

Dinnington and Anston Save Our Green Belt Group

Response by RMBC to questions submitted via Cllr Simon Tweed 8 Sept 2011

"Our Vision is that all communities are empowered and able to engage in and benefit from, the transformation of Rotherham, with no one place or person left behind" (RMBC documentation).

Q1. If the intention is to build 700 homes on Dinnington East, why do the proposals call for the release of over 60 hectares of prime agricultural Greenbelt land, which is sufficient for 3139 homes?

A. The consultation material shows all the potential sites being considered in the LDF. These have been put forward by land owners, developers, other interested parties and the Council itself. The Council has a duty to consider all potential sites, even if they are ultimately rejected, to ensure the final plan is robust. The preferred sites shown for the Dinnington and Anston area have a theoretical total capacity of 3,655 new homes. However, the plan only proposes a target of 1,100 new homes for this area over the 15 year period from 2012 to 2027. Presenting all the potential sites was intended to provide choice to the local community in expressing where they thought local development should go. We actively encouraged suggestions for alternative sites during the consultation.

Q2. Why does the amount of Greenbelt land to be released vastly exceed the proposed building requirement, especially in the light of government policy stating "Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances". Also, the Regional Spatial Strategy clearly indicates a change of philosophy, in terms of Greenfield land release viz

"Limiting the claim on non-renewable resources of land by ... maximising the use of previously-developed land and existing buildings for development ... (Rather than seeking to predict and then provide for past rates of development and continuing trends in car use and dependency.)", and

"... steering effort and resources towards making existing settlements better places to live, work and invest ... (Rather than continuing past patterns of social and infrastructure investment and response to market preferences for greenfield sites.)".

A. Please see answer to Question 1 above. The amount of Green belt land allocated for development in the final version of the Plan will be only that required to meet the proposed requirement for the Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common settlement grouping.

Q3. There are 248 hectares of Brownfield land identified, on which 5,351 homes could be built which gives a dwelling dph of under 22, with one site of 2.5 hectares supporting only 26 homes. Why is the dwelling dph for Dinnington East more than twice the mean dwelling dph of Brownfield land?

A. The Council has assigned differing assumptions on the number of homes that can be built per hectare on each site considered in the LDF process based on site location, characteristics, context and constraints. Sites in or close to main centres with good local services and transport links are most often given a higher density (more homes per hectare) than those less well located or served.

Q4. If, in the unlikely event that Dinnington East loses its Greenbelt status, how many months will it take to reclaim Greenbelt status when no building has taken place?

The Green Belt is shown on the Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common leaflet in green. Where sites within the Green Belt are eventually allocated for development, through adoption of the Sites & Policies document, these sites would be removed from the Green Belt. The specific boundary of the new Green Belt would therefore depend on which sites are allocated, and regard would also be had to ensuring, wherever possible, that new boundaries are appropriate and defensible (i.e. that they following existing field boundaries, hedges or other features). Green Belt is a planning policy designation contained in the local plan for an area and is determined by drafting, consultation, adoption and review of the relevant plan. It does not depend on the physical characteristics of land nor does land "revert" to Green Belt if it is allocated for development but not built upon.

Q5. What is the difference in the type of homes being proposed that causes Dinnington East to have 25% more homes per hectare than Dinnington West?

A. Please see answer to Question 3 above.

Q6. What is the Council's preferred option (A, B or C) as specified in the 'Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Non-Technical Summary'?

A. The options referred to in the IIA where those considered at an earlier stage in the LDF process (Core Strategy Preferred Options 2007). A "hybrid" option of Option B "Matching Needs With Opportunities" and Option C "Managing the Environment as a Key Resource" was taken forward in further drafting the Plan. This is further explained in Fact Sheet No. 1 "How Have We Decided Where New Development Should Go?" available on our website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/forwardplanning

Q7. Why do the planning maps on the Borough's website and made available at the drop in sessions not include LDF612 as a site for homes when a study of it (including clear residential boundaries) is included in a council report?

Site LDF0612 (or "Dinnington West" as it has sometimes been referred to) is shown on the Dinnington, Anston and Laughton common leaflet made available at the Dinnington and Anston drop-in sessions, on our website, in local libraries and via the Council's Area Assembly network and Parish Council. The large scale maps available at the drop-in sessions also showed LDF0612. Dinnington West was put forward as an alternative location for an urban extension to Dinnington as opposed to Dinnington East. On balance, the Council decided to put forward the sites making up Dinnington East as "preferred" sites rather than Dinnington West given their better connection with the existing settlement. However, the

purpose of the consultation is to seek local views on alternatives. The Council will consider any comments submitted on the merits of Dinnington West versus Dinnington East in further drafting of the Plan.

