



Miss Joanne Leech
Parish Council Manager
Countesthorpe Parish Council
(sent via email)

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

08.05.24

Dear Joanne,

Thank you for your email regarding the concerns that the parish council and residents have regarding the proposed developments and concerns about Blaby District Council local plan.

I understand these concerns and have always maintained the position that any housing development, must be appropriate which means it comes with the infrastructure support, that would enable the development to reduce the pressure on the local infrastructure, whilst developments that don't provide that infrastructure support would be inappropriate.

However, as planning is a devolved matter, it is up to the District Council and consequently the planning committee to approve or reject any planning applications that aren't in accordance with the local plan, NPPF and subsequent policies at Blaby District.

I understand that Countesthorpe has had its fair share of new housing development over the years and has even exceeded the number of houses that the village was required to take under the previous local plan, and one could argue that this would be a material consideration against any future development.

As you would be aware that planning authorities such as Blaby District Council are required to have a up to date local plan and a five-year housing land supply. Blaby District Council is currently going through the process to produce an up-to-date local plan as the original one was adopted back in 2013 which became the district up to 2029.

I understand that the process to produce a up to date local plan started in 2019, when the council started the process of calling for sites to be included in the new up-to-date local plan and this was subsequently followed by additional reports in 2021. However, I am aware that the pandemic is pushed the timetable back to what was originally envisioned and that the new local plan will be put to the inspector within the next 12 to 15 months and will cover the years 2026 to 2041.

Additionally, I understand the residents of Countesthorpe and propose Council concerns that the current local plan doesn't carry sufficient weight as it is becoming out of date and due to be replaced by an update local plan in the next couple years. I understand that the current local plan still carries weight when looking at applications and making decisions, however, that the new local plan develops the current local plan becomes less important.

The sites that have been proposed for development, include one that was successfully refused by the planning inspector thanks to the efforts of District Councillors and the tenacious work of residents. Given that Blaby District Council, currently doesn't have a five-year land supply is potentially the main reason why these applications have been submitted, including the Foston road application which was refused by the planning inspector.

Whilst the NPPF does give presumption in favour of development where a council doesn't have a five-year land supply or an up to date local plan. However, this does not include that provided there are strong material considerations that can outweigh any presumption in favour of development that the proposed applications can't be rejected.

As Blaby District Council does have a local plan and is going through the process of producing a up-to-date local plan that is the five year land supply that would be one of the key issues to find strong material considerations to challenge that part of the NPPF.

Whilst I note that Countesthorpe Parish Council is aware of the need that some housing development will need to be taken in the future, it is important as I outlined at the start that it comes with the infrastructure support and most crucially the support of residents.

I would like to add that I am of the view that the development of Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs), like New Lubbethorpe is one of the ways forward as this will enable the infrastructure to be put in and help reduce the risk of bolt-on developments in villages such as Countesthorpe.

Furthermore, Leicester City must expand upwards as well, by developing residential properties in similar vein to the height of student properties and a classic example of this is the Wulcomb development next to John Lewis car park in which people can rent out studio, one bed, two bed apartments and in some cities, this could also include three beds apartments.

I would like to thank you for getting touch on what is a important issue for the parish council and residents of Countesthorpe and I will continue to raise these matters with the relevant ministers to ensure that those areas that can take development should do.

Yours sincerely,



Alberto Costa MP

Member of Parliament for South Leicestershire

pp. David Findlay

Senior Constituency Assistant to Alberto Costa MP