorpe between the village and the proposed Whetstone Pastures Garden Village, be designated as Green Wedge in the Plan, rather than area of separation.

That COU045 be guaranteed exclusion from the Local Plan selected sites, because of loss of Green Wedge.

The Plan should specify wording with regard to the Whetstone Pastures development that the new garden village must fund, build and maintain adequate water and sewage treatment infrastructure at an early stage of the development to ensure that prevents surface water run-off and foul flooding from worsening upstream in Countesthorpe.

That Countesthorpe Parish Council position within the Housing Position Statement by Settlement 2025 be amended to being defined as a Larger Village.

That the current employment areas within Countesthorpe are preserved.

Countesthorpe has already exceeded its housing supply in the existing local plan period, and that excess figure should have been taken into account when setting the target figures affecting Countesthorpe.

## **CHAPTER 4 – CLIMATE CHANGE AND FLOODING**

### **COMMENTS**

#### **Policy CC3: Water Quality, Supply and Wastewater.**

The Parish Council notes the Policy, however, it has been apparent from the recent incidents of surface water flooding, that not all Authorities are part of the planning process and the Policy

should be strengthened to ensure that existing communities and local watercourses are not compromised by over-capacity sewerage networks. Planning permissions should be conditioned so that any sewerage network improvements are completed prior to occupations of developments.

The parish council would like reassurance from Severn Trent Water Authority that there would be no adverse impact on water pressure for existing properties in the Parish if the planned additional building in this and the surrounding areas goes ahead. Any drop in water pressure compromises the daily functionality of essential household appliances, such as combi-boilers and washing machines, which require a consistent minimum pressure to operate safely.

Severn Trent's response to two current applications express their concerns regarding the impact the additional flow these proposed developments will generate. It is worrying that as no investment is currently planned, Severn Trent cannot object to approval being granted. The Parish Council consider this to be unacceptable given the proposed substantial increase in new builds and feel this response highlight the urgent need for investment in infrastructure. The housing numbers for Countesthorpe are unsustainable, due to the unaddressed capacity in the local waste-water infrastructure.

The draft Local Plan assumes that local utility networks can absorb the cumulative impact of hundreds of new homes. However, the Wigston Sewerage Treatment Works, located on Leicester Road, has not undergone any structural expansion or capacity enhancement.

Countesthorpe is already under severe strain from major ongoing and recently permitted housing developments. This includes the 170 dwelling development at Foston Road, 185 dwelling scheme off Willoughby Road and 41 dwelling off Gillam Butts which are already approved, with applications for land off Peatling Road and Cosby Road amounting to a further 409 dwellings. If the system is already struggling, then it will not accommodate the proposed Whetstone Garden which will result in a minimum of 4000 dwellings which would also feed into the system.

Permitting even further allocations in the Local Plan, without securing infrastructure expansions creates an unacceptable risk of network failure. The existing network is not having the required structural upgrade to meet the demand of the number of new dwellings.

This situation does not comply with the National Planning Policy Framework which requires planning policies to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. Further dwellings connecting onto a sewerage treatment facility that has not received corresponding capacity upgrades increases the risk of surface water and foul sewer flooding into existing residential homes and overflow discharges into local watercourses with resulting odour issues to properties within the vicinity of the leaks. Existing properties including on Willoughby Road and Hallcroft Avenue have suffered incidents of sewage in their front gardens or coming up pipes within their properties.

The fact that the Wigston Sewerage Treatment Works has recorded repeated environmental discharges into the local waterways, including nearby Countesthorpe brook experiencing sewage spills over monitoring periods. The data compiled from waterway monitoring highlights frequent storm overflow and sewage discharge events with a total of 59 events of spillage over the past year. This is well above the national average for England of 20.5 spills and Defra's target maximum of no more than 10 incidents per annum.

In light of this, no further developments should be allocated or approved for Countesthorpe until there is a commitment from the District Council and its partners for the associated infrastructure improvements. Severn Trent Water needs to expand the infrastructure at the Wigston Sewerage Works Site, in particular to build larger storm water storage tanks to hold peak flows during heavy rain. The Parish Council understands that Severn Trent Water will be carrying out upgrades to local sewer networks in Leicestershire, however, there is a lack of clarity in what those areas are.

