



Campaign to Protect Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

DERBYSHIRE VOICE

The newsletter of the Derbyshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England
December 2015



This site, near Swanwick in Amber Valley, is threatened with 600 houses

Greenfields, green spaces and the Green Belt – all of these are under attack across our County on a scale that has not been seen for a very long time.

Every planning authority is required to produce a Local Plan (LP), which sets out the overall vision, objectives and policy for future development in their area. Without an approved LP, districts are vulnerable to speculative housing developments, as there is no agreed local basis on which to refuse them.

Almost all of the Planning Authorities (PAs) within the County are struggling to arrive at an acceptable LP that meets the targets of assessed population growth within their areas. Of particular concern is the requirement to make available enough housing sites that would be sufficient for five years' supply of new housing, but the recent CPRE pamphlet sent to all members, called *Round and Round We Go*, laid bare the claim that this actually results in an increased housing supply.

Working with local Action Groups

The pressure for sites, particularly from speculative developers, is causing distress to residents the length and breadth of the County, as we will explain in reports from North East Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire. We are unable to take the lead role in opposing some of these damaging developments, but

THE STRUGGLE FOR LOCAL PLAN APPROVAL

We have attended some of the public hearings where draft Local Plans are discussed by the Planning Inspectorate and will continue to do so during December for Amber Valley and South Derbyshire. One reason for doing this is to provide some balance to the discussion held at these hearings. They are dominated by developers arguing that their proposals are essential for the Planning Authority to meet its obligations and targets.



A CPRE Committee Member with Blackbrook residents on a litter pick along the A517. We are also involved in looking after our countryside in practical ways.

are encouraged by the emergence of local Action Groups to respond to particular proposals. There are examples of these in all the areas we are considering, including: Ashbourne Aware in the Derbyshire Dales; Say No to Mickleover Sprawl in South Derbyshire; and Act Now for for Ashover in North East Derbyshire. We have worked with these groups offering support and advice.

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE



Ashover village

The North East Derbyshire Local Plan

The Local Plan for North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) expired in 2011 and the Planning Authority has yet to adopt a LP for the period 2011-33. This means that there is currently no up to date LP in place and, in the absence of a '5 year supply' of land for housing development, the District is currently left vulnerable to speculative planning applications.

During 2012 a consultation was held on an initial Local Plan Strategy which CPRE Derbyshire considered to be well justified, recognising the unique characteristics of different areas within the District and their particular constraints.

For example, the sparsely populated and scenic 'Rural West' was attributed a housing target of 30 new dwellings per year (600 over the Plan period) which was broadly in line with natural growth in the existing population (9% of the District) and reflected the fact that the area is generally unsuitable for higher levels of growth.

Similarly, the housing target for the 'Constrained North' of the District was set at a level below natural growth in the local population (44% of the District) due to the need to preserve the Green Belt within that area.

This approach resulted in an overall target of 5240 new dwellings across the District over the Plan period which, although less than that required to meet population growth (6680), was nonetheless considered sensible and defensible.

Unfortunately, the failure of other Planning Authorities to secure Government approval for housing targets below levels required to meet population growth subsequently prompted NEDDC to concede that their preferred target was unlikely to be considered 'sound' by the Planning Inspectorate. This prompted the Authority to go back to the drawing board and consider a new approach.

A revised Plan was released for consultation in February 2015 which this time presented an increased District target of 6000 dwellings, based upon evidence within the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). CPRE Derbyshire teamed up with CPRE South Yorkshire to assess the proposals within the Plan due to the overlap in geographical coverage of the two branches.

Our main concern was the proposed pattern of distribution for new housing within the District. Due to the presence of the Green Belt within the north, only 1000 new dwellings were allocated towards the 'objectively assessed need' of the 44% of the population living within that area, resulting in a substantial shortfall against the 2645 dwellings required.



*Proposed site for housing development at
Narrowleys Lane, Ashover*

The strategy to meet this unmet demand appeared to be an inflation of the targets for other areas within the District, including the sensitive open countryside to the west, along the fringe of the Peak District. In particular, CPRE considered that the proposed target of 700-900 new dwellings within the 'Rural West' was disproportionately higher than that required to meet the needs of the local population and would result in considerable impacts on some of the highest quality Derbyshire countryside outside of the Peak District National Park.

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE



Whilst CPRE Derbyshire remains a staunch supporter of Green Belt function in the prevention of urban sprawl and coalescence of settlements, we do not believe that the presence of a Green Belt designation should result in disproportionate impacts on other areas of equal (or greater) environmental quality.

The CPRE response to the consultation exercise identified this disparity in approach and suggested more appropriate targets in line with both local need and the capacity of the area to accommodate new development without excessive impacts upon the local countryside. CPRE acknowledged that, in some cases, well considered and targeted release of suitable sites within the Green Belt may be more acceptable and sustainable than permitting excessively large and damaging developments within other areas of high quality countryside outside of the Green Belt boundary.

Since the last round of consultation, NEDDC have concluded that their proposals, including the distribution of new development, would be difficult to justify to the Planning Inspectorate and have elected to revise their approach once more; this time to include a review of the Green Belt.

