

Re: South Kesteven District Council: proposed housing allocation SKPR-322

With regard to Claypole's suitability for inclusion on the list as a larger village and the proposed land allocation; I feel strongly that this should be appraised and reconsidered for the following reasons:

Road infrastructure

Our village has had long-standing issues for many years regarding the sustainability of the infrastructure of our road network and more especially our main thoroughfare through the village. Main Street in effect becomes a one-way street for large parts of its length. From by the Church, past the shop, hairdressers, village hall and up to the Five Bells public house; at various points along that stretch bottle necks are created in the flow of traffic up and down the high street. There are always cars parked at various stages of Main Street, either by residents, visitors to the shop, or to the hairdressers. On street parking is normal and necessary, however this causes traffic congestion which can create frustration, tension and potential accident risks to both pedestrians and drivers, especially at busy periods during the day. In particular there are higher risks involved when there are school buses and morning/evening rush hour traffic, school runs and general traffic using our village as a cut through to link to Newark or to get across the back lanes to the A17 or Lincoln.

We cannot improve, change, or increase the width of our main street, nor use an alternative route through our village. All traffic must go up or down the high street at some stage and endure the gambit of dodging other vehicles, some of the drivers of which have behaved aggressively, especially if they've had to wait for any length of time at the pinch points.

To get to the school for drop-off in the morning some parents need to take their children to the village school by car. Inevitably this again puts a strain on the road network as the roads leading to the school are narrow and have parked cars.

The proposed site allocation to our village has the potential to significantly increase the volume of traffic and congestion through our main street.

Against this background of the potential increase of traffic flow to our village, consideration and provision also needs to be made for the external effects of the large-scale development taking place at Fernwood. There will be an extra 3000 new homes just over a mile away from our village. We have no physical barrier or control over where all these additional homeowners will drive their cars. Many of whom will use the village roads to get to the back lanes' road network leading to the A17 rather than getting caught in the Newark traffic. We are gradually being swallowed into an urbanisation project on our doorstep that we didn't ask for or facilitate but ultimately will diminish our enjoyment of our village.

Flooding

As highlighted above there's a substantial development happening at Fernwood within a short distance from Claypole, therefore reducing the soak-away benefit of land close to our village. This creates the potential for a rise in the water table and surface water feeding into the same River Witham which flooded earlier this year. Considering the above I have concerns that any substantial future development within Claypole could also add to the potential flood risk for our village.

Neighbourhood plan:

There was unprecedented support for the plan with 95% of those who voted saying yes to approving and supporting the neighbourhood plan.

Our neighbourhood plan completed in accordance with the feedback and wishes of residents, allocated limited housing development, and the proposed land allocation is well in excess of that plan.

Employment Land Needs

Employment provision is an important part of the long-term vision and strategy so I agree it should be placed in areas where it is shown to have the greatest demand and need. As far as I'm aware, an employment land study has not been done for Claypole.

Local planning policy:

This proposed development goes against the local plan as the field is in greenbelt. The development is too large and would increase the village population by over 13% which is disproportionate for the area and unsustainable.

Conservation of open land:

The field is currently a grassland habitat supporting, insects, birds and mammals. There are many species of small mammals e.g. voles, shrews, moles, wood mice. The barn owls and other birds of prey hunt above the field. Birds feed and nest in the hedgerows. Swifts, swallows and house martins hunt insects above the field in the summer months.

School:

Claypole junior school is meeting its current provision for school places – a development of the size proposed in this land allocation would likely require more spaces in the school than are available, particularly since families from Fernwood also send children to this school to gain access to the Lincolnshire education system.

Conclusion

Deciding where to place housing and employment is a difficult and onerous task as inevitably it is also an emotive one. Any proposed development plan will have far-reaching consequences for the future, and I am pleased that you have chosen to consult with communities prior to making any final decisions. To this end I implore you to gather all the relevant information and data and consider the long-term implications of your choices of chosen sites, both here in Claypole and within the wider community.

Any proposed solutions would also need to consider the combined implications and ramifications of the proposed developments at Claypole, and those due to take place at Fernwood in conjunction with Newark's Growth Plan. Rather than burdening our services there is the potential to lessen the load, especially on our road infrastructure and potential oversubscription at our school.

For all the reasons stated in this attachment I believe Claypole is **not** suitable for development as a larger village but is better suited for small-scale development as per our Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed land allocation is not suitable for Claypole and is unsustainable.