

Submission to Gossip Local Magazine

An extra 200 homes for your area

That's what consultation brings, even with thousands of residents of the local community objecting to building on the Greenbelt. Dinnington East (bounded by Lodge lane in the north across Swinstons Hill Road past the Butterfly Farm, then Woodsetts Road down to Rackford road) which is Grade 2 agricultural land and the 'highest quality land in the Borough' according to RMBC's consultants, is destined to have 700 homes built on it as a preferred site.

The Greenbelt is under even greater threat than before as far more land is to have its Greenbelt status removed than is needed for the proposed 700 homes, according to the recently released 'Core Strategy Focused Changes 2013'.

The projected growth figures for RMBC indicate that the proposed increase in housing will equate to nearly one house per new person.

Where will the people come from?

The 'Core Strategy Focused Changes 2013' reveals that provision has now been made to take residents from other local councils (Sheffield? who have stated that they will defend their Greenbelt).

The Government have discussed, in Parliament, moving people who live in expensive rented accommodation in London and are having their rents paid by the welfare state in expensive to less expensive areas in order to reduce cost.

People will come from the Continent, with UKIP, claiming on Question Time on the 17th Jan 2013, that many immigrants will come from the Eastern European new member states of the EU. Here are three quotes made by the Planning Minister Nick Boles stated in Parliament as long ago as the 29th of November 2012 "Vast swathes of the countryside will have to be sacrificed to build new homes for immigrants"; "Migrants accounted for almost half of the housing demand, the figures suggest 100,000 new homes a year will be needed to accommodate them" and "We can't go on like this". The question has to be asked 'How much money, if any, will be paid into RMBC coffers for housing migrants at the expense of our quality of life?

Here's another question "What about localism, the great new idea from Westminster where the local community influence the development of their area?" It may appear that the people speak, but no one listens!

What have the Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston Action Group done about protecting the Greenbelt?

Delivered thousands of objection/opposition letters to RMBC

Have an agreement with the leader of RMBC and its CEO, which includes prioritising development of Brownfield sites and restricting use of Greenbelt to scrub and derelict land followed by the poorest quality land.

Had many meetings with senior council officers to minimise use of Greenbelt

Identified many new Brownfield, scrub and derelict land to the council

Had discussions with the Kevin Barron the constituency MP who has been 'kept in the loop'

Held a public meeting

Set up a web site to keep people informed (www.saveourgreenbelt.info)

Generated links with similarly minded groups

More recently the group have:

Made a presentation to Dinnington Town Council members to raise their understanding of the Greenbelt situation and the amount of anger it is causing

Written to Eric Pickles the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government asking him to 'intervene' in the current planning application for building on Greenbelt LDF0257

Written to the Planning Minister Nick Boles suggesting that the government make building on Brownfield land more attractive to developers

Written to Nick Clegg regarding the issue of housing overspill from Sheffield.

Requested Dinnington Town Council and Aston Parish Council to organise consultation meetings for the public and have RMBC planning staff available to answer questions and explain how to use enter comments on the online system.

As the Constituency MP requested to be 'kept in the loop' the four items of correspondence were copied to Kevin Barron.

What Next?

There are several avenues available to the group some of which are not ready for public disclosure. However, there will be public meetings, co-ordinated demonstrations including Rotherham and joining with another group to have one at Westminster.

The group is also committed to writing to landowners and developers explaining the strength of feeling and will of the local community, which will not diminish with time – "developers, go and build on Brownfield land and improve the area".

Use of the media and public meetings.

There is an agreement to take the case to the EU if necessary. What is becoming clear is that too many members of the community report that they will not stand by and have their quality of life be reduced any further, "permanent decent jobs is what this area needs not more housing".

What Can I Do?

Be aware of the power of the community – you are entitled by law to have a say in the development of your village.

Report anything you may feel is relevant to the cause of maintaining the Greenbelt to the group via links on its website (www.saveourgreenbelt.info).

Try not to take things on face value – remember the summer of 2012 when a ward councillor placed article in a newspaper clearly stating the 'RMBC will not build on Dinnington East'. Perfectly true, RMBC never intended to build on Dinnington East as part of its Cores Strategy. They don't have to build, for it is the developers who will be doing the building if they are allowed to.

Support demonstrations and photo shoots.

Become a volunteer.

Spread the word to friends and neighbours.

Final Point

The group is disappointed with the content of the Core Strategy document. Particularly with the increase in the 'non-negotiable' target, Sheffield's protection of its own Greenbelt by threatening Rotherham's Greenbelt and the agreement given by the Leader of the Council and CEO of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in November 2011. An agreement, which includes the prioritisation of developing Brownfield and derelict land, but has not become RMBC policy.

It must be said, that it came as no surprise that the Core Strategy published in 2012 appeared to take no account of the views of residents (from the 2011 consultation process) on the proposed developments. What is clear is that the content of the document will in no way dilute the commitment and resolve in seeking to protect the Greenbelt, maintaining its support of wildlife, being a theatre for recreation and exercise, and the production of valuable crops.