



SOUTHWELL CIVIC SOCIETY

Peter Scorer Submission on 13th December Policies So/HN/1 and So/Ho/6

Southwell Civic Society is not against more housing – we accept the need - we don't want to live in a museum but in a thriving and sustainable community. However we do not agree with the distribution of sites. We are particularly concerned about some of the gateway sites, not only on visual grounds but also on sustainability grounds. Sites far from the town centre, such as Ho/5, will generate more traffic causing more congestion and more parking problems. We are also concerned about creep towards the neighbouring settlements of Halam and Maythorne

We concur with Policy So/HN/1 – there has been a big increase in the supply of expensive 4 and 5 bedroom houses in recent years at the expense of smaller more affordable homes.

However we find the DPD unsound in that it doesn't reflect this Policy – looked at together with the evidence base, in the densities used in calculating the housing allocations.

The Housing Viability Assumptions quote the following densities: Apartment 120 dph, 2 beds 50, 3 beds 40, 4 beds 25, 5 beds 20dph. Why has the DC chosen 30dph?

As further evidence, there have been developments on some sites near the town centre of up to three times the densities proposed in the DPD. Eg Abbey Mews at 97/ha. Also the developer for Ho/4 has produced a plan showing a density of around 50dph with 2, 3 and some 4 bed houses on the site. And..... this site, by its linear nature, is not particularly efficient.

If higher densities are used for appropriate sites near to the town centre then that would relieve the pressure on some of the more sensitive gateway sites.

Of particular relevance is site Ho/6; Rainbows Depot, where we consider that higher densities would be entirely appropriate, being close to the town centre with good pedestrian access.

In addition, we feel that the site should be extended into Tucks Yard to the SW as indicated in the NSDC9 plan. Whilst less than a third of a hectare itself, this site is contiguous with Rainbows Depot. Indeed it is my recollection that the two sites together were the subject of a planning application for housing in the early 1990s.

With a combined area of 1.13 Ha we feel that between 60-85 dwellings could be accommodated – even at 85, this is 20% down on the density of Abbey Mews at the top of the Burgage.

This is up to 60 dwellings more than the DPD which already has an over provision of 13 dwellings.

The DC have tabled several reasons why this site should not have more than 25 dwellings

- 1) *Tucks yard is not included because of access problems from Monckton Drive.* - Given that the sites are contiguous why cannot access be given from the Rainbows site?

Southwell Civic Society - Continuation

- 2) *Listed buildings exist on the site.* - The prison block at the rear of the site is dilapidated and deteriorating. The Society feel that the best way of preserving listed buildings is to sensitively refurbish them and bring them into use. The building could thus become apartments.
- 3) *Ground levels are above the surrounding residential area* – Our observation is that this is made-up ground. A decent Architect could plan the site with reduced levels and lower buildings at the perimeter to resolve this.

Our calculations show that with 85 houses on these two sites and a density of 50 dph on Ho/1, 3, 7 and AS/3 with the bypass line removed, there is no need for any allocations on the sensitive gateway sites of Ho/2, 4 and 5, together with Mu/1. In fact this gives an oversupply of 22 houses.

If for some technical reason it is necessary to retain the line of the bypass then we suggest that the shortfall can be accommodated on parts of Ho/4 and a small part of Ho/5 (SHLAA ref 08_0197) - the latter to avoid building on the recently established allotments on Ho/4.

Peter Scorer BA(Arch), BSc(Arch), Registered Architect(Retired).