Q8. Other areas in the borough have had the impact of housing reduced:

Why is Dinnington East the only area where 'impact cannot be avoided or reduced significantly because of other potential benefits'?

What are these potential benefits?

Why is Dinnington West not a preferred site, it being a "less sensitive landscape"?

A. All areas of the Borough have had their housing target reduced. The maximum proposed target for Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common in the previous LDF consultation (Core Strategy Revised Options 2009) was 7,123 new homes under Option 3 "Dispersed Development". Even under Option 1 of the same consultation, that would most likely have prevailed if the Council was still pursuing the Regional Spatial Strategy housing target, the number for Dinnington et al would have been 4,175. A new local target of 1,100 new homes represents a significant reduction for Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common.

Q9. Consultation Process: Which department is responsible for setting the time scale and dates? Which department is responsible for the choice of media by which to inform residents? What are the names of the media (eg Rotherham Advertiser, Internet) used by the Council to announce the consultation, and, for each name, how many adults were expected to be informed of the consultation process by referring to that medium name? What is the response from residents who live in the 'urban sprawl'?

A. The Forward Planning Team within the Council's Planning and Regeneration Service have led on the consultation with assistance from other Council services such as the Communications Team, the Community Engagement Team, the Press Office, the Area Assembly Team and several other council officers.

Around 5,000 people on our consultation database (who commented on the last consultation in 2009) were all sent individual letters. Those who supplied an email address were also notified by email. Email notification was also sent to around 100 "statutory" consultees and local interest groups. Adverts were placed in the Rotherham Advertiser, South Yorkshire Times and Dinnington and Maltby Guardian. (Each newspaper should be able to provide their circulation numbers if contacted.) We held a press briefing at the start of the consultation which generated further press coverage in print, online and on the radio. This also resulted in all the LDF drop-in sessions being reported in local press. We held radio interviews at start of consultation. We disseminated consultation material via Parish Councils, the central and all local libraries, on the Council's website, and via the Area Assembly Network. Local groups were also provided with consultation material, leaflets etc. to distribute as they wished. Elected Members and local MPs were all fully briefed at start of consultation.

Around 200 people attended the Anston LDF drop-in session with around 130 attending the Dinnington event. In total, across the Borough over 1,500 people have attended the 20 LDF drop-in sessions we have held. At time of writing we have processed just over 900 representations from around 700 respondents. These are available to view via our online consultation system at <http://rotherham.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>. We have a similar number of individual representations remaining to be processed following the close of the consultation.

The LDF consultation has met or exceeded the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This is available on our website. Following the close of the consultation, and after analysing all the consultation response, we will publish a Feedback Report setting out the methods of consultation, the key issues raised by consultees and the Council's response.

Q10. How much extra will be allocated to the education budget, and what will be the source of this funding?

The Council is preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Study which will help identify what infrastructure requirements will be generated by the proposed scale and distribution of growth across Rotherham. It will include consideration of infrastructure requirements such as education, highways, and health facilities and will look at gaps in provision and potential opportunities to close these gaps. The completed study will inform final drafting of the Plan. When the infrastructure requirements resulting from the LDF growth strategy have been quantified the Council can determine budgets and seek contributions from developers. The Infrastructure Delivery Study will also inform how the Council develops a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule to help fund necessary new infrastructure. This work will look at the requirements for infrastructure such as:

- Transport
- Utilities : Energy Supply
- Utilities : Water and Waste Water Treatment
- Utilities : Communications
- Waste Management
- Flooding & Drainage
- Educational Provision
- Health
- Community
- Emergency Services
- Open Space and Green Infrastructure Networks
- Sport, Leisure and Recreation
- Security

Q11. By what degree will policing be increased?

A. Please see answer to Question 10 above.

Q12. What are the concerns of local doctors' surgeries and hospitals to this proposed extra workload?

A. Please see answer to Question 10 above.

Q13. Flooding:

What is the probability of flooding taking place in topographic depressions?

How much extra surface water will enter the drainage system per 25mm of precipitation?

What concerns do Bassetlaw District Council and other councils downstream have with respect to an increased frequency and magnitude of overspill of the River Ryton?

A. The Council has carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 and Level 2 Study for the Borough to inform drafting of the Plan. Any local arrangements for dealing with surface water run off would be considered in determining the scale, massing, layout and drainage design for individual sites at planning application stage. At time of writing Bassetlaw District Council has not submitted any comments on the current consultation. However, the Council will consult neighbouring authorities as appropriate should proposed development at Dinnington be likely to have an impact downstream.

