For the attention of Richard Mapletoft

Ruddington Action Group objection to the allocation of 350 new homes on Green Belt land in Ruddington in the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies Publication Version

Dear Mr Mapletoft

Ruddington Action Group wishes to object to the proposed allocation of land for 350 new homes on Green Belt land in Ruddington in the Publication Version of Part 2 of the Rushcliffe Local Plan (hereafter referred to as simply ‘Part 2 of the Plan’). This objection is primarily informed by the recent inspector’s decision on the Asher Lane application, and the impact that this development is going to have on the village, particularly the village centre.

The Asher Lane appeal decision has granted planning permission for 175 homes on land which Rushcliffe Borough Council has not identified in the Local Plan as an allocated site and the inspector’s decision came too late to be incorporated and taken into account in Part 2 of the Plan. Therefore, as it presently stands and without further amendment to Part 2 of the Plan, Ruddington runs the risk of not 350 new Green Belt homes being built over the plan period, but 525, a figure which RAG believes the village simply cannot sustain.

The sustainability of such a level of housing is also not supported in Part 2 of the Plan itself which, at paragraph 3.69, states:

The Core Strategy sets a target of a minimum of 250 new homes that need to be built on greenfield sites at Ruddington up to 2028. It is considered that Ruddington has scope to sustain around 350 dwellings in total adjacent to the village, based on the capacity of local services and the availability of suitable sites for development.

Previous consultation documents prepared as part of the Local Plan have recognised the need to take account of any additional unplanned house building. The Further Options paper (February 2017) includes the following statement:

The Core Strategy sets a target of a minimum 250 new homes that need to be built on greenfield sites at Ruddington up to 2028. There are, as yet, no sites with planning permission which would count against this target.
Now that planning permission has been granted for the Asher Lane site, RAG considers the only appropriate course of action to take is to remove these 175 homes from the 350 figure set out in the Local Plan, thereby reducing the target of houses yet to be approved to a maximum of 175.

RAG believes there is an even greater imperative to reduce the number of Green Belt homes allocated in Part 2 of the Plan given the impacts that are going to result from the Asher Lane development. As you are aware, Ruddington has no route into the village from the south and so with the Asher Lane site being on the southern edge of the village, all traffic accessing it is going to have to travel through the historic heart of the village. The Highways Authority objected to the application on this basis and despite the mitigation measures which form part of the permission, including traffic lights at the junction of Kirk Lane and High Street, the anticipated levels of traffic which would occur are going to result in significant levels of congestion in the village centre, thereby making it all the more important to carefully plan for any further housing development in the village.

The village centre has undergone significant change in recent years with the closure of the bank and greengrocers amongst other retailers. A number of retail premises remain empty and many retailers and shoppers alike point to the levels of traffic in the village as the reason why the village centre is a less attractive place to shop. The Asher Lane permission puts the village centre at even greater risk and this should be recognised in Part 2 of the Plan.

Another consequence of an excessive number of new houses is the irreparable ruining of the character of this historic village centre by way of ‘traffic mitigation’ solutions, turning the High Street into simply a ‘through road’.

RAG therefore considers that the Green Belt allocations in Part 2 of the Plan should be amended in light of the Asher Lane appeal decision and the number of houses allocated reduced by at least 175 to prevent new house building in the village resulting in significant adverse impacts on the village centre.

Chairman, Ruddington Action Group