RMBC Core Strategy - Inspectors Examination – Submission of Matter 7

Dinnington & Anston Save our Green Belt Action Group

Reference 532909

Contents
  Preamble – page 2
  Matter 7 – page 3
Preamble

This submission deals specifically with the Dinnington area and will be presented at the hearing. **07/11/2013 - amended to reflect presentation at the hearing.**

Evidence has been drawn from RMBC documentation and other sources eg Minutes of Meetings, Emails and Letters.

This ‘summary’ has, in part, been drawn from Matters 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Where the material has been drawn from earlier matters in the Hearing the original paragraph number will be shown in parentheses after the current paragraph number.

Links are provided for all references. Some are in-line where they tend to refer to non-RMBC public information, whilst others are included on the last page and are address with an asterisk eg *1, except where reference is available in original statements.

The filename of the supplied Word (2000) document is “sogda_cs_inspector_submission_m7”.
Matter 7.1

Background

1 The group has worked within its own three aims and an agreement reached with the Council two years ago.

Issues from Matter 1

1 To increase the flexibility of the Core Strategy, we suggest that all references to North Anston, South Anston, Laughton Common, Throapham, Dinnington and Dinnington East be removed and be replaced with “Dinnington” or “Dinnington Area”.

2 (3) Local councils Dinnington Town Council (DTC), Anston with Woodsetts and Letwell have objected to building on the Greenbelt. DTC have gone one step further and objected to the Core Strategy in its current form.

3 (2) The Core Strategy calls for a reduction in recreational space owned by RMBC. To counteract the removal of the playing field, the developers have suggested using a recreational area which is unsatisfactory, in that it is over 1Km away, necessitates crossing a busy road and walking through a large housing estate with national acknowledgement of drug dealing. To safeguard the future of this recreational land DTC has registered its interest in the recreational area above for a ‘Right to Bid’ when the site is available for sale and has since agreed to request for an ‘Asset Transfer’ of ownership RMBC to DTC.

4 Parts of Dinnington East have had planning permission refused in the past on the basis of ‘urban sprawl’, ‘undesirable extension into open country’ and ‘good quality [soil] capable of growing good crops, and that it should remain in agricultural use’.

5 Parts of the area are not currently deliverable in its current form:
   The complete site is not under the control of the Developer
   Access is in dispute.

6 The Strategy identifies building on woodland with a tree preservation order.

7 (7) The current use of part of the area, in contributing to the Core Strategy is misleading in that:
   The report by Prof Walker “… open land laid to rough grass and scrub”
   RMBC’s report “… and evidence of informal recreational activity”
   The developers report showing images of it being scrubland.
   In reality, this land is in agricultural use, being used for growing a variety of crops over recent years.
8 (9) The soil of the area specified in the Core Strategy is of the highest quality and most versatile in the Borough, unlike the soil to the west of the settlement.

9 The NPPF item 112 states that the ‘lowest value land should be used first’. This is clearly not the case in the Dinnington area,

10 In taking account of previous work on sites within the Borough the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Non-Technical Summary of May 2011 states “[Borough wide] … The assessment of policies addresses the potential risks of negative impacts common to all of these sites, as well as opportunities. In the selection of these preferred sites, one impact which was not avoided and cannot be reduced significantly is that the Dinnington East sites are in area of the highest soil quality in the borough. This option was chosen regardless of this issue due to other potential benefits.” Begs two questions:
   1 What are these “other potential benefits”? Something so important that regardless of findings, no changes can be made, and yet there appears to be no public information available.
   2 If change “cannot be reduced significantly” why not make this clear to the consultation process, together with reasons enabling residents to make a better-informed judgement?

11 (9) Even to this day, the consultants, Jacobs, have serious reservations with development of Dinnington East and have suggested other more suitable areas in the locale, particularly to the west.

12 (11) The land to the west of the Dinnington Area has had a flood risk analysis conducted, which demonstrates its suitability for development. There is no net increase to the catchment area of the River Ryton, which is not the case for some other areas of identified land.

