

Hathern Public Meeting

Workshop notes

Hathern Community Centre 10th November 2008

(Attendance 160)

This report provides a summary of the key issues raised by members of the public at Hathern Community Centre as part of the further consultation on the Core Strategy. No workshop exercise was run at this event due to the numbers of participants who attended. The views expressed are those of the participants and are not necessarily shared by the Council.

Q How is Affordable Housing defined? And why aren't some of the many vacant properties used to meet some affordable housing needs?

A *For each SUE 30% of new housing would be affordable, that is housing to rent, shared ownership properties or low cost market housing. More detailed work would be needed to identify the exact mix.. At the village level the Core Strategy proposes Hathern is downgraded from a Service Centre to an Other Settlement. This would mean the only housing allowed would be developments of up to 9 affordable units to meet a proven local need. Vacant properties could be used but funds are unlikely to be available to purchase them.*

Q Why not use Brownfield before Greenfield land? There is 155ha of brownfield land at Wymeswold Airfield which would accommodate 6,000 houses and has willing sellers?

A *For Brownfield locations to be suitable for development they have to pass key tests of sustainability. The Core Strategy's urban concentration strategy locates development in the most sustainable locations adjoining existing urban areas. Wymeswold Airfield is remote, difficult to serve by public transport and requires very expensive new road infrastructure that would pass through Soar valley floodplain.*

Q Has sufficient attention been given to flooding problem of Blackbrook?

A *Any development west of Loughborough would have to take account of flooding issues re: the Black Brook corridor. This area is kept free of development. Mitigation measures would be developed as part of detailed masterplanning.*

Q What is the value of Garendon Park & Garden that makes it so important? If it is so important how can you propose building a road through the park?

A *It is of national importance as a registered Historic Park and garden and contains a number of listed buildings some of Grade I importance. The proposals are for a new link road at the very edge of the park located to minimise harm to the park and*

listed buildings. It would be immediately adjacent to the M1 corridor itself a very significant feature. It could be that without this link road providing access from the A512 the West Loughborough SUE might not be feasible.

Q As Garendon Park has not been looked after perhaps it is of less value than it was. Is there an option to build on the Park and have a new park to the north with better links to the countryside?

A Re-emphasised national importance of the Park and the potential to reinstate it to its former glory and safeguard its future with added benefits of public access.

Q Can there be greater policing? People want a safe community for their children in the village.

A Properly planned new developments should not result in additional crime problems. Levels of local policing are a matter for the Constabulary having regard to available resources..

Q The proposals do not seem to take account of the potential of rail corridors – they seem to be based on roads not trains, Why not take advantage of accessibility to town’s rail station?

A Census figures show rail use is a small amount of total travel. Past experience from locating housing development at Barrow and Syston suggests no real changes in rail use. In addition there is unlikely to be sufficient capacity on train services at Loughborough to accommodate extra demand at peak times. The main emphasis is on developing high quality access by bus. Bus based solutions offer much more flexibility than rail based solutions..

Q What is the current situation with the proposed Dishley Grange employment land extension?

A A planning application is currently being considered for a much smaller development than that envisaged in the Local Plan 10 years ago. The developable area has been reduced by about two thirds and the amount of new roads is much less because of the increased importance of minimising flood risk.

Q What sort of employment provision is envisaged as part of the SUE and Science Park?

A Offices, light industrial/small warehouses with only blue chip research and development in Science Park.

Q The west Loughborough option will add significant traffic onto A6. This will disadvantage other users; how can the impact be mitigated? The County Council support an eastern growth option which they see as better in terms of transport issues and able to provide an eastern relief road.

