

North Rigton Parish Council

Response to Harrogate District Local Plan Consultation– Aug 2015

1: Transport:

Traffic - general:

Traffic modelling information will not be available until the Autumn of 2015, and will not be reported until early 2016. It is therefore impossible for the public to make fully informed responses to the current consultation process. We believe that traffic and transport infrastructure (or lack of) is a major contributory factor to any consideration of future housing or other development.

Option 4 problem: Additional housing in the area of Weeton & Huby and the consequential increased traffic flow, will make the dangerous A658 traffic junctions even more dangerous without planned major improvements.

Option 3 & 4: These corridor routes would only be of benefit if the access to the stations was vastly improved. Car parking is relatively non-existent at some stations, eg. Weeton, and local residents suffer the effect of lanes and entrances being blocked from early morning until the evening, sometime even for longer periods, if people are using the train to travel further afield for days or even weeks. Bus frequency and timetables matching would need to be a vital element.

Cars:

There is no reference in the transport documentation to traffic problems other than those relating to the town centres of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon and to the major junction of the A1(M).

Consideration of what car drivers are currently doing, and what they will continue to do in future to avoid the bottle-necks and over-capacity junctions **MUST** be identified and considered.

Rail:

Unless railway level crossings are removed, (currently under consideration) there will be huge implications for traffic flows and movement. At one specific crossing, Rigton Gates, there is only space for three (3) vehicles to back up to the A658. This crossing has just recently been modified to being automatic, so is unlikely to be upgraded again. Additional, large scale developments with **Option 4** at Weeton will create a greater volume of traffic at this already busy crossing.

There will be no value in increasing the use of the rail network unless suitable arrangements for car parking at the out of town stations, are addressed.

2: Development Limits:

Identification of existing development boundaries of communities, as opposed to the current out of date limits needs to be addressed urgently in the first instance. Following this assessment some “rounding off” may be suitable and acceptable for many

communities.

3: Green Belt:

Between Harrogate & Knaresborough is designated Greenbelt, which implies that all the development for Harrogate **MUST** be to the West, North and South, and for Knaresborough, to the North, South and East, outside of the Greenbelt.

Protection from the spread from Leeds is imperative, however the River Wharfe is a natural boundary.

Developments have already taken place in the Green Belt however, so it is not all encompassing and needs more careful and specific clarification and not the blanket cover which is currently used to define it.

Green wedges are appropriate considerations but are not mentioned.

4: Education:

Additional places at Primary level, will be required for any large scale development. The decision on new builds is one for NYCC, and that agreement must be in place prior to the building works beginning. The impact of this on smaller communities with small village schools may have an adverse effect, resulting in changes in the profile of residents in those villages.

Senior schools, to provide for the influx of new residents, need to be considered near to the locations of these developments to avoid further unnecessary travel.

5: Gas:

The introduction of mains gas to locations which do not currently have this option appears highly unlikely as NGN will not invest speculatively, or anticipate demand. Consequently proposing any large scale development in areas where there is currently no gas provision, is not sound. Such locations we are aware of include Weeton & Huby.

Conclusion:

Site Options:

A key missing link in all the plans is that between where people **desire to** live, because of the quality of life – amenities, safety, etc. in relation to where they **have to** work.

If the provision of housing in the Harrogate district is an attractive option for those working in the main conurbations to the south of Harrogate, it should be avoided at all costs, and the main development for the District designated to be to the East which has the advantage of good road and rail links.

Considering the proposed alternatives, North Rigton Parish Council initially concludes that the following options are the more favourable -

Option 5: A clear start with the numbers of houses being discussed. Infrastructure can be planned and implemented more easily.n

Option 3: with the provision of a new railway station this option also links well with the main A1(M) route and is to the East

The main towns and Market Towns, and some small communities should expect to make a contribution with some small scale developments appropriate to the size of the community as it exists at the present time - without putting major strain on the existing infrastructure or together with infrastructure improvements as necessary.