

Charnwood Local Plan – Post Hearing Consultation Response

Cllr Anne Gray

I feel I need to comment on this section of the local plan, as it will directly affect many of my residents, including those who live in the more deprived parts of Shelthorpe and are without their own transport. Their access to open space is becoming more and more difficult as Loughborough spread out towards Quorn and the Outwoods, and we are all aware of how important green space is to mental and physical wellbeing. I am also worried about the amount of wildlife which will be disturbed or driven out.

There is no denying that we need more homes and I have been contacted by residents who are sleeping in cars, by a lady whose whole family was sleeping in the same bed in a one bedroomed flat, and by many more whose homes are in serious disrepair. However, the homes which are being built include too many executive-type dwellings, which take up more of our precious countryside and fields than is necessary. Four bedroomed houses could be occupied by just one couple or a small family. On the other hand, more social housing, some of it in low-rise developments of three-storey blocks with facilities on the ground floor for the elderly or disabled would make much more sense if they were fitted with excellent sound-proofing.

Moreover, we have the example of Grange Park, where development has been allowed without facilities or public transport links. Please can we ensure that facilities are provided before houses are occupied – at the very least the proposed school in HA15, a health centre and a shop?

Charnwood Borough Council has just declared a climate emergency. How can we build more houses without viable public transport and still reduce carbon emissions? Moreover, the local roads are not going to cope with the amount of traffic if hundreds, or possibly thousands, of extra cars are travelling to school, work, shops, and places of entertainment.

Please may I suggest that sensible housing is built and the developments should include:

- On-site compensation, including trees and an area for butterflies, many of which need fields, not trees
- Modern eco-designed houses, not the usual “copy-and-paste” estate design
- Wildlife-friendly construction with bat and bird boxes and specialist tiles used for roofing so birds can nest there
- Solar panels
- Heat source pumps for heating
- EV charging points
- Cycle routes and paths to schools and the town centre
- Funds for the Arc Community Hub to enable it to cater for an increased population (declaration of interest: I am an ARC trustee)
- A design which will work to allow access but stop cars speeding around the streets
- Plots designed with spaces to encourage residents to park on driveways and not on roads (i.e. Put parking spaces on drives near the house and side by side, so that one car does not have to be moved to allow another access)
- Pull-ins/designated parking spots for delivery vans and visitors to park without obstructing the road and suitable room for refuse collection vehicles
- Section 106 money to provide an enhanced bus service (possibly Kinch 5 route to be expanded)
- An extra number of social houses, including some housing suitable for wheelchair users etc

- Designs with thought for possible ASB and some attempt to stop it
- Plenty of housing where all rooms will be used with some low-rise blocks, all well-designed buildings and good open spaces

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about my points.