A *Wherever an SUE is located it is likely to generate significant traffic. Levels of traffic can be contained by putting development in locations that reduce the need to travel and that can be well served by public transport walking and cycling. The west Loughborough option seems well placed in terms of these issues. In addition a new link road between the A6 and A512 would help distribute traffic including directly on and off the M1 Motorway. However, much more also needs to be done to reduce current high levels of car use.*

The County Council continue to pursue a scheme that was not supported by the Panel considering the draft Regional Plan. Concerns remain that this is not a sustainable solution; that the road would be very expensive relative to the benefits it would bring; and may not be achievable because parts of the route run through floodplain.

Q. How can anyone comment on the proposal without more detail about levels of traffic, roads and transport provision? It is known that the A6 is already congested and the development will generate lots of traffic (figures quoted of 7.2 vehicle movements per day x 3,500; ½ on Ashby Road, ½ on A6 - 12,000 onto A6). Much additional traffic would travel northbound through Hathern towards M1 J24 rather than to J23.

A *At this stage of considering growth options it is not realistic to expect detailed information about the final transport provision to be provided. The broad assessments of transport issues undertaken suggest there will be significant traffic implications wherever an SUE is located. The forecast traffic impact will depend on the variables used in modelling work. The SUEs will not come forward for some time and wider changes in circumstances could change the nature of transport solutions. Details will emerge as part of the masterplanning for the locations chosen.*

Q What type of houses would be provided?

A *There would be a mix of family accommodation, affordable housing, provision for older persons and some flats.*

Q How can a West Loughborough SUE be more deliverable than an eastern option?

A *Initial estimates suggest that the cost of transport infrastructure to serve this development is less than a third of the cost of an equivalent scale East Loughborough option. It would be much cheaper and easier to build a western bypass than an eastern bypass. Both would have significant adverse environmental implications.*

Q Where will the proposed site for gypsies, travellers and showpeople be located in the SUE?

A *There would be between 5-10 pitches each for permanent residents and transient people. At this stage there is no particular location. That would be a matter for consideration as part of masterplanning of the site.*

Q How do you propose to protect settlement identity? Residents of Hathern feel threatened by large scale development coming so near the village.

A The importance of safeguarding the identity of settlements is recognised and the SUE would be located and designed to help achieve this.

Q The proposals suggest there would be 2 new primary schools in the SUE – Local people ‘feel Hathern School under threat - it is the heart of the community.

A The new schools would serve the new development only – there is no intention to take children from Hathern. Catchment areas for schools are matter for the County Council to consider

Q This plan is vague - not sure of size or what’s there. There are not enough facts to tell us at this stage.

A Symptomatic of where we are at this stage. We are consulting on the officers preferred by officers after considering all the available evidence - please pick holes and tell us what’ wrong, how they could be improved or what might be better.

Q What will happen to the farm I work and the house I live in which is shown in the proposed SUE area?

A It is unfortunate that the farming community has to be directly affected by planning proposals but it is unavoidable in planning on such a large scale. The future of farms and properties is a matter for tenant and landlord.

Q What scale of housing is needed for a new secondary school to be sustainable?

A The West Loughborough option does not include a new secondary school as it is close to existing secondary education with spare capacity. 4,850 dwellings would justify a new secondary school.

Q Could you make 2 smaller development sites at Woodthorpe and another at Garendon south? Or spread around more villages?

A Although having two SUEs is an option we feel this would be less viable and would not deliver the full range of community and infrastructure benefits achievable from one large SUE.

Spreading development around is an option but Villages would be less sustainable locations than urban concentration and there would be less opportunity to deliver significant benefits.

Q Might the number of houses needed be reduced if more development were provided at Nottingham, or in an Eco Town at Kingston?

A *No. The Regional Plan requires 19000 dwellings overall in Charnwood of which 10,000 still need to be found. These must be provided.*

Q Development West of Shepshed is more appealing. It seems cheaper in terms of, for example, viability and access to the motorway

A *This option has been considered but is not a preferred option. Whilst it could bring benefits to Shepshed and seems viable it would be more remote from Loughborough. There could be a significant Impact on Charnwood Forest. Also takes more Grade 2 Agricultural land. All in all it does not perform as well as the preferred option.*

Q Have you consulted with other authorities and taken account of other things planned? eg At the Airport, Long Whatton/ Shepshed golf course, Shepshed waste disposal facility, M1 widening.

