

Deputation to GIR Scrutiny

19th December 2019

Assessment of proposed Strategic Development Sites

St. George's Barracks and RAF Woolfox

From a reading of the reports commissioned by Rutland County Council and released for public consideration on Friday 13th December 2020, **there are several important statements arising**. These statements are made in many different areas within the reports, all making substantially the same points. These are.

1. Both sites are reasonable options which need to be appropriately considered
2. A great deal more independent validation work and additional evidence is required to establish whether either site could be considered viable, justified, effective and consistent with National Policy.
3. The confirmed Objectively Assessed Need for Rutland lies between 127 dwellings per annum and 160 dpa. Any higher figure does have a considerable degree of uncertainty attached, given that it is linked to a forecast of economic growth.

What conclusions should be drawn from this clear advice?

Firstly: If RCC decide to allocate the SGB site for development in the Regulation 19 consultation document and to exclude the Woolfox site, they will be inviting significant legal challenges at the forthcoming local Inquiry before a Planning Inspector. It seems highly likely, from the evidence contained in the report pack, that a challenge would be successful.

Secondly: If RCC decide to allocate both sites in the Regulation 19 consultation, and therefore if St George's and Woolfox both go ahead following the Local Inquiry, that would mean over 400 houses per annum or, put another way, over 6,800 new dwellings within 17 years (till 2036) increasing Rutland's population by 14,000 or 36% over 17 years.

Thirdly: In view of the extensive additional validation work and additional evidence that is required over the whole range of considerations relevant to these development schemes, the legal challenges to be presented to the Inspector at a Local Inquiry might be considered highly likely to be upheld.

What Course of Action might be considered by the Council?

- a) It would appear that **acceptance of the HIF bid should be delayed** until the many uncertainties concerning whether SGB is justified, effective and consistent with National Policy are fully resolved by further independent viability studies

- b) **To exclude both sites from eligibility for development** in the forthcoming Regulation 19 consultation, thus allowing time for further independent research and validation over the next few years, during which time optimistic forecasts of economic and employment growth can be tested. Both sites can remain on the table for consideration at the next Local Plan Review which might perhaps be expected in about 5 years time – giving sufficient time for the further necessary validation work to be thoroughly carried out.
- c) As it would appear that once planning permission has been granted for a site, the LPA have no control over when development starts nor of the rate at which it progresses, if and when the time comes for RCC to allocate land on these sites for development **only a very small proportion of the site should be released for development at any one time**, in order to ensure that development cannot exceed the rate that is in conformity with and within the OAN for Rutland and allows for other development in Rutland, all within the OAN range.

C J Bacon

Member of CPRE Rutland.

17th December 2019

END