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Confidential

18 November 2004

Cllr. Simon Galton  
 Thurnby Court  
 The Square  
 Thurnby  
 Leicester LE7 9PX

Ref: kf/KB1/Thurnby & Houghton

Dear Simon,

**Re: HDC Housing SPG and Kibworth (KB/1) and Great Glen (GG/2)**

I am writing to seek your support during the forthcoming full Council debate (24<sup>th</sup> November) on the Housing SPG. None of us want houses, particularly the scale being proposed for the Kibworths and Great Glen, in our villages, and so you will not be surprised to learn that neither do I, nor well over a thousand residents of the two Kibworth parishes.

On this occasion support for this view has come from a number of organisations. Leicestershire County Council (the Structure Plan Authority) has repeatedly and consistently objected to the release of land at KB/1 (Kibworth), GG/2 (Great Glen) and now MH/3 (Market Harborough); the Leader of the County Council, David Parsons, has made public his views that this land should not be released for housing; Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt Parish Councils have not only formally objected but taken the unusual step of calling for referenda on the subject with well over 95% opposing the housing; Great Glen Parish Council has objected; and many hundreds of Kibworth residents have written individual and template letters to the council over the past two years objecting to the release of KB/1. Edward Garnier QC MP has spoken publicly about the need to support local democracy and not release this land for housing.

I will concentrate on KB/1 because this has had the bulk of the publicity, but most of the arguments against releasing this area for housing apply equally to GG/2 – both sites are in my patch.

Until recently, the Kibworth Ward has a history of Independent councillors. It was one of those Independents, Sheila Leslie-Miller, who argued strongly in the 1990s that KB/1 should be included (750 houses was the initial number) because of the Transport Choice Corridor policy incorporated in the old Structure Plan which she saw as bringing much-needed infrastructure developments to the villages. This policy has been removed from the new Structure Plan 1996 - 2016.

Apart from the planning reasons for not approving the release of KB/1 that the County Council have provided, I would like to give you just a few reasons given to me by local residents. "We've already had 200 windfall dwellings over the last 4 years, with no infrastructure improvements", "The schools are already at capacity", "The doctors' surgeries are already too full; how will they cope with another 1,000 people?", "We have traffic jams and congestion already getting out onto the A6, imagine what it will be like with another 800 cars", "The queue to collect my pension at the Post Office is already out of the door". Please spend a few moments reading some of the individual letters sent in during this last consultation. These are real people who care for their village community, which this unwanted, greenfield development would ruin forever.

**Transport Choice Corridor Policy of 1996 – 2006 Structure Plan**

A brief look at the history of why the land at KB/1 was ever identified might be useful for Councillors elected since this all came to a head in the mid 1990s. Why was the land in Kibworth proposed for housing? The Strategic Structure Plan Authority (Leicestershire County Council) included in the 1996-2006 Plan, a Transport Choice Corridor strategy. This Government inspired strategy was intended to ensure future large housing needs were on or near good transport choice corridors into the main urban area i.e. Leicester. The A6 (since detrunked), with plans for the Great Glen by-pass, was one form of transport (cars), the bus

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services between Market Harborough and Leicester run through the Kibworths and that gives a second choice, but the overwhelming reason came from the ill-fated suggestion that the Rail Authority would support re-opening a railway station in Kibworth Beauchamp. This was the fly in the ointment and led eventually to both KB/1 and GG/2 being proposed. The fact is that there is not going to be a railway station opened in Kibworth; or so Midland Mainline and Network Rail have stated. The action group, LANRAC, now agree that if there was to be a new station south of Leicester, it should cover Wigston, Oadby and Great Glen not Kibworth. The County Council Transport section have also agreed that a railway station in Kibworth should not be included in any future strategic documents, as it is just not going to happen. The main reason for including KB/1 and GG/2 has therefore been effectively reduced to zero chance.

### **New Structure Plan, 2006 - 2016**

The new County Structure Plan, 1996 to 2016, is nearing the end of an extended consultation period and is due to be adopted in mid February 2005. The Transport Choice Corridor factor has indeed been removed, and we now have the Central Leicestershire Policy Area (CLPA). The Housing SPG discusses the effect of the CLPA on Harborough District housing numbers in considerable detail. However, housing numbers as a whole for Harborough are well on target and indeed, with the proposed large development on the Tungsten and Harboro Rubber sites, will exceed the 6,500 target by 2006, and these will also give the target numbers to 2016 (2,700 in CLPA, 4,850 outside) a big boost. Sustainable sites adjacent to Leicester must now be identified for the CLPA target, not continuing with greenfield sites: KB/1 and GG/2.

The County Council (the Structure Plan Authority) planners have consistently objected to the proposed release of KB/1 over the past 15 months. You should have seen their clear arguments which I am not going to repeat, however if you would like me to summarise them, then please get in touch. Should the matter of KB/1 go to planning inquiry next May, the County Council Cabinet have agreed that their strategic position will be represented by QC. I believe that for HDC to also be represented by a QC arguing in favour of releasing the land would be seen by Council Tax payers as a huge waste of public money.

In conclusion, I would ask, as County Councillor for the East Gartree Division, that you and your colleagues do not support any motion to approve the release of housing land in Kibworth (KB/1), or Great Glen (GG/2). Although I would rather the whole issue was now deleted from the Local Plan, I appreciate that this is unlikely for the moment, so would ask that, at the least, the situation be reviewed in a further 12 months.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Kevin Feltham (Dr)**  
**County Cllr East Gartree**