A *Yes. There has been consultation with neighbouring authorities and in compiling the evidence base consideration is given to a wide range of issues that might influence selection of a preferred option.*

Q What feedback/issues have come from other workshops/areas?

A *The responses vary with the local issues in any given location. Events have mainly been held in locations where development is proposed. There has therefore been a lot of opposition. There are general concerns about the scale of development, transport issues, loss of green field land etc*

Q Why is Hathern's identity less valuable than Quorn's identity? We have landscape value and wildlife too.

A *In identifying potential locations for development the need to safeguard the identity of settlements has been an important consideration. In terms of wildlife habitats west of Loughborough does not have areas of interest as significant as other areas considered.*

Q If West Loughborough is not suitable - what is the alternative? What is Plan B?

A *There is no Plan B. The preferred options have been chosen after considering a whole range of issues. If this are not carried forward there will need to be a further assessment of alternatives. This consultation helps gather views of public and stakeholders, to be assessed and reported to Councillors. If Councillors decide against West Loughborough we would need to re-consider.*

Q When does the Plan move forward to next stages?

- A *By early 2009. In June/July 2009 we should be in a position to identify the preferred option for inclusion in the Submission document. This document will be subject to examination by an independent inspector to establish whether it is soundly based.*
- Q Why does the report say that Maxwell Drive area is deprived?**
- A *Deprivation statistics relate to Census output areas which are quite large - Maxwell Drive is in the same area as more deprived areas around Keats Way, Storer Road area.*
- Q What about dispersing new development around the existing villages?**
- A *This was considered but would not conform with the overarching urban concentration strategy. There is some allowance for development in a few of the settlements acting as local service centres where this might help resolve local issues. Please write to us setting out reasons why you think dispersal is better.*
- Q At Shepshed Watermill road traffic often queues to gain access to the tip entrance. There is lots of wildlife recorded by the Blackbrook (heron, kingfishers, crayfish etc) which would be destroyed if west Loughborough goes ahead.**
- A *In masterplanning any SUE, careful consideration would be given to developed mitigation measures to ensure important wildlife interest are retained or relocated.*
- Q Can you comment on Government housing building requirements? - is it based on reality?**
- A *Government figures are fixed and we must accept them as set out in the Regional Plan.*
- Q We want no harm to Hathern. How far would Loughborough extend towards Hathern?**
- A *The intention is to safeguard the identity of Hathern as a separate village.*
- Q What about flooding of River Soar between Sutton Bonington and Rothley?**
- A *The Environment Agency aim is to restrict any development in floodplains and to ensure sustainable drainage practices are adopted.*
- Q Complaint about consultation process. It's unfair not to allow meetings for all. There have been no events at Cotes, Hoton and Wymeswold. A copy of the Core Strategy should be given to everyone to enable them to respond properly.**

A *All households in Borough were sent a postcard with dates and venues of exhibitions and events. It is not feasible to hold meetings in all settlements. The focus has been on those areas most affected by preferred options. An extra exhibition arranged with Burton on Wolds Parish Council. A Core Strategy document costs about £10 to produce. It would be too expensive to provide free copies. The document is available at libraries and on-line.*

Q I am a Shepshed resident. What is happening about the Golf course and 400 bed hotel planning application? What will happen to the field between me and the Golf course?

A *Application is currently being considered. Although cannot be specific with regard to your property the aim would be to ensure amenities of existing residents is safeguarded.*

Representative of the Parish Council made the point that the Borough Councillors were absent. Hathern Parish Council strongly opposed the west Loughborough Preferred Option. It is important ALL residents respond by letter or web. Hathern Parish Council will send out information to help people make comments.