

Question from Mrs. M. Cocks, Lower Bullingham

"The latest information is that consideration is being given in the latest UDP for 300 houses to be built on the eastern side of the Bullinghope land owned by Bloor Homes. This will put about one thousand more cars per day on to Hoarwithy Road. This will compound the traffic from the north that will still prefer to use Holme Lacy Road to access the Rotherwas estate.

What plans does the council have to ensure that every vehicle travelling from or to the north, of all types wishing to access or egress the Rotherwas Industrial Estate uses the proposed new road?"

ANSWER

- 1 - Having reviewed the Transport Assessment submitted by Bloors for the UDP Inquiry it is estimated that there will be under 500 vehicles per day using Hoarwithy Road (both out of and into the site). It should be noted that the general flow of these vehicles will be towards Hereford City Centre during the morning Peak and coming from that direction in the evening Peak. As such they will be not compounding traffic to and from the Estate as its peak flows are in the opposite direction.

In addition, the Rotherwas Access Road will attract traffic before it reaches the Holme Lacy Road/ A49 junction. The positive benefits of the reduction in traffic on Holme Lacy Road resulting from the Access Road more than compensate for the small increases resulting from the Bullinghope development. Constructing the Access Road will not significantly increase HGVs travelling north through the City on the A49.

- 2 - The Council intends to remove all HGV's from Holme Lacy Road so that they use the new Access Road and this will be achieved through Traffic Regulation Orders. The Council also intends to implement transport improvements along the Holme Lacy Road corridor which would include traffic calming and facilities to improve and encourage pedestrian, cycle and bus access to the Estate and within the local area in general. Whilst these measures will not stop car borne access to the Industrial Estate they will discourage it. Car borne access to the Estate to/from the south will use the Access Road in favour of the Holme Lacy Road.

Question from Mr. P.J. Cocks, Lower Bullingham:

"The council's purpose for putting housing development at Bullinghope into the UDP is to part fund the ROTHERWAS road, in the sum of £8,000,000 from Bloor Homes.

As the council will have to, initially, borrow the £8,000,000 for up to three years until Bloor Homes tender their contribution, what services do the council propose cutting to service the debt? At 6% £480,000 per year. £1,440,000 over three years or if compounded over three years a total of £1,521,128."

ANSWER

The funding model for procuring the Rotherwas Access Road does not rely solely on receipt of s106 development money as it is part of the wider Rotherwas Futures scheme. The funding package is still the subject of negotiation but will include external contributions from Advantage West Midlands (AWM), Local Transport Plan

funding, capital receipts generated as the regeneration project progresses prudential borrowing and developer contributions. The cash flow costs in the early years of this project are significantly less than the figure you have estimated and will be offset by cash flow gains in later years. The Council is not therefore planning to cut any services as a result of the Rotherwas Futures project.

Questions from Mr. I. Jardin, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Herefordshire Branch

"With regard to the Rotherwas Access Road:

- (a) what is the latest cash flow forecast, by financial year, of expenditure on procuring the Road, including any interest payments?
- (b) what are the intended sources of funding for that cash flow, including loans, by financial year?
- (c) what is the earliest expected date for the signing of a Section 106 agreement with Bloor Homes to secure their contribution to the funding of the Road?
- (d) if Bloor Homes' contribution does not eventualize, how do you propose to fund the equivalent element of the cost of the Road?
- (e) do you still share the conclusion, set out in the letter of 20 January 2004 from Bloor Homes' agent to the Forward Planning Manager, that "the direction of future growth of Hereford should be to the south of the City"?
- (f) do you expect the number of heavy goods vehicles travelling north on the A49 through Hereford, including the Belmont roundabout, to increase after completion of the Road?"

ANSWER

Three specific questions (a, c and d) are so closely linked to the project's timetable that until this is confirmed and agreed they cannot be answered. In effect, the cashflow forecast will be known when the details of expenditure requirements are in place; the Section 106 information will depend on the final agreement and any funding issues around a developer's contribution would be a matter for the Council to review depending on the outcome of any negotiations.