We understand that work is currently underway on this revised Plan and a revised timetable for consultation is expected in due course. We will continue to monitor the situation and respond to further consultations as appropriate.

In the meantime, CPRE Derbyshire is increasingly concerned by the impact that the absence of an adopted Plan is having on the ground. Suggested targets within the most recent consultation document appear to have paved the way for a rash of speculative planning applications, particularly within the marketable areas of countryside to the west of the District that does not benefit from existing Green Belt protection.

The villages of Ashover, Shirland and Wessington are all currently subject to a number of proposals which the Planning Authority appear minded to approve given the lack of a 5 year housing land supply. We continue to comment (and object) to inappropriate applications on a case by case basis, but would strongly urge local residents to monitor planning applications on the NEDDC website and comment accordingly. We would also urge local people to become involved in devising a "Neighbourhood Plan" for their area, which in the absence of a District-wide Local Plan may form the best line of defence against speculative planning applications in the short term.

Further information on the progress of the North East Derbyshire Local Plan can be found on the NEDDC website at:

<http://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/environment-planning/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-2011-2033>

STOP PRESS....

We have just been informed that NEDDC Councillors have turned down the latest proposal to build more houses in Ashover, despite the officers recommending that it should be allowed. This follows intense activity and campaigning by the local group, Act Now for Ashover, which was also supported by our committee member in the NEDDC area.

In the Chesterfield area, the Council Planning Committee has refused the development at Dunston Lane. This is after a long hard battle by our members and local residents to prevent this being approved. The letter from our Chesterfield Group Secretary was considered to be to a significant factor in their decision.

Derbyshire Dales Local Plan

Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) submitted a draft Local Plan for approval by the Secretary of State's Planning Inspector in May 2014. Unfortunately, in July of that year the Inspector ruled that the draft LP could not be approved, as it made provision for only 4,400 new homes by 2033, whereas, according to the Government's population and housing needs projections, 6,400 are needed. The council has therefore had to carry out a whole new process of plan preparation, with a deadline for submission of the new LP in September 2016.

One of the major problems the council has to address is the fact that all the required new houses have to be provided in the area of the district outside the national park, roughly half the overall land area. This is because the Peak District National Park Authority is the planning body for the park, which, as it rightly has special protection, is not required to accommodate so much housing and other development.

This map of Derbyshire Dales graphically illustrates the problem – the area shaded dark green in the south and east is the area in which all the new developments have to lie.



This is already putting enormous pressure on some DDDC areas, notably Ashbourne. According to one of our campaigners, planning permission has already been granted for 900 new homes there, over sixty percent of which are on greenfield sites. This will potentially increase the population of the town by 30 per cent, with no new infrastructure such as roads and health provision planned.

The last few months have seen the District Council working to update the evidence base for the new LP, including assessing housing and economic development needs, assessing land availability, landscape sensitivity and available infrastructure, and drafting a settlement hierarchy, which outlines the most suitable towns and villages for further development.

DERBYSHIRE DALES

All of the documents summarising this evidence can be found on the council's website at <http://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning-a-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2015/local-plan-consultation>

One of the key issues for the new LP will be the setting of a target for affordable housing as a proportion of houses provided by any new development. DDDC has a relatively good track record for providing affordable housing, and had set the target at 45%. However, one of the questions being asked now is whether this target should be reduced to 30%. There is also the question of just how many houses are required in the district by 2033. Although the previous estimate of 4,400 was deemed too few, the range being consulted about is between 5,300 and 7,200 dwellings. Whatever the final agreed number, this scale of development will put major pressure on greenfield land in the countryside and in our villages and towns.



Hopton Rise development near Middleton-by-Wirksworth. There are a variety of types of houses which are based on those in Middleton and Cromford with some stone cottage types, others similar, but rendered in a natural stone colour and also some narrow 3 floor town houses. They have used a variety of vernacular styles to copy the way in which houses in a village evolve and are all different.



DERBYSHIRE DALES



DDDC launched an initial local consultation about the new plan in November, with comments invited by mid December. CPRE Derbyshire responded to the initial consultation, which had only a limited number of questions. However, our response supported the option with the least new houses and the highest affordable housing provision, a major need in rural areas.

There will be two further opportunities for us (and all local Derbyshire Dales residents) to comment on the proposals for the new LP. In February/March 2016 the first draft will be available for consultation. Then in June/July, there will be a final consultation on the Submission Plan. All details will be available on the Council's website or from the DDDC planning section in Matlock (01629 761195).

Your CPRE Derbyshire branch will be doing our utmost to reinforce the message that the countryside must be protected against inappropriate developments.

We will argue that brownfield sites must be given priority, that small scale affordable housing developments must be supported, and that developments that destroy the landscape character and tranquillity of local areas must be resisted. We would encourage all members who live in the Derbyshire Dales to participate in the consultation and to stand up for the Dales countryside we value so much.

AMBER VALLEY



These pictures are of land off Kedleston Road in Derby, close to Kedleston Hall Estate.

Earlier this year, Amber Valley Borough Council turned down an application to build up to 400 houses on this site. However, the developers are appealing against this decision, and the appeal is due to be heard in the New Year.

