

DEPUTATION BY NEIL NEWTON ON BEHALF OF EMPINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
SPATIAL STRATEGY

The documentation on the Spatial Strategy released late last Friday is a six hour read, with a ridiculous timescale for the public to absorb and make any input to this meeting. The vast majority of residents will be totally unaware of its existence, but it is part of a process that will have a major impact on their future living environment.

As a pre-cursor to consultation on the Local Plan, EPC do not see this as an example to be repeated, either as to content and presentation or timescale.

The 12 options detailed in the Spatial Strategy document with umpteen variables considered, is essential background reading for the truly committed and the professionals, and will be an essential part of the quasi judicial process; but to the average person it is both unintelligible and a disincentive to engage.

The 12 options can readily be condensed into two major themes;

- Do we wish to exceed the Government housing targets for Rutland by introducing one ( possibly two) major new settlements into Rutland, with minimal growth in our existing towns and villages; or
- Do we want to continue with the strategy very widely endorsed at the 2017 Local Plan review, which was to meet Government targets by the gradual expansion of Oakham ,Uppingham and the larger villages, without any new major settlement.

The wording of the two alternatives might need fine tuning .Both are totally viable and supportable by evidence, and are easy for the general public to understand. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

To stretch the argument further, but in a genuine attempt to encourage participation without confrontation, we would also put forward the following suggestion.

It is obvious that the leadership of the Council currently favour a major settlement at St Georges Barracks from past comments and reports, whilst recognizing this will be subject to examination and consultation.

It is equally apparent that a significant number of Parish Councils, and a significant number of residents witness the SGB consultation, are in favour of continuing the policies agreed in the 2017 Local Plan review, with future housing development continuing to be concentrated on our existing settlements.

Let each side make the case for their "preferred" option in easily digestible language in a short format. To be distributed and/or argued in public meetings. In this way by the time the Local Plan gets to the Inspection stage there could be a much better indication of the preference of residents, and a much larger participation than would be the norm from a lengthy jargon filled technical document.