From: [redacted]
Sent: 22 August 2021 19:28
To: localplans@charnwood.gov.uk
Subject: Response to Local Plan Consultation
Attachments: Response to CBC Pre-Submission Local Plan.docx

Attached is my response to the Local Plan Consultation. Please acknowledge receipt.

Regards, David Cannon

RESPONSE TO THE CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT 2021-2037

This is my response as a resident of East Goscote to the Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft as part of the consultation ending 23rd August 2021. There are other responses from my Parish Council and the Keep East Goscote Green (KEGG) group all of which I support but will not repeat them here. These are my main concerns as an ordinary resident.

GROWTH

Allocation of housing to the three Other Settlements of East Goscote, Queniborough and Rearsby

425 houses have been allocated to these three small villages, 223 to East Goscote alone. This appears to be over 50% of the total homes allocated to small villages (815). As Other Settlements these villages only have "some of the services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents". For example in terms of general retail, East Goscote only has a small convenience store, chemist and newsagent all with limited opening hours. The information regarding a village GP practice is well out of date, having closed in 2019. I trust that the rest of the research on which these decisions are made is of a higher standard. Queniborough and Rearsby are even less well provided. And yet these three villages appear to be treated as a Service Centre. This will force new and existing residents to predominantly use private transport which directly conflicts with the environmental aims of the plan.

The scale of the allocation in this area also raises concerns about flooding. This is a regular occurrence on Broome Lane and also affects the Queniborough Brook. There are numerous new developments near Melton all of which impact the River Wreake, the cause of Broome the Lane flooding.

Areas of Local Separation

The HA64 and HA65 allocations reduce the separation between Queniborough and East Goscote to an even narrower strip than that which resulted in the recent Three Ways Farm development being refused by CBC on the grounds of ALS. A similar situation occurs between East Goscote and Rearsby with regard to HA60 and HA66 which reduces an already limited ALS conflicting with your policy EV3. The separate identity and character of these three villages are highly valued by their residents, voters and Council Tax payers.

The Land Comprising HA 60

I will not repeat my concerns with regard to the previous and current applications from Gladman Land which is the subject of a separate exercise. However, it does disappoint me that, having spent a huge amount of CBC resources and Council Tax payers' money in fighting the previous application through a public enquiry, the same area of land and almost the same number of houses appears in this Local Plan.

The existence of a WWII landfill site within the area of HA60 and very close to existing occupied housing is well known to the Borough Council. The NPPF guidance states in relation to whether an outline application requires less information:

"The information sought should be proportionate to the decision at the outline stage, but before granting outline planning permission a local planning authority will, among other matters, need to be satisfied that:

- it understands the contaminated condition of the site;
- the proposed development is appropriate as a means of remediating it; and
- it has sufficient information to be confident that it will be able to grant permission in full at a later stage bearing in mind the need for the necessary remediation to be viable and practicable."

The known and suspected contaminants buried in this site should preclude even test boring, the only safe approach being to leave it undisturbed. Developing over or near it or creating any kind of public space such as a children's play park should not be permitted. Even gravel extraction would not be regarded as viable and practicable this close to occupied property and the same would apply to any other kind of remediation. Outline planning permission should not therefore be possible because no viable and practical remediation is apparent so it should not be included in the plan.

Remediation and construction traffic

If despite the above, HA60 does remain within the plan, there is the prospect for the East Goscote community of suffering years of remediation and construction traffic via the narrow single access road to the site. Access off the A607 Rearsby bypass has already been ruled out by the Highway Authority. Of the three 7.5 tonne weight limit roads remaining, only one is practical. Broome Lane crosses two small weight restricted bridges and the traffic would not be routed unnecessarily through Rearsby so it would all have to pass along Melton Road, through East Goscote to the Queniborough roundabout. (That is until the HGV drivers discovered the rat runs.) Also, as any new development started to become occupied, private transport, pedestrian and cycle traffic would have to be mixed in with the HGVs.

COMMMUNITY

Creating a Cohesive Community in East Goscote

It is probably not reasonable to expect there to be no houses allocated to East Goscote. However, the proposal to allocate 223 houses, and worse still, the background threat of the 270 houses in the Gladman application, is disproportionate for the reasons given. It is not only the number of houses, it is the lack of any plan for what is needed and how it could be integrated into the existing village.

The three recent developments, Willowbrook, Lilac Way and Rearsby Roses, are all piecemeal additions to what was a well-planned village. A village which was developed as a single entity in the 1960s with wide open spaces and footpaths allowing safe pedestrian access to the school and the centre for most residents. No attempt has been made to integrate the three recent developments with the original village so they stand as an example of what not to do in planning terms.

There is an opportunity in this local plan to put some of that right and join up those three developments in a safe and green way with the core village. There is also the opportunity to meet the real need which is high standard housing for the ageing part of the population enabling them to release family homes and gardens which are now too big for them. Combine that with starter homes for young people and you could create a cohesive community able to care for its elders and its grandchildren.

Eco Villages and Care Communities have been built in other parts of the country. We live in an area which is highly attractive and desirable so why not here?

Access to Healthcare

The Jubilee and County Practices in Syston are currently at capacity as anyone who lives in East Goscote will verify. When the Mahavir Surgery closed in the village in 2019, the list was almost entirely transferred to the Syston practices and the problem still remains. The same would apply to new residents in Queniborough and Rearsby. The CCG have made it clear that before any new property is occupied, they would need Section 106 funding to be released.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

All of our actions, especially those of local authorities, need now to be viewed through the prism of Climate Change. Every day, week, month and year of delay makes the task of moving to a zero carbon society more challenging, as if it was not challenging enough. This plan covers the development of nearly 18,000 properties over 16 years. The Borough Council can, if it chooses, hide behind the limitations of the planning system as an excuse for enabling more of the same type of housing which we know to be below the standard required to meet our zero carbon targets. Or it can find creative ways and means to encourage developers to raise standards above and beyond the minimum. The plan is weak in this regard and as such fails the people of Charnwood.

I am not an architect or a planner so I will not try to second guess what can and should be done. I will leave that to the experts. My expertise, such as it is, is in sustainable household waste management. But twenty years ago, as CBC's Environmental Co-ordinator at the time, I took part in meetings with the Planning Department where we discussed how to influence developers into building greener. Surely there has been progress in that time with Climate Emergency as an imperative? This local plan lacks any real evidence of that.

Finally, the country has just been through the biggest social and economic change since WWII. This has accelerated change which had already begun to affect town and city centres. The shift to online shopping and working from home will never be completely reversed. Many businesses of all types will take the opportunity to scale back their estates. Large towns and cities will need to be repurposed into more diverse conurbations. In most cases the greenest way of achieving this is by converting existing buildings to residential rather than demolishing and new build. This requires a different skill set and approach to development not just more of the same.

David Cannon

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22 August 2021