Local residents have mounted a very active campaign called Kedleston Voice: www.kedlestonvoice.com



Development in South Derbyshire, near Mickleover

A large area to the west of Mickleover is being considered for development. Planning permission has already been granted to build 700 homes at Hackwood Farm, 410 within Derby City's boundary and 290 within South Derbyshire and 300 homes at New House Farm. A further 252 houses on pasture land controlled by Richborough Estates off Greenside Court are proposed.

A well attended public meeting was held at Murray Park School at the end of September 2015 at which members of the local community voiced concern over the proposal. A local action group: Say No to Mickleover Sprawl has a very useful website: saynotomickleoversprawl.com providing background information, links to key documents and information on consultation opportunities.

Proposed amendments to the Local Plan

South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC) has recently proposed that its Local Plan be amended and that a new strategic housing site be added called 'Land West of Mickleover'.

This is intended to provide around 1,650 dwellings, to include the 300 at New House Farm with planning permission, bolted on to Mickleover all along its western edge, from the A516 in the south to Sandown Avenue in the north and spreading west to the boundary of Bonehill Farm and the cycle track.



Fields like this near Mickleover are under threat

Consultation on the amendment to the Local Plan closed on 24th November. The reason SDDC have given for the change is that the monitoring of housing delivery (completions) in 2014/2015 was 306 dwellings below expectation and that therefore South Derbyshire have a further shortfall compared to their 5 year housing supply target.

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE



CPRE Derbyshire is opposed to these plans. Whilst we appreciate that Local Planning Authorities are required by national planning guidance to demonstrate enough supply of land suitable for housing for 5 years, we do not agree that allocating this large additional site is the best way to meet this requirement in South Derbyshire.

We believe that South Derbyshire's argument in favour of the present allocation is fundamentally flawed as it assumes that allocating more land to housing will itself secure the speedy delivery of such housing.

This is not supported by evidence. South Derbyshire's own assessment of existing permissions is not being delivered. This confirms the overall pattern across the country as described in a recent CPRE publication distributed to members: *Round and Round We Go*.

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE

Mickleover is a populous area with few open green spaces. The public right of way, the footpath to Radbourne, and the Mickleover Greenway cycle route on the northern boundary of the proposed site give access to open countryside.

Both are easily accessible and well used by local residents and by visitors from elsewhere. Should the proposed amendment be accepted, access to this rural landscape would be through a large housing estate and the tranquillity of the area with views across green fields would be destroyed.

The housing development would be clearly visible from some distance. There would be significant loss of ridge and furrow landscape and agricultural land. Once this area is built over this cannot be replaced.

For the benefit of the countryside it is of paramount importance that building on greenfield sites should be a last resort when previously developed brownfield land is available.

Transport is of particular concern because the highway network west of Derby is already operating at or above capacity and committed schemes in relation to junctions on the A38 are only designed to accommodate current traffic levels.



An urban expansion of the size proposed will generate a significant number of additional car journeys. South Derbyshire's proposal to make it a planning condition that developers fund a bus service would not be sufficient to absorb the additional journeys generated by the New House Farm development.



Housing is planned for this field near Mickleover

The response of CPRE Derbyshire

It is the view of CPRE Derbyshire that allocating land to the west of Mickleover to housing will lead to net harm to the natural environment, especially to landscape and amenity and would result in an oversupply of housing land.

We have engaged the services of our transport and planning advisor and have written to SDDC.

Our transport and planning advisor attended the public hearing in early December to put CPRE Derbyshire's case.

Attendance at hearings is dominated by developers all keen to make the case that the Planning Authority needs to allocate more green fields to them to build to meet targets, but the evidence is that this does not deliver and that their land banks continue to grow.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

After reading these reports from across the County, you will understand why we need to continue to be vigilant. Are you able to help us do this? Below are some of the ways that you could become involved. We would love to hear from you if you think that you could offer some time to assist in any of the tasks.

Be our 'Eyes and Ears' and respond to or investigate planning applications

If you know about the planning process, you could help to assess local planning applications. If you don't know how, we would be happy to teach you. We need people to keep an eye out for potential large scale developments in their local area – those that would have a significant effect on the character of the local landscape. It may be as simple as keeping us informed of new developments, or you can take a more active role for which you will receive training.



Produce publicity

You could write news releases or organise photo opportunities, create newsletters, website and campaign material for us.

Lobby

We need volunteers who are willing to speak to councillors, MPs and local authority officers about CPRE's campaigns on our behalf.



CPRE Derbyshire members on a visit to Baldfields Farm, Etwall

Fundraise

Help our fundraising efforts or use your skills and imagination to develop our fundraising potential.

Administration

Provide assistance with mailings, funding applications or letter writing.

If you'd like to talk further, please contact:
committee@cprederbyshire.org.uk or phone:
01332 557281



CPRE Derbyshire AGM 2015



CPRE Derbyshire gratefully acknowledges the support of NFU Mutual in the production of this newsletter.



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

CPRE Derbyshire
committee@cprederbyshire.org.uk
tel: 01332 557281