

April 2019 Hearing Statement for MDC's Local Plan Examination in Public

Main Matter 3 – Whether or not the plan will secure high quality sustainable design and safeguard and enhance the District's landscape character, natural and historic environment

MAIN MATTER 3 - QUESTIONS 10 & 14 - BACKGROUND:

1. Questions 10 and 14 fall within the issue: *"Are other environment policies soundly based and justified by the evidence? (Policies NE1 – NE4, HE1 – HE2)"*
2. Question 10 asks: *"How would any net gain in biodiversity sought through Policy NE2 be secured, measured and monitored?"*
3. Question 14 asks: *"Overall, is the plan's strategy to secure high quality design and safeguard landscape character and the natural and historic environment positively prepared and are any main modifications necessary for soundness?"*
4. The third principle raised by Labour's Publication Draft submission is relevant to the Mansfield Constituency Labour Party's response to Questions 10 and 14.
5. The third principle set out in Labour's Publication Draft submission – summarised by MDC in **PD/74** (paragraph 1.6) and **PD/100** (Policy S5, development in the countryside) – was that: *"It is vital to protect and enhance the environment, and more needs to be done to ensure that the Plan actually delivers net gains for nature and makes Mansfield a better place for people to live and work. This can support sustainable green tourism, making the most of Mansfield's location at the heart of historic Sherwood Forest."*
6. As noted in our Publication Draft Submission, policies relevant to our third principle include: **IN2** (Green infrastructure); **NE1** (Protection and enhancement of landscape character); **NE2** (Biodiversity and geodiversity); **HE1** (Historic environment); **IN6** (Designated local green space); **CC4** (River and waterbody corridors); and **S5** (Development in the countryside).
7. As noted at Paragraph 10.9 of the Publication Draft: *"The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stresses that pursuing sustainable development includes the conservation and enhancement [of] the natural environment (paragraphs 7, 9 and 17) and moving from a net loss to achieving net gains for biodiversity (paragraph 109)."*
8. Mansfield District Council's response to **PD/100** was that: *"The Local Plan needs to be read as a whole and policy NE2 covers net gains for biodiversity, policy S5 allows for tourism and recreation uses within the open countryside."*

MAIN MATTER 3 - QUESTION 10 & 14 - COMMENTS:

9. The Local Plan needs to protect our beautiful green spaces, support our parks, and promote Community Allotments and Community Orchards across the district.
10. In response to Questions 10 and 14 of Main Matter 3, the Mansfield Constituency Labour Party takes the position that, in practice, Policy NE2 might not secure net gains in biodiversity and that overall the plan is not 'positively prepared' because it does not ensure that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
11. Simply put, the policies are not worded strongly enough to ensure that development is sustainable and delivers net gains in biodiversity and provides other needed environmental improvements.
12. MDC's response that **Policy NE2** "*covers net gains for biodiversity*" is a far cry from a convincing case that **Policy NE2** would actually deliver net gains for nature.
13. One element of the 'Aspiration for Growth to 2033' set out in the Publication Draft is that: *"The natural assets in the district will have been protected and enhanced to help shape new places to live, increase biodiversity, and improve connectivity to benefit wildlife and the health and wellbeing of the district's residents. Our heritage assets and their settings will have been conserved and enhanced to maintain their important contributions to creating a sense of place and also delivering the regeneration of the district."*
14. As such, in addition to failing to meet the aspirations set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Plan fails to ensure that it will live up to its own stated aspirations.
15. Based on the above, the Mansfield Constituency Labour Party maintain that more needs to be done to ensure that the Local Plan is fit for purpose with respect to the issues raised within the third principle set out in our Publication Draft submission.