

Borough Council of Wellingborough
Site Specific Proposals and Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan
Rural Issues and Options Consultation Event
held at the Tithe Barn, Wellingborough at 7pm on 16th March 2006

Foreword

The workshop was organised jointly with the Wellingborough Partnership in order to:

- provide a brief explanation of how the area is being planned;
- give an overview of what has already been decided;
- explain the content of the Issues and Options paper relating to rural issues and the purpose of the consultation; and
- provide participants with an opportunity to comment on issues and options relating to the rural areas.

This paper summarises comments made during the workshops.

The comments will assist in the development of the Preferred Options.

Housing

Should the plan seek to allocate sites specifically for affordable housing where there is an identified need?

Should establish a need towards which one can work.

Difficult to get pockets of land for social housing e.g. developers get in first and owners ask for more money than the land is worth.

Essential to allocate sites in villages where there is a need – Parish Council should have a major part in where this will be located.

Dangerous to define sites specifically for affordable housing as they will not come to market

Should be a financial incentive to encourage landowners to sell their land for affordable housing - consider allowing some market housing on affordable housing sites.

Use section 106 agreements on urban sites to fund affordable housing in rural areas.

Can't have affordable housing within villages that don't have facilities because owners will need cars.

Important to sustain/create mixed communities – affordable housing needs to blend in.

Where should new housing in the rural area be located?

How should village boundaries be defined?

Parishes should identify which areas in the villages are suitable for development and which are not.

Parish Councils want greater involvement – local people should have a greater say about how sites are developed.

Parishes are not listened to when they ask for smaller houses. Planners should not grant planning permission for large houses

Planners do not take into account the environment of the village.

Important to identify the character of the villages - existing natural and historic assets should be maintained. Development needs to fit in with its surroundings.

Support for Environmentally Important Open Space designation.

In some villages existing boundaries should be retained but in others they should not.
Should there be a grey area beyond the village boundary, which could be considered for development that complied with a criteria based policy e.g. if there was a defined need?
Points towards Parish Plan approach.

Favour 'Local Development Village' type approach.

Some villages want to retain village policy lines whilst those with facilities want to expand
Should new buildings be constructed on the edge of, or within, the village?

Should 'Restraint Villages' be allowed to evolve?

Parish Councils should be involved in deciding which villages are to be 'Restraint Villages'

The fabric of village life needs to be re-invented – e.g. consider mobile shops and facilities with a dual purpose such as shop/library.

Village Policy Lines need to be expanded or removed in order to allow development where there is a local need not only for housing, sports facilities etc.

Village Policy Lines are needed in order to protect the villages – they provide greater certainty

Policies could allow for development beyond the Village Policy Line where there is a local need.

Employment

Which of the existing industrial estates should be retained for employment purposes?

Are there any other existing employment areas that ought to be safeguarded?

What measures, if any, need to be taken to ensure that existing employment areas match market requirements?

Should any new sites within the rural area be allocated for employment?

Should existing industrial buildings outside industrial estates be retained for employment purposes?

Need some retention for workshops – undertake a survey to identify what people do and what they need.

Earls Barton has industrial sites but can't force developers into villages. For many employers it is better to locate on estates in the town where suppliers etc are near by.

Williams Way, Wollaston should be redeveloped for housing.

Earls Barton Industrial estate needs to expand

Once you lose employment you don't get it back.

Possibility of employing village people in the village is remote - 25% of Scott Bader employees live in Wollaston.

Small businesses are often run from home and workshops etc are not needed.

Could be a need for some live/work opportunities and possibly some small storage units

Need employment to encourage local shops.

Whilst large factories that are now empty are no longer needed, due to the nature of employment today, employment areas are still required.

Staged process – develop some employment in villages and then expand if necessary.

Community Facilities and Village Shops

Should the plan seek to protect existing community facilities?

Are there any new community facilities that are needed within the villages?

Should policies in the new plan seek to protect and encourage local retail provision in villages?

Can't retain facilities if they are not viable – need support if they are to remain open.

Facilities should be saved/protected (subject to local need again).

Need to be realistic/innovative in order to meet modern needs

Ask Parish Councils to conduct consultation to determine which facilities are needed.

Encourage/support shared facilities e.g. post office in a pub (Isham).

Community shops? Subsidise mobile shops? Organic veg/fruit sales?

Ensure villages facilities can offer a service that no-one else can.

Lack of playing facilities - Parish plan can help overcome this.

Mears Ashby – parish cannot gain ownership of sports facilities - Earls Barton is losing control of facilities.

How can community facilities be funded (e.g. Earls Barton playing fields) in the absence of development?

Need to identify how the network of villages is going to function in practice - what role will the different villages play in providing facilities?