

## **Scrutiny Panel Deputation: Tim Smith. 16th January 2020**

The definition of scrutiny is: '**the careful and detailed examination of something in order to get information about it**'.

The Pre-Submission Local Plan was published towards the end of last week, all 966 pages of it. I have a Bible at home and the Old Testament therein has less pages than that. (I might add that after 2000 years it's still being scrutinised).

I don't think I'm alone in being sceptical about how anyone can make a '**careful and detailed examination**' of this document in the time given.

I have attempted to read through this document as best I can in the time available but I am sure I have missed many important details. I have not been able to cross reference all the evidence base that apparently backs up the recommendations made.

One example is 'The Sustainability Appraisal for the Rutland Local Plan 2018-2036' beginning p349. This document alone requires detailed examination to appreciate its significance. For instance, it doesn't quite dismiss Woolfox as the Pre-Submission Local Plan suggests.

This Pre-Submission Local Plan has a great deal of useful detail within it, and credit to the officers of RCC for its production. It is also about **the whole of Rutland** and both deserve fulsome scrutiny. However it is heavily biased towards St George's Barracks

'The Spatial Strategy for Development', p39 paragraph 4.8 states:

**'The new garden community (SGB) will deliver a significant portion of the County's housing and employment development** and provide supporting services including local shopping, education, and community and employment opportunities to meet the needs of the residents of the new community'.

2016 Government guidance on Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities; states;

**'We expect expressions of interest to demonstrate a strong local commitment to delivery'.**

Cross reference that with Question 9 p75 of Appendix 5 on Consultation Responses to the Local Plan: ' Do you support the proposed changes to the housing requirements set out'?

It states; 'A high proportion of respondents (**95%**) do not support the proposed changes'.

And the response of RCC; '**noted**'

One would have thought it needed more recognition than that. This significant negative response should be subjected to significant scrutiny as to reasons why, and this will take time.

In the Local Government Association guide 'A councillor's workbook on scrutiny' it states:

'Fundamentally, all scrutiny work must add value: it must make a positive contribution to the lives of local people and scrutiny committee members must be very clear about how their work will do this'.

**To make a positive contribution you, The Scrutiny Panel, need sufficient time.**

I end with the following hope:

'Scrutiny works well when the council's executive views it in a positive light and as an opportunity to improve council performance. Scrutiny's effectiveness will be reduced if the executive sees it as aggressively critical, which will lead to defensive behaviour and make it difficult for scrutiny to influence change'