- b) The Council will seek to optimise funding contributions from external sources as outlined in answer to Mr Cocks' question. The balance will be met from within the Council's prudential borrowing limits. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy sets out the approach to minimising borrowing costs.
- e) It is a matter of record that the Council's position was that the Bullinghope allocation would form the first phase of a much larger development to take place beyond the Plan period. In response to objections to the Proposed Modifications stage, minor changes to the Plan are being proposed to Council. If accepted, these will remove reference to such development beyond the Plan period. Future direction of growth for Hereford will be consider in the light of emerging requirements in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- f) The results of the modelling carried out for the Major Scheme Business Case for the Rotherwas Access Road (July 2005) indicated that constructing the road will not significantly increase HGVs travelling north through the City on the A49.

Question from Mr. B Caldicutt, Hereford

The Initial UDP up to 2011 included for 300 houses at Holmer, which after the consultation period was moved to Bullinghope in the Draft UDP. After a Public Enquiry the inspector recommended that the houses should be reinstated back to Holmer as proposed in the Initial UDP. This was quite rightly done through the democratic procedure. Planning Permission has been granted for the houses at Holmer so it appears to me that this is now an over provision of houses based on the Initial & Draft UDP especially when the Stirling Lines development is to increase by a further 250-300 houses

I generally have the feeling that the majority of members do not know where the site is, and even more so just how much land Bloor Homes, the prospective developer owns, which could lead to some 2000 houses.

If it were not for the financing of the Rotherwas Access road, these houses would not have been included in this Modified UDP.

I personally collected 220 signatures on a petition against this proposal, and standing on residents' doorsteps the feeling was, enough is enough. It is a pity that they are not here to voice their opinions!

Before the Committee approves this Modified UDP, I request that, another Public Enquiry is held on this matter, and all members should visit the site to acquaint themselves with the landscape and the drastic consequences this proposal would have.

ANSWER

The proposal to allocate land at Bullinghope for 300 dwellings has been fully considered through the UDP process. Many matters were raised in representations to the draft Plan and are addressed by the Inspector in his Report. Although the Council has rejected the Inspector's recommendation in this case, no new matters have been raised in subsequent representations which would require a second Inquiry.

Question from Ms J. Shuttlewood, Bullinghope

Based on the recent history at the Stirling Lines development, where one of the developers sold amenity land to another developer who subsequently obtained planning permission to build on it, I am concerned that leisure and amenity land be protected. If planning consent for the Bullinghope development includes leisure and amenity land will the Council insist that the developer gift any such land to the people of Herefordshire for leisure purposes in perpetuity?

ANSWER

The question of amenity land on any development at Bullinghope is a matter for detailed consideration at the development control stage. It would be inappropriate for any amenity land on the application site subsequently to be developed for housing purposes.

Question from Mrs. S. Shuttlewood, Bullinghope

What is the hidden agenda that persuades this council to go against the results of its own surveys and the decision of the inspector from the Government department with regard to the development at Bullinghope?

I would be grateful to receive a transcript of the meetings recorded minutes.

ANSWER

The Council's reasons for rejecting the Inspector's recommendation are set out in the published Statement of Decisions and Reasons. The reasons refer to the role of the site in helping to ensure that the strategic housing requirement is met and to the opportunity to secure funding for the proposed Rotherwas Access Road.

Question from Mr. H. Shuttlewood, Bullinghope

Population Estimates for Hereford - As an interested party in what Herefordshire Council is proposing for Bullinghope I have tried to research the reasons, but some figures are a little out of date.

