

Deputation to the Special Meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee

by Oakham South & West Action Group (OS&WAG) 19th December 2019 re the potential allocation of Brooke Road as a development site.

Deputation to be delivered by Monica Stark, Co-ordinator, OS&WAG

Wording:

Introduction:

- We believe that contrary to NPPF section 109, due consideration has not been given to the impact of the level crossing, traffic congestion and highway safety that a development on Brooke Road would have on this part of Oakham.
- Moreover, now that otters have been confirmed as resident in the brook that flows through the site, to build here would be counter to section 170 of the NPPF.
- This site was rejected from the Local Plan in 2008 on the grounds of congestion and the impact of the railway line. With a 22% increase in traffic since then, how can this site be thought appropriate now?

Level crossing:

- Rated 'high risk' (4/13) by Network Rail due to the nature of the approach of the road from the town side and the bend in the track.
- John Hares, Network Rail, Level Crossing Manager, stated in 2019:

"a development of this size (139 houses proposed by Taylor Wimpey) would increase the risk of road traffic "blocking back" onto the crossing, ie "being caused to remain stationary"

- We have witnessed examples of this which have been harrowing.
- The Planning Inspector of the rejected proposed Allotments development on Brooke Rd, stated that:

"Any increase in traffic as a result of the development would be likely to exacerbate this current situation which would not be in the best interests of highway safety".

- With 81 trains per day, the barriers are down on average 20 minutes in every hour.
- This is set to increase drastically within the Local Plan period when they "re-signal" the line after 2028.
- During OS&WAG's photographic survey in July this year there were 4 incidents in 4 days when traffic did not dissipate, meaning did not clear before the barrier came down again. This is used as a test of "severe" in NPPF terms.
- During the survey, queues reached up to 54 cars backing up Welland Way, blocking Derwent Drive, Brooke Rd and Penn Street.

Congestion

- OS&WAG's photographic "snapshot" over a 10 day period in July graphically illustrates the extraordinary levels of congestion on Brooke Road, not just at peak times.
- We estimate a further 350-400 cars from the new development onto this narrow congested road, based on RCC's "minimum parking standards" and the Government's own "Parking Requirements".
- The recent Broad Oaks Manor development on Brooke Road of 28 units with parking for 35

- cars, already has cars and vans parked on the verges of their access road.
- The McCarthy & Stone Development of 58 flats on Penn Street with 31 parking spaces, adds to the congestion, not only through staff and residents, but with frequent deliveries by van drivers.
 - We all live with the gridlock that can occur when the crossing is down, but for the emergency services (2 of whom are on our committee and have written a paper on the problem), the problems are immense and life-threatening.
 - This is a particularly congested road as Brooke Road is simply a tarmacked former lane going to Brooke village, designed for an occasional horse and cart. With its historic ribbon development of Victorian and Edwardian houses (not built with drives), it is effectively a single track as it is completely parked up on both sides.

Road Safety

- OS&WAG's survey of Brooke Hill Academy this year, showed that 86% of parents were concerned about the potential increased traffic and the safety impact that that would have for their children.
- Putting another access road off Brooke Road into the new development would only exacerbate the danger.
- The volume of cars coming in and out of the development would effectively make movement along Brooke Road impossible at school times.
- I never want to hear the heart-wrenching screams of the mother who thought that her son had been killed when he was knocked down outside our house in March this year on the way to school.

Bio-diversity

- The site has a rich diversity of species, but now with confirmation of the legally protected otters in the brook, building would be counter to The Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act by disturbing their habitat.

Delegation of 14:

Bridget & Mike Hodgson	187 Brooke Rd		
Jenny Cross	108 "	"	
Chris & Charles Dukes	171 "	"	
Julie Taylor	161 "	"	
Sally Andrews	175 "	"	
Geoff Oval & Kerry Quy	141 "	"	
Sarah & Andrew Flitcroft	169 "	"	
Jackie Gregory	116 "	"	
Pearl Garfoot	185 "	"	
Nigel Stark	157 "	"	