

Rugby Borough Local Plan
Consultation response by Princethorpe Parish Council, due by 5pm Friday 11th
November 2016

The Council challenges the soundness of the Borough Plan (not positively prepared) due to the lack of strategic infrastructure planning. This falls under three headings detailed separately below: transport; flood risk assessment; and amenities provision.

Transport

In our response to the first phase of consultation we raised our concerns regarding the lack of planning re traffic flows south from the main development sites on main commuter routes that converge in Princethorpe – the B4453 and the B4455 (Fosse Way) – meeting just before crossing the A423. The largest development in the Local Plan is for 5,000 homes at a site just north of the A45 close to the junction of the A45 with the B4453 (Local Plan policy DS8). This is an enormous undertaking and in the current Local Plan detail is offered re infrastructure needs for DS8 – transport, schools and GPs. However, the infrastructure planning is not strategic; it covers an area no wider than the triangle to be developed under Local Policy DS8.

The *Strategic Transport Assessment Report* now published with the Local Plan with regard to policy DS8 considers no more than the following question: How does the traffic emerging from the triangle of development under policy DS8 access the immediate road network, in particular the A45/M45? The response is the provision of a south west link road (SWLR). Provision of the SWLR does not, however, address the wider strategic question for traffic planning: Once the traffic exiting the site re policy DS8 has accessed the road network, where will it go and what difficulties will it present?

In terms of breadth, the traffic planning consequent upon policy DS8 goes no further than improvements at Dunchurch crossroads. This fails to consider where any of the traffic exiting this development goes next. The Strategic Transport Assessment Report also details planning for other ‘pinch points’ in the road network, e.g. Rugby Gyrotory, the A426 north of Rugby, but nothing beyond the immediate vicinity of Rugby and the large Cawston development under DS8. There is reference (p.5 *Strategic Transport Assessment Report*) to the effect that

‘there are still likely to be a number of residual impacts which occur on the network requiring the identification of further mitigation measures. Some of these may be strategic but it is envisaged most of the additional mitigation would be required to deal with localised impacts identified on a site by site basis’.

This brief comment fails to give evidence of consideration of the serious impact we anticipate upon Princethorpe as commuter traffic leaving the Cawston site (DS8) travels south. Without consideration of mitigation measures at our core junction, the Local Plan fails to provide strategic consideration of infrastructure for traffic management.

The 5,000 homes under policy DS8 could generate up to 10,000 commuter journeys in and out every day. Even if the figure is only half of that, it is still a major increase in traffic flows on the system. The main reason the B4453 and B4455 carry large numbers of vehicles through Princethorpe every day is that they are the preferred north/south routes for large numbers of commuters who, on a southerly heading, are accessing key employers in the south of the county – Jaguar Landrover and other

major employers around Leamington, Warwick and Stratford. (This is in addition to the traffic routing to Princethorpe to feed the two catholic schools within the village – Our Lady’s First School, and the independent Princethorpe College.)

Notwithstanding clear signage for routes via the A46, the B4453 has been a longstanding favoured route for many commuters and there is no reason to think that completion of the Toll Bar junction upgrade will bear on commuter route selection. Quite simply, the Fosse Way presents a more enjoyable drive for a great many drivers, even if it does result in significant congestion at key junctions, especially the junction where the joint flow from the B4453 and B4455 crosses the A423 in Princethorpe. See our response under the first phase of consultation for details of the traffic data we commissioned in November 2015 (another data collection is scheduled for November 2016). Nearly 3,500 vehicles cross that junction between the hours of 07:00 and 09:00 every week day (one vehicle every 2 seconds). There is likely no affordable option for moving the traffic flows onto alternative routes, the strategic issue is to mitigate the tailbacks and congestion that currently aggravate traffic flows at peak times through the B4453/B4455/A423 junction in Princethorpe. A roundabout at this junction would allow current traffic volumes to travel smoothly through the junction and would enable the route to sustain a managed flow with the steady increase to be expected through the phased execution of policy DS8. Without such infrastructure investment, it is difficult to see how the minor roads leading into this junction can bear further traffic volumes. A §106 agreement is the obvious solution. With a total build of 5,000 houses, there should be plenty of scope to write in such an agreement in to the planning at this stage.

Delaying is not an option. On previous developments to meet local needs elsewhere (the construction of the Rugby western relief road) the then Parish Council objected that it would result in increase of traffic south on the B4453 impacting on the village and causing tailbacks to the B4453/B4455/A423 junction. They were told no such effect was likely. That proved wrong. Of the 300+ HGVs larger than 11.5m that daily use the B4453 (a minor road that is not fit for such large vehicles), 140 of these journeys are the outbound and inbound journeys of the 70 large bulk carriers that take that route daily from the Cemex quarry at Long Itchington to the cement works off the western relief road. That routing was the natural consequence of the development of the western relief road. We do not know if Princethorpe featured on the planning maps for the western relief road – probably not. The village does not feature on any of the maps in the 172 pages of the *The Strategic Transport Assessment Report*.

Flood Risk Assessment

Princethorpe has a high level of flood risk. That is acknowledged in the supplementary documents for the Local Plan – see, e.g. inset map 25 detailing the flood plain from the watercourse running through the village. There is, however, an immediate impact upon this from developments planned in our neighbouring village of Stretton on Dunsmore. Stretton on Dunsmore have already raised concerns about the Local Plan re the risk to flooding in their village, although the source of the flood risk there is different to the risk at Princethorpe and no note seems to have been made of how these two different kinds of risk are related.

The flood risk map for Stretton on Dunsmore shows that the main flood risk to the villages concerns flooding from surface water, not from the watercourse that runs just to the southern edge of the village. In Princethorpe, our flood risk comes from the watercourse rather than surface water. The indicative plan for 75 new houses in Stretton understandably raises concern for their Council re surface water flood risk. However, Stretton’s surface water flood risk is Princethorpe’s watercourse flood risk. The March 2016 floods in Princethorpe (3 houses inundated, several vehicles

abandoned, two vehicles 'written off' + one property with raw sewerage in its back garden) were due to the inability of the catchment area between Stretton and Princethorpe to handle the very heavy overnight rain that poured into the watercourse heading south to Princethorpe. Any development in Stretton that impacts on the ability of the catchment area to absorb rainfall and that adds to surface water problems in Stretton only adds to the volume of the flow heading south from Stretton to Princethorpe. There is no assessment of this risk in the Local Plan.

Amenities

We do not accept that adequate appraisal of key amenities (schooling and GP surgeries) has been provided regarding the proposed 75 new homes in Stretton on Dunsmore. Princethorpe falls within the catchment for the First School in Stretton. The first school in Princethorpe is a Catholic school that prioritizes families of that faith and is currently full. The Stretton school, Knightlow, has been full, closed to Princethorpe families, for two years unless the family already have an older child at the school. Consequently, some families in Princethorpe have to travel to Long Itchington for first school provision. It cannot therefore be true that the school at Stretton has space for the proposed development of 75 new homes when it is already oversubscribed within its current catchment area.

Policy GP2 of the Draft Local Plan states:

Development will be permitted within the existing boundaries of all Main Rural Settlements.

Further, at §3.11 (p.17) it states that

Main Rural Settlements have a sufficient level of services, or access to services to allow for development within the existing settlement boundaries.

The experience of Princethorpe residents is that this is not true with respect to schooling provision. We have no confidence that adequate consideration has been given to impact on the GP services in Stretton either.