**Policy CC4: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (paragraphs 4.32, 4.33)**

The National Planning Policy Framework does not require for a specific level of renewable energy to be provided in a Local Plan, therefore the Parish Council considers the scale allocated to Countesthorpe and Foston Road to be unnecessarily high. It is also contrary to Policy CC4: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, in that it would cause harm to the residential living environment of existing homes and would have an unacceptable visual impact which would be harmful to the character of the area.

As all of the 16 sites investigated as part of the Landscape Sensitivity Study for Renewable Energy for Blaby District Council were identified as suitable for BESS (Battery Energy Storage System), Solar or Battery, the Parish Council's view is that sites be selected from across the 16 sites so that not just one area is targeted.

Referring to the Landscape Sensitivity Study for Renewable Energy for Blaby District, the Parish Council notes that, as well as being targeted for housing, that it is one of the primary areas for renewable energy sites. With two sites within the immediate area of the village, at site COU044 and also to the north of Foston Road (proposed as ideal for small scale BESS installations). Both sites are within close proximity of the village of Countesthorpe, with the site to the south of Countesthorpe will be visible from the proposed new housing.

The Parish council is concerned that the document states that the area to the south of Countesthorpe would be suitable due to the fact that there is heavy traffic travelling along Peatling Road, therefore justifying its location, and presumably saying that the noise generated from the installations will not be heard by local residents due to the increased traffic noise from Peatling Road. The site is identified as suitable for turbines to the south of the site however they would be highly visible from residential properties. Similar to the case with the recently approved application for solar panels on land off Foston Road, vehicular traffic on Foston Road, cannot be heard from Rosebank Road, therefore it will not counteract any noise generated from the solar panels.

Incompatibility of co-located uses. With regard to the proposal for a wind farm facility to the south of the village, the draft Local Plan seeks to allocate both housing and wind turbine within close proximity. While the Parish Council supports the principle of renewable energy generation, placing major housing next to these installations creates significant spatial conflict. The draft plan does not demonstrate that it has adequately considered the adverse impacts of this co-location on residential amenity, including intrusion. Similarly, as to the housing development, the Local Plan appears to have been drafted with developer led planning in mind and the fact that there is a strip to the south of the village that can't be developed with housing because of a gas pipeline. With an existing approved application for a large scale solar farm to the east of the village within close proximity of existing dwellings. And with a proposed construction of a new 132/33kV substation compound to the east of the village on Welford

Road, it appears that it has been easier to continue with accepting renewable energy facilities in the region of Countesthorpe, now that the inappropriately approved solar facility on Foston Road has been approved as a precedent.

With regard to the proposals for renewable energy in general, the proposed renewable energy facilities, to the south of the village, and the length of Foston Road leading from the village, fails the test of soundness with a lack of a robust approach. The National Planning Policy Framework and local planning guidance require renewable energy sites to be directed towards areas of least constraint and the plan fails to consider any area within the wider district that are located away from settlement boundaries. Choosing to concentrate this intensive infrastructure in close proximity to residential dwellings, while ignoring unconstrained alternative land, demonstrates that the spatial allocation is neither justified nor the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives.

### **WHAT MODIFICATIONS**

A guaranteed commitment for improvements to sewerage and drainage infrastructure in response to the additional housing to protect existing housing.

A more sympathetic distribution of proposed sites for renewable energy that would not impact on existing residential communities.

That there be more transparency in the Local Plan at this stage as to the potential sites for renewable energy in that they are listed under Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 6 – Housing**

### **COMMENTS**

#### **Policy H1D: Land at Keepers Farm, Lutterworth Road, Blaby. (paragraph 6.26, 6.31)**

6.26 acknowledges that parts of the site are shown on the Environment Agency's Surface Water Map as being a high chance (more than 3.3% each year) of flooding. There are sufficient sites identified during the call for sites process which would not include an area of flooding. A Contributing factor to the site flooding is surface water run off coming from the opposite side of Winchester Road.

