

30 May 18

Cllr Oliver Hemsley (By email:)
Leader Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland

Dear Oliver

ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS - CONSULTATION

We are writing to you on behalf of the Parish Councils of Edith Weston and North Luffenham to express our disappointment at the consultation exercise currently being pursued by RCC about the St George's development.

I hope you will have found Wednesday's meeting at Edith Weston a useful indication of public opinion about the project, and trust that you will also have detected that there is a strong belief that the public have not yet been properly consulted.

Following that meeting, on Friday 25 May representatives from Edith Weston and North Luffenham met Sir Alan Duncan MP, who clearly saw our position and agreed with us that this is a project that affects all of Rutland, not just the two closest parishes. He therefore suggested that we write to you with a view to finding a way through that will work to the advantage of all concerned. This letter comes with his blessing.

The Scale of the RCC Proposal

The proposal by RCC to build a new town of over 3,000 houses is an issue affecting the whole of Rutland, not just the nearest villages. It would increase the population of the County by 20-25% which, in addition to destroying the rural character of the County, could also cause massive infrastructure problems.

A Phased Approach

A single development of a town comprising over 3,000 houses is a very high risk enterprise. There will inevitably be unintended consequences and the damage caused to the character and infrastructure of Rutland could be considerable. No responsible Council should allow that to happen.

Far better to plan at the outset to build any development (and we would suggest a maximum of 1,500 houses) in properly managed phases, so that the inevitable unforeseen consequences from the earlier phases will be able to be addressed before moving ahead with subsequent ones. A maximum of 500 houses per phase would seem sensible, with 10 years between phases.

Phase 1 would comprise the new town centre with open space and provision for (but not necessarily yet built) support facilities such as a medical centre, shops, pub and village hall. It should also include the start of a well- planned business park to one side.

Phase 2 would be built around phase 1 and would comprise mainly housing, but planned in an imaginative and attractive way in the character of a Rutland village.

Phase 3 would add further to the size and be designed on the basis of the lessons learned from Phases 1 and 2.

We would envisage Phase 1 being built in the timeframe 2022-2025, Phase 2, 2032-2035, and Phase 3, 2042-2045. Throughout the growth period there would not only be the opportunity to learn from previous phases, but also to receive input from the new inhabitants of the town, thus allowing truly organic growth.

Suggested Way Ahead

As indicated above, we firmly believe there needs to be a much wider high-level consultation on the size and shape of any development. We have not yet had that conversation, so no surprise that there is little or no appetite for discussion of the detail of your “master plan”.

We therefore propose a new round of consultation to resolve the three major issues of size, shape and phasing. With that completed and everyone happily on board, we can then start to look together at the detail of the project.

No doubt you will be able to propose a consultative structure that will ensure such dialogue, leading to a solution that has the agreement and support of the whole County.

National Park

You will have heard about Michael Gove’s proposal for more National Parks; we feel sure that you will agree that Rutland would be an excellent candidate, which makes preservation of our precious environment a top priority.

A copy of this letter will go to adjacent Parish Councils and the local press for their consideration.

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Information:

EWPC – For all PC Members

NLPC – For all PC Members

NPLC – SGB Working Group

Parish Clerk – Manton PC

Parish Clerk – South Luffenham PC

Parish Clerk - Empingham PC

Parish Clerk – Ketton PC

Mr Cliff Bacon