From Matter 3

1 The Core Strategy is weakened in that it fails to take account of RMBC’s own documentation, which shows that they have serious reservations of developing Dinnington East. (Settlement Capacity Report 2009 appendix14, Table 3.1: Representation Sites, page 3 *)

2 Another example is that much of the area is on, or adjacent to, land of a high landscape value. “(… And is within an area of high landscape value …)” (refused planning application 1980/0540 - direct link - http://roam.rotherham.gov.uk/PDF/PlanningPDF/XRB1980-0540.pdf) and
3.12

3 In the Dinnington area Brownfield land could have accommodated more homes, for example LDF0238 is identified for only 274 homes when other RMBC documentation claims more homes could be built on it “Further additional activity is under consideration on The Old Timber Yard, Outgang Lane with the development of up to 400 new mixed tenure dwellings by Westleigh Developments”. (Rotherham Local Investment Plan 2011-14, Draft Revised – 28th September 2010, page 115). Accepting that apartments are not attractive to mortgage lenders, the site would lend itself to the delivery of apartments for social housing creating greater scope for more houses, thus increasing the profitability. Additionally, this site is within easy walking distance of employment, shops and bus station.

Further gains in making the site more attractive to developers, in terms of profitability, would be the release of council owned land as suggested by the Council in its response to a question raised in 2011” However, the Council is in negotiation with a developer to provide additional affordable housing on nearby Council owned land” (Response by RMBC to questions submitted via Cllr Simon Tweed 8 Sept 2011, Page 8, Question 22 – direct link - http://www.saveourgreenbelt.info/docs/admin_110909_RMBC_SOGB_Dinnington_A nston_response_28.pdf).

Assuming the ‘nearby’ land above is not the adjacent Council owned Greenbelt scrubland, this Council owned land could also be incorporated into the Core Strategy, thus increasing the attraction of the site to developers and at the same time reduce the risk to high quality agricultural land in the Greenbelt.
Derelict land and scrubland to the south of the area (Kiveton Park Station) could be developed. We are back to matter 5. Reclassifying the site from commercial to residential may well be to its advantage, particularly as it adjoins a small number of existing homes, and has open views to fields. Agreed, it has access issues. However, these issues still apply to its use for commerce, perhaps even more so as the type of traffic may well comprise larger, heavier vehicles.

Within a short walking distance of this site is bus service to Sheffield and Rotherham, and a railway station, which provides short journey times to Sheffield, Worksop and also to Retford, connecting with the East Coast Main Line, just 90 minutes from London.

From Matter 4

4.1

1 Transport – The proposals for the east of the Dinnington area would mean those who work in Rotherham or Sheffield would have to travel the greatest distance of anyone in the Borough. The position of the preferred sites to the east of the Dinnington area in relation to the settlements of Dinnington and North Anston would see a large increase in the number of vehicles traversing the busiest parts of the two settlements to access the main transport routes of the A57 and M1 junction 31. These sites are in the worst possible location for good transport links in terms of infrastructure, safety, congestion, pollution, carbon footprint and journey times to Rotherham and Sheffield. A development to the West would give direct access to the newly completed A57 upgrade and on to the M1 J31 without any vehicle having to pass through the centres of Dinnington and Anston. The bus companies assess the bus service as being ‘Rural’ and confirm that there is no reason to change this in the future (Presentation at DTC meeting September 2013).

The above relates to the NPPF paragraphs 30, 34, 37 and 95

2 In times of moderate to heavy snow, the area is cut off, sometimes for many days. In the snow of a couple of years ago it took several days for a snowplow/ gritter to get through. Even then, buses were re-routed to avoid the more easterly roads of Dinnington to Anston, which were not ploughed clear of snow. Shops and supermarkets ran out of food, even bread. According to the Rotherham press, there was much beating of chests of councillors with images of relatively clear streets in the centre, whereas the residents of the Dinnington area were still contending with thick snow on the roads.

From Matter 5
5.15
2  Tourism – Yorkshire is the third most popular place in the world to visit. Dinnington East has an expanding wildlife centre, which is to be confined on three sides by housing in an area of High Landscape Value.

A development proposed for the west of the Dinnington is to include a hotel would provide a venue for potential visitors to the area to stay thus improving scope for tourism, particularly for Rother Valley Country Park.

Links to in-line references in the text
