

BOB SPEARS' COMMENTS ON NEWARK AND SHERWOOD D.C. DPD

REPRESENTOR NUMBERS 180 & 194 - SOUTHWELL PROPOSALS

In the early stages following the appointment of the Inspector, I suggested to the Programme Officer that in view of the confusion caused by **re-numbering sites** between the last two stages of the process, it was incumbent on the Council to go back to all respondents who commented on sites **So/Ho/ 2 and So/Ho/ 3** to check on which site the response was directed. I have since examined the Council's response to the Inspector's specific question on this issue.

I have therefore conducted more detailed analysis of the responses regarding these sites. In particular, I have checked on the 'limehouse' site, to which I was directed, on those entries relating to **So/Ho/2**, the Springfield site, to which I have already objected. To my amazement, I found that of the **87** current entries, about a **quarter** were actually my own representations, **six** in all. The extra entries stemmed from the duplication (more or less accurate) of these, cross-referred to the other sites or policies to which the individual responses also referred. In addition, given that I have been given an extra representor number (for reasons beyond me!) there were a further 6 duplications for that second number. Just why all these duplications should appear against a single site search is not apparent.

I am far from expert in the design or use of databases but this strikes me as a very wasteful modus operandi. The Inspector may already have seen the protests from Mrs Ann Wigham and Mr Michael Ainley on the subject; I cannot say how the database was organized at the time they were scrutinizing it but if it was as now, with duplications as described above, I believe for the Council not to go back to them with an explanation and a statement that their fears were not justified was at best a serious discourtesy to council tax payers.

A near neighbour recently told me he had not joined the process of consultation because he found the Council's database impenetrable. At the very least, a guide to the best use of the database should have been issued. Overall, to base the consultation around a database of such poor design without further guidance is I believe a serious procedural flaw in the whole consultation process. **I therefore find the Council's response to the Inspector on the re-numbering issue both complacent and inadequate.**

The other matter on which I wish to comment, since it was not available at the time for representations, is the Housing Trajectory. It seems to me at the least provocative and insensitive for the first tranche of developments in Southwell to include So/Ho/2, which judging from the number and quality of objections, is the most contentious of all the gateway sites in Southwell. Having chosen to select two sites on what observers (including a previous Government Inspector) would agree is the most iconic entrance to Southwell from the south, they have opted for an early start with that site which extends the town boundary the most, with known persistent flooding problems and which undoubtedly adds markedly to a tricky problem with traffic.

R. Spears

27th November 2012