**Policy H1E: Land East of Lutterworth Road, Blaby** In light of the fact that approval for the development of the Blaby Golf Course has been granted by the Planning Inspector, this site (BLA038) should have been anticipated and taken into account when considering this site for the Local Plan. There are sufficient alternative sites as part of the call to sites process that are identified as suitable for development. Once the Blaby Golf Course is developed, the development of this site will completely eradicate the Green Wedge between Whetstone, Blaby and Countesthorpe. As with the recent developments at Countesthorpe, developer contributions have been made to improving the existing football facilities. It should be pointed out that these football facilities are existing profit making clubs and the facilities are not open to all. There are no meaningful open spaces being identified that would be suitable to

accommodate other activities or sports. A group of Countesthorpe residents are currently trying to identify a suitable location for a skatepark facility within walking distance of the village.

The Parish Council objected to an additional access onto Winchester Road as part of the planning application for the Blaby Golf Club which ultimately resulted in an access only being provided via Lutterworth Road. This is evidence that Winchester Road cannot accommodate additional vehicle access.

#### **Policy H1F: Land South of Maurice Drive and Gillam Butts.**

With this site and the site identified in Policy H1G: Land West of Peatling Road, it is proposed that the sites will be connected by a road which will pass through from Willoughby Road to Peatling Road. There is no evidence in the Local Plan to show improvements to infrastructure for the movement of vehicles once they reach Willoughby Road and Winchester Road. There is no mention in this Policy CC4 with the potential for there to be a wind turbine farm on land to the south of this site.

#### **Policy H1G Land West of Peatling Road.**

Infrastructure Deficiencies: the infrastructure constraints identified in the speculative application phase, ie inadequate off-site highway infrastructure, with the vehicles accessing the site having to negotiate either the narrow and winding Peatling Road/Main Street or Willoughby Road. There has been no commitment shown by the developer, the District Council or Highways, to respond to acknowledge the impact that the Peatling Road development will have on the east of village, including at the already complex one-way system at The Square.

The inclusion of these sites fails the test of soundness because the existing highway network lacks the capacity to safely accommodate the projected traffic increase. The National Planning Policy Framework requires development to be refused if the cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The draft plan fails to identify or secure the necessary strategic highway infrastructure modifications required to mitigate the adverse impacts of these sites on the existing community of Countesthorpe.

Without a deliverable infrastructure improvement plan (there is no indication in the Local Plan that there is to be supportive highway infrastructure and the Parish Council has continually stressed that the proposed works by the development off Willoughby Road are totally inadequate to resolve the issues at the Cosby Road/Winchester Road/Willoughby Road junction

The Parish Council has already expressed its objection to the development of this site due to the loss of countryside and restricted vehicular access via the narrow and winding Peatling Road and Main Street. Overall with the development of these sites, it is the Parish Council's opinion that the process for the Local Plan has been reactive to speculative applications as a result of not having an up to date Local Plan, rather than proactive and selecting the most suitable sites, and therefore these sites have been selected that are not suitable.

The District Council itself refused an application for a single dwelling in this area due to it being within 'open countryside', yet this area is now being described as scrubland.

#### **OUTCOME REQUIRED**

As per the Parish Council's objection to Peatling Road, the application not to be approved due to the lack of supporting 'off-site' highway infrastructure, resulting in adverse impact on the existing Peatling Road and Willoughby Road.

## CHAPTER 7 – HEALTH AND WELL BEING

### COMMENTS

**Policy HW2: Open Space, Sport and Recreation** As the following sites identified for development in the Local Plan have already been submitted, the Parish Council has already identified that the applications for approval have included a number of dwellings that means that inadequate levels of land for open space is being provided, and the cumulative effect of the developments is not being taken into account. The Gillam Butts site (Planning Application Number 24/0004/FUL) has currently not provided any open space. Financial Contributions are being made to existing commercial football facilities and not general fitness and walking facilities and limited provision for open space. Areas of open space within the site are being used to accommodate the SUDs schemes.

In the Open Space Provision Table on Page 224 of the draft Blaby Local Plan Regulations 19 document, Countesthorpe has a proportionately lower accessibility to green space against other parishes, which reiterates the rate of loss of open space in the village due to developments and a lack of meaningful open spaces be secured from smaller developments.

### **Policy HW3: Ground Conditions, Pollution and Health.**

The Parish Council is aware that local residents claim that there are areas within the proposed Whetstone Pastures site where Anthrax diseased cattle were disposed of. As there is no evident official record of this, the Parish Council would seek assurances that relevant sampling from across the site are carried out an early stage in the Local Plan process.

