

Appleby Environment Factsheet

Understanding more about the Local Plan Policy and how it affects Appleby

THE LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

What is the Local Plan?

In terms of planning the Local Plan comes in between [National Planning Policy](#) and the day to day decisions that are made by District Councillors about individual planning applications. The Local Plan has to be consistent with National Policy but reflects local needs and priorities. It will also designate which land is to be made available for housing, retail and employment. Its policies are used to judge individual applications made by those wishing to develop – and they also provide the basis on which objectors can make their arguments. Local Plans are in place for a relatively long time – this plan is intended to guide practice until 2031.

Why are the District Council consulting on this now?

The previous Local Plan ran until 2006 and since then there has been no plan in place for NW Leics. The Council were developing a replacement plan and that went out for consultation. But at the next stage (submission to an independent inspector) they were forced to withdraw it and rework it. This is why the plan is so out of date and why so many applications have been passed in recent years.

This new [Draft Local Plan](#) has been developed by officers and councillors with input from external consultants. [Consulting on the draft](#) is part of the process of getting the plan adopted.

How will my views be taken into account?

This is not the final plan. Once the consultation period has closed, officers and councillors will consider the responses (which will include ones from developers and other interested parties as well as from residents). They may make changes to the plan to take account of the comments received. This will lead to a plan which they will submit for approval by a planning inspector prior to adoption. If points made at the consultation stage are not incorporated then they can be raised again with the Inspector. The inspector will also assess whether the plan is in line with national policy. The best opportunity to get changes to the plan is to make an input at this initial consultation stage.

The District Council will analyse the feedback. If a large enough response is received from Appleby residents then hopefully our local concerns will be reflected in the revised version which is expected to be agreed by the Council in March 2016.

What do I need to do to give my views?

The Council prefers you to give your views via their [online form](#). This consists of 62 questions (53 on the plan and a further 9 about you).

Of the 53 question you only need to answer the ones you want to. We have asked the planning officers where we should make comments about the issues we are concerned

about and they have told us Questions 7 & 41. So as a minimum we suggest that you just put your comments there. The four points highlighted on our website and shown on maps on the flyers posted around the village are the ones we consider to be the most relevant and worth commenting upon.

You also need to give them some personal information at 54, 56 & 57. 57 asks the name of your business or organisation. If you are replying as an individual we suggest you put 'resident of Appleby'.

Of course do answer other questions if you want to. It is good to say things you agree with as well as those you disagree with. It maybe that something you find positive (such as allocating most housing to the main settlements in the District rather than to the villages) will be opposed by some housing developers. In that case your support for the policy could be important).

If you don't like online forms you can send your comments as an email or email attachment to planning.policy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk.

Alternatively you can send your comments by post to: Planning Policy; North West Leicestershire District Council; Council Offices; Coalville; Leicestershire LE67 3FJ. We have some forms you can use for sending your comments by post.

Don't forget the deadline is 5 p.m. 30th November 2015.

What else can I do? I feel very strongly about this and would like to get more involved.

Please spread the word by talking to your local friends and neighbours and encourage them to respond to the consultation.

Subscribe to our mailing list (via the [home page](#) of the website) and encourage others to do so. This allows us to let you know what is going on and let you know when there are times when we need your input.

If you would like to become more involved then please do email sonia@applebymagna.org.uk and let us know. We will let you know when we are meeting – or when you can help us with tasks such as leafletting if meetings aren't your thing. We are always keen to encompass fresh views and welcome any help.

PLANNING TERMS WITHIN THE LOCAL PLAN

What is the Settlement Hierarchy (mentioned in Q7)?

The [Settlement Hierarchy](#) (Policy S3 in the plan) describes the order in which housing and other development should be allocated. The plan says that most development should go in the Principal Towns (what is described as the Coalville Urban Area – in practice wider Coalville including places such as Hugglescote & Whitwick); then Key Service Centres (Ashby de la Zouch & Castle Donnington); then Local Service Centres (Ibstock, Kegworth & Measham); then Sustainable Villages (including Appleby); and finally Small Villages and Hamlets (including Snarestone).

The basic approach is that most development should go to the places where there are employment opportunities, shops & other services, and public transport. This is in line with

sustainability principles (trying to ensure that development does not create environmental problems or damage our heritage).

We agree with this basic approach but are not happy about the way in which it is applied to Sustainable Villages and Appleby in particular.

What is a Sustainable Village?

[A 'Sustainable Village'](#) is defined as 'a settlement that has a limited range of services and facilities and so is suitable for a limited amount of growth, including in filling and / or physical extension of the settlement' (see Policy S3).

While Appleby has some services: a primary school, a shop, 2 pubs, a recreation ground ... we know that these are limited. Most residents do their main food shop at one of the supermarkets in Ashby, Swadlincote or Tamworth and have no alternative but to do non-food shopping at one of these centres, if not further afield. We have recently lost our GP surgery and our bus service, already limited, has been further cut so it no longer goes to Ashby. As such residents are very dependent on car travel and those without access to a car (whether they are young or old) are very dependent on others or in risk of becoming isolated). Increased car travel is also bad for the environment.

How many More Houses can we expect?

One of the problems with the previous draft plan was that the housing needs analysis was said not to be up to date. [A new analysis has been carried out](#) of the number of houses needed across the District from 2011-2031. They have then added another number based on expected new jobs in the District in this period.

