



**Castle Donington
Parish Council**

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

CASTLE DONINGTON PARISH COUNCIL - COMMENTS

16 MARCH 2024

1.0 Settlement Hierarchy, Key Service Centres (S2) and Housing

Castle Donington and Ashby de la Zouch are both categorised as Key Service Centres.

They are, however, clearly and fundamentally different by any reasonable measure.

Ashby de la Zouch has a much more developed range and quality of services and facilities. This is demonstrated by the fact that the local population of Castle Donington regularly visit Ashby de la Zouch to make use of its facilities. It is unlikely that this is reciprocated.

The retail and leisure offering that Ashby de la Zouch benefits from is far superior to that of Castle Donington. Ashby de la Zouch has retail parks, large established 'one-stop' supermarkets, discount food stores, DIY outlets, a B&M warehouse etc. It also has a large, by comparison, and accessible town centre retail area with numerous branded and independent shops.

Castle Donington has a large format Coop convenience store and a discount food store. It does not have a town centre area, and only has a small village centre with a handful of independent shops and very limited parking. The village centre has not grown in line with the residential development because it cannot do so. It is physically restrained, as well as being within a Conservation Area. To expand, would change the character of the location and have a negative impact. There is no leisure centre in Castle Donington and dated medical infrastructure that cannot meet the current demand placed on it.

Castle Donington is very different to Ashby de la Zouch and planning policy decisions should take that into material consideration rather than liken the two as Key Service Centres without further detailed analysis. They are incomparable.

The report to the Local Plan Committee (Nov 2023, section 4.43) notes that whether land should be allocated for housing at Castle Donington or Ashby de la Zouch is 'finely balanced'. Given the fundamental difference between the two Key Service Centres, the headlines of which are noted above, this assertion of a 'fine balance' is potentially misleading. The spirit

of that section of the same report is that Ashby de la Zouch is already getting more houses and that therefore Castle Donington should take its share to bring similarity in housing growth – in other words, to take its fair share. The taking of a fair share is not a commonly known planning policy. This assertion does not account for the fundamental differences in infrastructure. The reality is that the infrastructure status quo of Ashby de la Zouch can *already cope* with further development with no significant change, whereas Castle Donington simply *cannot cope now and is restrained* in what increased infrastructure could be achieved to support in the future. Returning to the fair share concept, to achieve a fair share of draw on available resources and infrastructure then it is Ashby de la Zouch that can reasonably absorb far more housing development than Castle Donington.

The difference between Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington is further tangibly demonstrated by the level of support received from NWLDC. Ashby de la Zouch has a Town Centre Manager, assistance with events, a purple flag scheme etc. Castle Donington does not.

With further employment and industrial development around Castle Donington, and the potential Freeport and new settlement, there would be Highways benefits to additional new housing in Ashby de la Zouch and not Castle Donington. There is already significant strain on the road network around the airport and Castle Donington. The Relief Road has helped but has become very busy already due to an overall net increase of traffic and was not designed for the volume or type of traffic that now uses it.

Section 4.38 of the same report to the Local Plan Committee essentially presents a choice between land South of Ashby de la Zouch and land West of Castle Donington for housing. It is the view of Castle Donington Parish Council that, with respect to this choice, Ashby de la Zouch should receive a *significantly* higher allocation.

1.1 General points regarding proposals to increase housing provision in Castle Donington:

- Secondary schools would need improvements – size, services, equipment provision.
- There is no leisure centre in Castle Donington meaning the nearest sports facilities would be in Coalville or Ashby de la Zouch.
- The existing historic *village centre* already cannot cope.
- The existing medical facilities already cannot cope.
- Open space, sport and recreation is well utilised and will soon be at capacity.
- Community facilities like the village hall, the community hub etc. are well utilised and will soon be at capacity.
- Housing provision needs to reflect the community needs – the elderly (Castle Donington has a high proportion of elderly) and affordability for local workers.

2.0 Neighbourhood Plans

It is noted in para 4.46 of the Draft Local Plan Proposed Housing and Employment Allocations document that Ashby's extant 2018 Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for housing and that the new NWLDC will seek to allocate housing regardless of the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, with respect to residential housing, the existence of a Neighbourhood Plan seems to be regarded as irrelevant. It follows that Castle Donington should not be treated in any way unfavourably by not having a Neighbourhood Plan.

3.0 Isley Woodhouse (IW1)

Castle Donington Parish Council supports the concept of a new settlement to take as much of the housing allocation as possible in order to reduce the burden on Castle Donington and other areas. It is hoped that a new settlement would also have sufficient infrastructure and connectivity to be self-supporting. This will also reduce the traffic burden on Castle Donington.

Whether Isley Woodhouse is the right location for a new settlement is a moot point.

If this is the new location for a new settlement, it should be just that, a properly supported new settlement, perhaps in the style of Poundbury, Dorset. It would be preferable that the 4,500 homes are expedited on this land to increase the allocation from 1,900 and reduce the allocation elsewhere.

4.0 Land North and South of Park Lane (CD10)

A new settlement or land at the far superior Key Service Centre of Ashby de la Zouch, and indeed other sites, should be pursued for housing allocation before this site is considered.

The current scheme is nowhere near completion and there is insufficient local infrastructure to support further residential development off Park Lane. The type of housing that has hitherto been constructed does not meet local needs because employees of large local employers cannot afford new houses in Castle Donington. This means that there is an inflow and an outflow of workers every day. This is unsustainable for local roads and against the spirit of housing provision and environmental factors.

The existence of the Relief Road would create more dormitory style living as this site would essentially be an isolated estate of houses, be disjointed and fail to promote community cohesion.

5.0 Other New Settlement

Castle Donington generally supports the concept of a new settlement when compared to residential or other expansion of Castle Donington or other areas.

6.0 Land West of Hilltop Farm, Castle Donington (EMP89)

There is no requirement for further development of this land.

7.0 Limits to Development

Castle Donington Parish Council feels there is no requirement to increase the limits of development although does not object to the proposed LtD/CD/01 proposal in isolation.

It is also noted that the proposed change of LtD/CD/02 is undesirable but is preferable to the current planning application (23/00883/FULM) for an adjacent site off Hill Top (please see Castle Donington Parish Council comments on this application. Hill Top is not suitable for this kind of development. Planning Policy comments already note that need is not demonstrated.

7.1 The following points should also be considered with respect to limits to development:

- The local farming and agricultural land is thought to be classed as high quality meaning limits should be retained.
- A meaningful area of separation is required between development and Kings Mills.
- Sewers and drainage systems already cannot cope, surface water should not increase and the rate of run off from green fields should be reduced.
- The Relief Road was not designed to take the amount of HGVs or general traffic that further development will create.

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Castle Donington Parish Council**