Q14. What will the disadvantages be to the current residents of Dinnington and surrounding villages if Dinnington does lose its 'town' status?

A. There are no proposals to alter Dinnington's status. The "principal settlement" category assigned to Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common in the Plan is a planning categorisation to inform its position in the Plan's "settlement hierarchy". The settlement hierarchy determines how much growth is allocated to which settlements based on their location, services, capacity and accessibility. The administrative arrangements for Dinnington are a separate matter. We wish to be very clear though that there is certainly no proposal for Dinnington's status to change.

Q16. What is the minimum level of development and type of development required to ensure that Dinnington retains its 'town' status?

A. Please see answer to Question 14 above.

Q17. On what date was Greenbelt status removed from LDF219 (land off Wentworth Way)?

A. Site LDF0219 is currently allocated as Green Belt in the Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1999). Green Belt status has not been removed from this site. Please see also answer to Question 4 above.

Q18. Effects on Educational Attainment:

How much extra will be allocated to the education budget, and what will be the source of this funding?

For each school in Dinnington, North Anston, South Anston, Laughton and Woodsetts, how many pupils have started school, during the academic year 2010/2011 that were not readily able to communicate using the English language? Please express in magnitude and as a percentage of pupils

Why is a new school specified in the Dinnington West plan but none for the remainder of the development?

A. Please see answer to Question 10 above.

Q19. By building over 1100 homes in the Dinnington area what will the benefits be for residents outside the local area?

A. Sustainable growth of Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common will support the settlements role in providing employment and services to a wider area. The new infrastructure that will be required to support new development will benefit not only residents of Dinnington, Anston and Laughton Common but also those who live in surrounding villages. New residents and the local spending they can provide will help support the vitality and viability of Dinnington Town centre. New homes will help to provide more affordable housing to help young families on to the housing ladder. An increased local population will help to provide a local workforce to support local employers – in turn employers are more likely to locate in Dinnington.

Q20. Given that 15% of proposed new residents will be overseas migrants and a further 28% of migrants from outside the Borough, some of which are 'recent' overseas migrants. What reasons do the Council have in appearing to encourage an influx of overseas migrants when central government is trying to drive down net migration and the Cross Party Group for Balanced Migration state "These are the latest population projections before the election. We are on course for an unsustainable and unacceptable rise in population. Over the next Parliament, at a time of public spending cuts, the Government will have to find the money to pay for one million new immigrants - a city the size of Birmingham. If politicians want to rebuild trust and counter extremism, they must stop ignoring the public's deep concern about this. The major parties must now promise firm and effective measures to keep our population below 65 million"?

A. The Council's reasoning for setting the level of our proposed locally derived housing target is set out in Fact Sheet 2 "How have we set a local housing target?" available on our website. This explains how we have considered the population and household growth projections available and how those projections take account of migration trends.

The Council is not encouraging an influx of migrants. We have a statutory duty to plan for the projected increase in our population over the next 15 years. We must produce a Plan that allocates sufficient land to provide the housing, employment and services that meets the need of all our residents. If we do not produce our own Plan we will have decisions imposed by government and risk developers cherry picking sites.

In fact, the latest projections which we have based our proposed local housing target on have fallen since those that informed the regional spatial strategy. Hence we have cut our target from 24,482 down to 12,750.

We have explicitly not included any additional "uplift" for Sheffield's growth in our new local target.

Q21. What is the reasoning behind continuing support for the now historic Spatial Strategy in the light of other local councils discontinuing their support for it, thus reflecting the policy of central government?

A. In fact the opposite is true. The Council is proposing a new, locally derived housing target that is significantly lower than the Regional Spatial Strategy target. We are the only South Yorkshire local authority to follow this course. This is a very important point. The vast majority of people we have spoken to support the Council taking this action.

We have reduced our proposed housing target from 1,160 a year down to 850 (24,482 down to 12,750 over the plan period of 2012 to 2027). This was for a number of reasons:

- i) To reflect the consultation response we received from our last LDF consultation in 2009 which gave an overwhelming objection to the scale of Green Belt release we were contemplating at that time. Our current proposals show a 60% reduction in the amount of Green Belt land that would be required for development.
- ii) To take advantage of the flexibility the forthcoming Localism Bill gives councils in setting their own targets which they consider appropriate for their area. When the Localism Bill is enacted, and regional strategies and the targets they contained are formally revoked, we can progress to the next stage of the LDF process by submitting our Draft Core Strategy to government.
- iii) To reflect local characteristics and current information on the capacity available on brownfield, greenfield and Green Belt sites. Historically, Rotherham has a "tight" Green Belt boundary which has resulted in pressure to release Green Belt land to meet our future needs. The development sites previously allocated in the Unitary Development Plan have either been used up or are no longer suitable, either due to site constraints or market conditions. Sheffield has an adopted Core Strategy based on their regional housing target. Barnsley and Doncaster have both continued with their regional figures. However it is worth noting that, in the main, neither Barnsley nor Doncaster has the constraining Green Belt issue that we face in Rotherham.