### OUTCOME REQUIRED

Contributions to be sourced for meaningful health and leisure facilities for the areas taking the additional development, including indoor sports facilities. Which would be central to the larger villages that are proposed to expect the highest level of housing provision, such as Countesthorpe, Blaby and Whetstone.

## CHAPTER 9 – RETAIL, LEISURE AND TOURISM

### COMMENTS

**Policy R4:- Neighbourhood Parades.** The Parish Council notes that The Bank has not been included in the list of current Neighbourhood Parades. It also notes that the Policy relates to the protection of the existing Parades, however, there is no policy for the creation of new parades to support expanding communities.

### OUTCOME REQUIRED

To include The Bank within the list of Parades in the district

That there be consideration to take into account the lack of off-road parking within the centre of Countesthorpe, where currently the parking restrictions are being violated resulting in hazardous parking due to the fact that there is insufficient public parking to accommodate a

village increasing in population and new residents more likely to travel by car to reach local facilities, schools etc.

## CHAPTER 10 – INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

### COMMENTS

**Policy INF1: Developer Contributions.** It is the Parish Council's view that the reliance on developer contributions for the local highway improvements is a) resulting in the allocation of sites to meet the needs of Highways improvements, and b) accounting for the majority of the developer contribution from developments, therefore with limited allocations for example open spaces.

The Parish Council notes that any infrastructure provision is reliant on parties other than the District Council, and would therefore question the statements in the draft plan that existing communities will be protected from the harmful effects of pollution, including air, noise, contaminated land and light (Item 16. of the Blaby Local Plan – Regulation 19 proposed submission)

The Parish Council has frequently raised concerns for the need for highway improvements at the junction of Cosby Road with Lutterworth Road, a one-way system to be introduced to Hill Lane, extending the 30mph speed limit on Foston Road and an improved pedestrian crossing at Foston Road. The Parish Council does not therefore consider that the plan demonstrates the required soundness regarding infrastructure delivery as there are no concrete commitments to providing improvements to mitigate the impact of the new developments.

The Parish Council welcomes that the District Council acknowledges from previous consultations that there are concerns about what development will have on the local road network, and capacity of schools and healthcare, need for open spaces and local shops. It welcomes the role of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to identify needed infrastructure and the cumulative impact of developments, however, the Parish Council does not consider that by approving smaller developments that sufficient developer funding can be secured.

The Parish Council questions paragraph 10.4 with regard to the provision of Utilities – water supply and sewage treatment as there is currently no guaranteed provision currently and also a lack of transparency that would give reassurances to local residents that their properties and the village will not be affected by flooding.

**Policy INF2: Community Facilities.** The Parish Council does not consider elements of the Plan to be achievable:-

The Parish Council considers the policy to be vague in terms of the provision of new facilities. As previously stated by the Parish Council, the cumulative effect of new developments are not being taken into account and therefore the opportunity for new facilities is being evaded.

Whilst the Parish Council welcomes the proposal for developers to contribute to new community facilities, it considers that this would be unlikely as developers are having to contribute to highways improvements. Also, with smaller developments which tag on to

existing settlements, it is unlikely that any contributions will be obtained to improve existing or provide new facilities.

**Policy INF4: Sustainable Travel in New Developments.** There are sites identified in the Local Plan that the Parish Council has already objected to on the basis of the unacceptable adverse impact upon local amenity and highway safety.

#### **OUTCOME REQUIRED**

For meaningful consultation to take place with communities on their needs and early indication as to what development contributions are going to be sought, on not rely solely on the recommendations of the District Council's own departments, such as the Health and Leisure Team.

For the District Council to expediate the introduction of its Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document which was reviewed in 2024.

Improved assessment for need for services and infrastructure to support additional development appropriately and not sacrificed for solely the provision of highways. However, any contributions towards highway networks to be secured for meaningful works to reduce impact on the existing network, as specified in the Parish Council's response. For example, improvements to the Countesthorpe Road/Lutterworth Road junction with traffic light system; a safe pedestrian crossing at Foston Road; extensions of speed limit reductions at the main entrances to the village to reduce to a 30mph.

Clarity and commitment on leisure and health facilities to support additional housing as this is currently vague and does not explain how the parties will be working together.

Commitment with regard to the inclusion of the provision of improved utilities, in particular water supply and sewage treatment which is currently not provided as part of existing planning approvals.