

Daventry District Settlements and Countryside (Part 2) Local Plan Written submission from Charlotte Mackaness, resident of Boughton

I would like to add to my original submission by making the additional points.

Soundness

In addition to the points I made in my original submission about Boughton being in the wrong village classification (having been incorrectly scored as a Secondary Service village rather than an “other” village), I would like to comment on a common feature of villages in a similar position.

Badby, Pitsford and Staverton have also been wrongly classified for the same reasons as Boughton. I would like to draw the Inspector’s attention to the geographical location of these four villages. Boughton and Pitsford and the two closest villages to the northern fringe of Northampton. Badby and Staverton are the closest villages to the western edge of Daventry. Does the Inspector believe this is a coincidence or a convenience? I believe the latter.

Spatial Strategy

Firstly, Daventry District Council’s 2018 endorsement of a growth deal (as part of the so-called “Cambridge-Oxford growth arc”) committing West Northamptonshire to providing 100,000 housing units by 2050 is way beyond the projected housing needs for the area. There has been no evidence provided to support the reasoning behind this decision, which appears totally unjustified and arguably out of kilter with a general public who generally accepts a need for more housing but also wants to see adequate and sustainable services to support it and green space in all forms preserved where possible. There is a real danger that the Local Plan (Part 2) could be used to justify this massive development despite no evidence being provided for the need to produce 43% more housing units than required.

Another topic brought up in MIQs, and pertinently to the Boughton area, is the North West Relief Road (NWRR) and Northampton Northern Orbital Road (NNOR). An important issue is terminology and an understanding of this. Historically and to this day many refer to a “north-west bypass”, which is commonly understood as a road that would complete the bypass around Northampton. Many people also assume such a road would be a dual carriageway. There is almost universal confusion and muddling of all three of these terms. I have seen this with members of the public, the media and local councillors, including those on planning committees. Many seem not to understand the difference between the two road schemes and, most importantly, the benefits and adverse impacts they will bring.

The “north-west bypass” looms large in the Joint Core Strategy and its existence was considered pivotal to the viability of some allocated sites, such as “Buckton Fields” in Boughton Parish and the Dallington SUE further west. Completion of the “north west bypass” was at one time a requirement of the Buckton Fields site being given the go-ahead but by the time planning was granted, the bypass was replaced by the North West Relief Road project, which is yet to be given planning permission despite Buckton Fields being well under way. Further, the NWRR is not a road that completes the bypass around Northampton but a road to mitigate the impacts of the 3,000-dwelling Dallington Heath SUE and will end just below Buckton Fields, which Highways’ own data suggests will increase traffic on the road along the development by over 80%. Such figures were not spelt out to the

planning committee at DDC, who clearly believed the NWRR was a mitigation scheme for Buckton Fields. In reality, it is a mitigation scheme that will require mitigation!

Northamptonshire Highways was unable to make a case for any of its proposed routes for the NNOR, despite its consultation material stating repeatedly but incorrectly that they would relieve congestion to the North of Northampton. This, coupled with a lack of funding, means the NNOR project (which would complete the ring road, albeit with single carriageway road) has been mothballed. However, both the NWRR and NNOR are still being used to justify massive development when Highways' own traffic modelling clearly indicates (when carefully analysed and poured over) that they will be over capacity at present traffic levels, let alone with more development.

Buckton Fields was given outline planning permission but each phase has required separate permission, thus far always granted. Phase one is nearly fully constructed and occupied, phase two has just started. In phase one and two, facilities cited in the original outline planning permission have either disappeared or been pushed back to later phases. As it stands, there are no facilities (neither school, employment opportunities, shops nor community centre) at Buckton Fields and there is a real risk the development will be a Sustainable Urban Extension in name only and made up entirely of housing. The experience of this SUE is not unique. I am not confident that the Local Plan (Part 2) ensures development is truly sustainable and that allocated sites are not granted planning permission simply by virtue of being allocated, allowing developers to simply go through the motions and provide no genuine or meaningful evidence of sustainability.