Surfing the internet has produced the Councils papers on population figures, age distribution and housing needs and I see that population growth is expected to slow during 2003-11 and be in line with the general growth of England and Wales of 3.4%. Do you have later figures from the Population Estimates Unit of ONS for growth in Hereford City and rural areas that support planned housing growth here?, and can you tell me what the housing needs figure was for Hereford in the last unitary development plan? There is obviously a shortage of cheap homes, but the plan to piggy back development here just to get a builder to pay for a spur road of limited use, will not achieve that aim given the cost to the builder.

Just how many homes are you expecting to be justified?

ANSWER

Housing requirements for the County are set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Bullinghope site will help ensure that these regional requirements are met and the Regional Assembly has concluded that the UDP is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. Changes to household projections at national level feed initially into the process of reviewing the Regional Spatial Strategy, rather than directly to the Council. The Regional Assembly is currently consulting on revisions to the Spatial Strategy which incorporate revised housing requirements for the County.

Question from Mr. T. Ford by e-mail

Question from Cycle Hereford concerning the current scheme for the St Owen's Street cycle contraflow:

The Council convenes the Pedestrian, Access and Cycle Forum to get advice on improving the environment for vulnerable road users in the County. The PAC Forum has agreed a set of movement principles to ensure that traffic management schemes benefit road users in line with the Council's road user hierarchy and enhance the area where they are introduced. It is clear from the scheme currently being progressed for the St Owen's Street cycle contraflow that the Council ignored the movement principles and the road user hierarchy when instructing its consultants.

If the Council will ignore these principles for a scheme on St Owen's Street, one of the most attractive and sensitive streets in Hereford, where and when will it apply the principles?

ANSWER

The Council's Local Transport Plan includes a hierarchy of modes of transport from walking through to car users which demonstrates our commitment to securing a sustainable and integrated transport system which is accessible to all.

It is from consideration of this hierarchy and suggestions from local cyclists that the potential benefits of allowing cyclists to cycle contrary to the flow of general traffic in St Owens Street, and hence give them greater priority for access to the city centre, have been identified. The design of individual schemes must take into account relevant guidance and standards for highway design whilst also considering views from all stakeholders to arrive at the most suitable design. The Council recognises the importance of St Owens Street to the economic vitality of the city centre and the value of its historic landscape.

At the last meeting of the Forum, there was general agreement with my proposition that the retention of the ambience of this important street is of paramount importance when considering possible cycleways.

The St Owens Street contra flow proposals were published for public consultation in January this year following previous discussions with stakeholders. The Council will be considering all the views expressed during the consultation period prior to making a decision regarding the scheme.

Question from Mr. P. Cocks by e-mail

Is the council aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, announced on 6th December, 2006: that the government intends to introduce legislation that will take away clause 106 money from local authorities and pass it to Regional Government?

How would this legislation affect the councils financing proposals for the Rotherwas Relief Road and thus the need for the Bloor Homes houses at Bullinghope?

ANSWER

The Governments proposals for Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) are the subject of an ongoing consultation process and changes to the current planning obligations system are the subject of a similar process ending on 28th February 2007. The Government has confirmed that it will move forward with PGS if, after consultation, PGS is deemed to be workable and effective.

A key feature is to return at least 70% of PGS revenue to the local authority area in which they were generated for local infrastructure priorities. The remaining PGS revenue would be returned to the region to help finance strategic infrastructure projects.

The Government has confirmed that PGS would not be introduced before 2009.

Whether or not the Bloor Homes proposals for development at Bullinghope and the Council's financing arrangements for the Rotherwas Futures Project are affected depend on the timing of the Governments intentions and the date of any planning permission.

Any Section 106 Agreement will come into effect if planning permission for the development is granted.

Question from Revd Peter Hackett, Lower Bullingham

How many houses would need to be built to meet the shortfall in the cost of the Rotherwas Access Road, and how many houses would be affordable?

ANSWER

The Council recognises the strategic importance of delivering the Rotherwas Access Road. The proposed housing site of Bullinghope will provide proportional funding to assist in its delivery. It is anticipated that the site will yield approximately 300 dwellings with no affordable housing being provided.