The total is 10,700 new dwellings. They have looked at houses built or given permission since 2011 and at sites where the District has already decided that they would be prepared to grant permission. This covers most of the land needed. The plan has designated land to cover the rest of the housing need.

The only sites in Appleby are the ones where permission has already been granted: Land off Measham Rd (shown as H1a on the maps) – with permission for 39 houses; and Land off Top St (shown as H1b on the maps) with permission for 29 houses. That makes 68 houses plus various other houses that have been given permission either by the District Council or on appeal, getting close to 100 new houses overall.

So as far as local plan allocations go there are no more that we know about. However there is nothing to stop anyone putting an application in for development in the village and it would need to be judged within the plan policies:

- Applications on land within the limits to development can expect to get permission
- The Plan says that sustainable villages can have some growth 'including infilling and / or physical extension of the settlement'
- Rural Exception Sites for affordable housing

Together these could lead to quite a few new housing ...

What are the 'Limits to Development'?

This is indicated by the red lines on the map. Land outside the red lines is considered as '[countryside](#)' to be protected from development (see Policy S4). Land inside the red lines is broadly considered to be the developed area of the settlement.

There are [two areas in Appleby where the limits to development have been extended](#).

1. On Measham Rd the limits to development around H1a relates to the area where the developers originally tried to get 73 houses approved. They reduced the numbers applied for to 39 on a smaller piece of land. If the limits to development are allowed to stand it is highly likely that another 34 houses will be granted here at some point.
2. On Botts Lane houses that were previously treated as isolated houses outside the limits to development have now been enclosed. This is creating a green space that is outside the limits of development but almost surrounded by development. This makes it more difficult to defend the limits to development on Top Street.

What does Physical Extensions & Infilling mean?

'Infilling' refers to development in spaces within existing areas of development.

'Physical extension to the settlement' means developing in sites next to an area where there is already development. We have seen what this can mean on the East side of Measham Rd whereby permission for development on one field then led to an application for the next field away from the village. This was granted. Obviously this kind of creeping development could go on endlessly as the settlement limits change.

Don't we need more housing – particularly for local people?

The District council have commissioned research to determine how many houses are needed in the District over the plan period (to 2031). They have decided where they should go to ensure that sustainability criteria are also met. Each approved site is supposed to have a proportion of 'affordable' housing (Policy H4) – in the case of the Appleby 30% of all sites with 11 or more houses.

There is an additional policy called Rural Exception Sites (Policy H5) which allows housing permission to be granted outside the limits to development if there is a demonstrable local need. There is additional provision for market housing on such sites if this is needed to make the project viable.

We think this policy is very problematic for villages like Appleby which has already had a lot of housing provided (including a recent Rural Exception Site). The sites with permission should include houses suitable for local people rather than saying we need yet more housing sites.

What are 'Local Green Spaces'? Why aren't the District Council identifying areas in the plan for this designation?

['Local Green Space'](#) is a designation set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. It says there that this label can be given to green space valued by local people. They provide special protection against development. The designation can be made as part of a local plan or through a neighbourhood plan.

In the draft Local Plan the District Council say that they do not intend to designate any areas, proposing instead that this is left to local people constructing Neighbourhood Plans. In the previous Local Plan there was a policy called 'Sensitive Areas' which offered similar protection. This is no longer a plan policy.

We believe that there are areas identified in the Village Design Statement as important to the character of Appleby (in particular, fields coming in to the historic heart of the village) which deserve this protection. This has been recognised by the District Council and so it is

right that they should designate them in this new Plan. They would also need to develop policies to link to the planning framework for such spaces.

Neighbourhood plans are a long process with uncertain outcomes. So while Appleby residents may want to go down that route we think it is important that this status is established within the Local Plan.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

What about the Village Design Statement?

The Appleby Magna [Village Design Statement](#) was produced by local people and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance under the last Local Plan. For the VDS to continue to be valid it would need to be consistent with the new Plan Policies. We think this could still be a viable way to express the characteristics of the village that have been identified as important.

A more common way to express local views about local development now is called [Neighbourhood Plan](#) and it was introduced under The Localism Act 2011. These require a lot of work to prepare, need to identify plans for development, and have to be approved by a vote of all local residents. If this is passed then the plan has strong status within the planning framework.

... and the Village Green?

Under the old Local Plan the two corners of this field (between Church St & Bowley's Lane and between Church Street and Rectory Lane) were 'sensitive sites'. This protection is no longer available.

An application was made in 2013 by local residents supported by Appleby Environment to have this field declared a Village Green. You can read more about this on our [Village Green page](#). We had a lot of support and established most of the criteria – however unfortunately we were not successful ultimately. This was not any reflection on the use we claimed local people made of this field. It was more about the legal tests for the type of use needed to establish a Village Green.

This leaves this field unprotected in the draft Local Plan – other than the protection accorded to it through its formal status as 'countryside'. This is why we think it should be designated as a Local Green Space. The failure to achieve a 'village green' has no implications for this claim.

Who can I contact if I have any further questions?

Our contact details are on our website www.applebyenvironment.co.uk.

Don't forget that responses to the consultation need to be received by the District Council by 5pm on 30th November 2015