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Response to the Harrogate Draft Local Plan Additional Sites Consultation

New Settlement Proposal: -

Natural Environment: we applaud Objectives 16 - 20 of the Local development Plan:

'To safeguard the natural environment and manage natural resources for the benefit of people today and future generations 'but fear that the policy to build a new settlement at either Flaxby (10.9 FX3) or Green Hammerton (10.9 GH11) contradicts them all.

Whixley Parish Council continues to express preference for the New Settlement to be at Flaxby, 10.9 FX3 which has better potential for contributing to the achievement of the following Objectives and Draft Policies of the Plan than the site at Green Hammerton (10.9 GH11)

The relevant policies are

Objective 1 (sustainable development)

Objective 12 (foot, bike and public transport connections) closer to existing town of Knaresborough

Objective 13 (rail, bus and road links) - (reference 8.77 aspiration to have new rail link)

Objective 14 (infrastructure and reducing congestions (roundabout already built - quick access to A1 in addition to A59)

Policy GS2 (G) (closer to existing (at Knaresborough and Harrogate) and proposed employment

Policy GS5 (3.47) and DM2 - FX4 (Strategic employment allocation for the landscaped 'green business park'

Policy NE8 (protection of the best agricultural land) - the Flaxby site is predominantly on the now closed golf club site - whereas the Green Hammerton site is on Grade 2 agricultural land/and a productive horticultural nursery offering good local employment opportunities

Policy T14 as the larger site, FX3, it is better able to justify the infrastructure provision to meet its needs - e.g. new railway station to serve the business park, electricity available from the Incinerator at Allerton Park, one roundabout already built.

The Parish Council feel the potential noise and air quality issues (from the A1M traffic) have been overplayed by Harrogate Borough Council Planning, given the prevailing winds being SW or W.

We also respectfully suggest that the new Rail Station to the north of the A59 should be supported, to serve both new residents and the proposed employment area.

Whixley Parish Council strongly opposes the New Settlement be placed at Green Hammerton, for the following reasons:

Objective 12 (foot, bike and public transport connections) Re-siting the A59 (already difficult and dangerous to cross on foot or by bike) will cause the loss of footpaths and bike rides on currently quiet local lanes unless expensive bridges/underpasses are built and considerable thought given to traffic issues.

'CEG Hammerton 'Emerging Concept Masterplan' includes proposals re-routing the A59 and creating a 'green 'boulevard' through Green Hammerton. This proposal will encourage drivers using the B6265 to use Rudgate (The road which passes Whixley Gate). Whixley already has a big problem with traffic speeding through on this route and this problem will increase if more houses are built.

Noise and air pollution will increase for Whixley and on the A59 affecting the new homes.

Public transport is currently limited to a not very frequent bus service to York and Boroughbridge/Ripon and eventually to Harrogate. The proximity of the proposed rerouted A59 would have a huge effect on the village of Kirk Hammerton destroying the peaceful character of this ancient village with its ancient church.

Objective 13 (rail, bus and road links) rail links are on a single line railway from Cattal to York. Rail infrastructure would need considerable upgrades to cope with the additional use from a possible 3000 new homes. Hammerton and Cattal have inadequate parking for current use.

This blue print appears to propose the eventual closure of both Hammerton and Cattal stations. Many Whixley residents walk to Cattal, the new station is much further from the village of Whixley and appears to involve a route along the A59. Whixley Parish Council seek reassurances that safe access to and from Whixley can be accommodated with an improved junction on the Station Road/A59 route, perhaps a roundabout with lights at peak periods.

Following conversations with the consultation team from CEG at Green Hammerton there appeared to be no real idea of when the re-routing would take place nor much idea of cost or the true feasibility.

Surely sorting out the traffic scheme is one of the most fundamental factors of such a sizeable settlement?

Objective 14 (infrastructure and reducing congestion) Two new roundabouts and realignment of the A59 are suggested, this would do nothing to resolve the fact that the A59 is already a very busy road. The addition of a probable 5000 vehicles using it would do nothing to reduce congestion in the area.

This blueprint shows no employment areas, again when questioned the CEG consultant said the only employment would be in the schools and shops. Again, this would mean residents of the new settlement travelling on already very busy roads and trains to places of employment.

The CEG blueprint omits the site GH2 in Green Hammerton.

Conclusion: -

Whixley Parish Council remain strongly opposed to this New Settlement at Green Hammerton, they are greatly concerned by Paragraph 7 which states 'Sites CA5 and GH11 also offer a greater opportunity to grow in the longer term' as this could lead to further developments in the future.

It is difficult to see this New Settlement proposal positively, as it will create problems for the surrounding villages. The needs of the people within these villages would be overwhelmed and the environment would inevitably suffer. Development will not happen overnight and major disruption will go on for years before any real sense of community is created.

Joy Richardson

Proper Officer to Whixley Parish Council

Forwards this response on behalf of

Whixley Parish Council

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