

Comments from Councillor King

I would like to offer the following comments to the Scrutiny Panel for consideration, as I am not able to be present in person.

There are a number of concerns that I wish to raise with members of the panel respect of the executive recommendations:-

1) The first recommendation agreed by executive essentially says that the SDA should have as many houses on the land as possible, to meet the likely future housing demands for Market Harborough locality.

In principal, I donot disagree with this, BUT how many is the highest possible and what is the LIKELY future housing land requirements for Market Harborough locality, rather than Harborough District.

These are the two key issues upon which the executive appear to have taken a contrary view to the representations from public and stakeholders as part of this masterplan process and to the decision, and debates of Full Council as part of the Core Strategy decision making process.

For these reasons I strongly request that the panel recommends:-

a) that the recommendations from Executive, being significantly different to those contained within the Core Strategy and as Full Council determined the core strategy, this report should be brought instead to a meeting of the Full Council, in the interests of transparency, public accountability for a decision.

b) that because at a number of points within this document it is suggested that the adopted Core Strategy is at threat from planning appeals and " development by planning inspector"

**and that the report does not identify what the highest possible number of homes is possible within the SDA, (they are figures based upon developer statements)
and that the report does not adequately identify what the future housing demand within the Market Harborough locality is, they are based upon extending the extant Core Strategy rather than from any robust independent analysis of realistic future demands**

that it is recommended an urgent review of the Core Strategy is required, to include updated future housing requirements across the District.

c) that further information is required on the deliverability of essential infrastructure requirements including schooling, shops, community facilities etc and the likely impact that will be caused by the proposed phasing, and scale of development options.

I base these recommendations on the following rationale:-

2) As part of the evaluation process prior to the adoption of the Core Strategy, a number of important pieces of evidence were presented and evaluated regarding Landscape, Sustainability and Transport. This evidence was presented to the Core Strategy hearing, and summarised by HDC officers in Technical Paper 2 (TP2) "**The Approach to accommodating housing development in Market Harborough**" in June 2011. This is publicly available to download from the Council website.

3) From report TP2 it is clear that the Landscape study (EV23) identified significant constraints around the town and that as a result of that many sites were classed as not being suitable. These were the low/low medium sites. That report concluded that in Landscape terms, the area most able to accept large volume of development was to the south east of the town, NOT the north west. But this site was

not preferred due to the "expensive, challenging and high risk" of securing a required link between the A508 Northampton Rd and A6 at Clack Hill, although it was clearly more beneficial in terms of accommodating more housing and in transport impacts on the local road networks.

4) The landscape assessment of the SDA, says that the main reasons for recommending the Airfield Farm site as an SDA were: availability of land, the opportunity to develop in a single sustainable manner, despite the evidence in Para D9 of TP2, which stated that ***"part of the area is classified as having low/low medium capacity due its steep terrain, its visibility from a wide area, its potential to compromise the separation between Market Harborough/Lubenham and to allow Market Harborough to encroach into locations where it is not currently visible"***

5) In para 4.4 of the Executive report it is stated that Option A and Option C are at opposite ends of the scale in recognition of the constraints around the town. These constraints are further explored in section 6.0 of the report, pgs 10-12 under the Assessment of Risk. However the impression that is given is that these constraints on development can never be overcome, how do we know that will be so over a 20 year period?

6) On the one side the Council says we have a Core Strategy, which defines the SDA area and provides material evidence to any planning application, but this report also appears to suggest that the Core Strategy is insufficiently robust to defend other applications, so that appeals could be lodged with uncertain outcomes. So either the Core Strategy is robust or it isn't, it cannot be both.

7) Lastly, if the Executive recommendation 2) for 1800 homes within the masterplan stands, then how would the recommendation 3), about phasing of this development **enable the crucial sustainable facilities to be provided i.e. school, shops, community space?** There is very little information contained within the report before you that explores or explains how this will work and whether the requirements can be delivered for each of the 4 options as consulted upon or indeed for the one contained within the executive recommendations.

Kind regards

Councillor Phil King
Council Health Champion
Kibworth Ward, Harborough District Council
p.king@harborough.gov.uk
07795 156325