Q22. LDF238 - Why does the map, made available for consultation, show a maximum of 274 houses when the Rotherham Local Investment Plan 2011-14 states a maximum of 400 homes?

A. Outline planning permission has been granted for most of this site for residential development. The capacity figure given for this site in the LDF consultation reflects that planning permission. However, the Council is in negotiation with a developer to provide additional affordable housing on nearby Council owned land. This may provide up to 400 new homes in total from the development - but not all would be on the timber yard site (LDF0238).

Q23. With reference to the Growth Point Housing Targets, Rotherham MBC received to total of £1,166,814 from central government via Sheffield City Council in the financial years 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. What will the Borough receive for the financial year 2011/2012 and subsequent years?

A. Payments from central government to the South Yorkshire and Doncaster Growth Point ceased with the 2010/11 payment. No more funding for Growth Point will be forthcoming. The government has adopted a new approach via the New Homes Bonus whereby local authorities receive a payment related to how many new homes are built in any year. We have explicitly not included any additional "uplift" for Sheffield's growth in our new local housing target.

Q24. Housing development (in the broadest possible terms) – what benefit, in terms of funding, does the Borough enjoy from other local councils (eg Sheffield)? If this benefit is in 'kind' please state the nature and approximate value.

A. Any funding received from Sheffield was due to their role acting as "banker" for the South Yorkshire and Doncaster Growth Point Fund. The previous regional strategy housing target for Rotherham of 1,160 a year did include an element of Sheffield's growth. Our proposed local housing target of 850 a year does not include any "uplift" to specifically cater for Sheffield's or any other neighbouring authority's growth over and above any allowance for migration contained in government population projections. We have categorically stated that the LDF plan is not about accommodating "uplift" from Sheffield.

Q25. What effect will the proposed new housing have on the Social Services and other ancillary services budgets?

A. Please see answer to Question 10 above.

Q26. Why is Windmill Plantation, which has a Tree Protection Order, included in the proposal for Dinnington East?

A. Tree Preservation Orders would be respected in any future development of a site. The potential development sites making up Dinnington East show the broad extent of the potential urban extension in this area. If this urban extension progresses in the Plan then further detailed drafting of site boundaries would be undertaken in the next version of the

Sites and Policies document. In other words, features may well be included within a larger site boundary at this stage but, in practice, would be protected in further drafting of the Plan and in determining any planning applications to develop the site.

Q27. Why were planning application orders on LDF0216 and LDF0219 refused in the past?

A. The application for the existing houses on Wentworth Way and surrounding area (including part of LDF0219) was refused by the Council but granted on appeal by the planning inspectorate to allow the development to take place. Further applications by Wimpey, in the 1980s, were refused on the grounds that the land had not been allocated for residential purposes in the local plan and was Green Belt.

Regarding site LDF0216, no applications are recorded for the majority of the area. 30ha of land adjacent to Swinston Hill woods was subject to a residential planning application in 1964. The application was refused as it was within open countryside and remote from the defined limits of the village and the value of agricultural land.

For further information please see the Council's planning register, which includes reasons for grant or refusal of any planning application, available on the Council's website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/608/development_control

Q28. In the unlikely event of a population level surge, what would be the projected growth rate for hairdresser/beauty establishments, takeaways and charity shops in Laughton Road?

A. Please see answer to Question 10 above.

For reasons of clarity and to avoid confusion the majority of residents have expressed their questions in writing. We feel it is reasonable for all replies to be in writing, with any claim made being supported by evidence that can be understood by a 'reasonable person'.

Response in writing provided above.

In an attempt to be helpful here are examples of the type of answer we were expecting.

eg qu 18 part 3

"Why is a new school specified in the Dinnington West plan but none for the remainder of the development?"

Specimen answer: We asked Jacobs to conduct a more detailed investigation to include the phased implementation including services."

Specimen Evidence: Include relevant part of the request document to Jacobs together with dates and names.

qu23

Specimen answer: £0.00

Specimen Evidence: Name of report and relevant page number

qu24

Specimen answer: No benefit of any kind is being / will be received from other local councils in respect of the building of homes.

Specimen Evidence: None