## Strategic Housing & Land Availability Assessment 2021 – SHELAA

Harborough District Council has recently published its Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment known as SHELAA. This is a compendium of ‘Evidence on the Potential Supply of both Housing and Economic Land across the District,’ and follows on from the 2021 ‘Call for Sites’ which invited suggestions for possible locations for development in the future.

SHELAA is NOT a Decision Making Document. Nor does it allocate sites for development.

All suggestions are subject to the next Local Plan and all proposed sites are subject to the normal Development Management Process (Planning Permission.) So at this stage they are all merely ‘Potential Sites.’

Of immense importance to residents of Stoughton is the submission by Wellcome which proposes the development of the whole of the Farmcare Estate known previously to many of us as CWS Farms.

**See Map:** The submissionbasically extends from Evington to Bushby to Houghton to Great Glen to Oadby plus some land to the South of Great Glen.

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As may be seen, the Proposal (Ref 21/8229) comprises the Farmcare Estate covering parts of Burton Overy, Gaulby, Great Glen, Houghton, Kings Norton, Little Stretton, Thurnby & Bushby and all of Stoughton.

It comprises 1696 Hectares (3731 Acres) and is part Brownfield but mainly Greenfield. It is described as a ‘New Settlement’ or ‘Garden Village’ and would include Housing, Employment, Retail, Schools and Social & Community Infrastructure.

It is claimed to be a ‘Sustainable Location for Growth’ but that ‘Strategic Highway Infrastructure may be required to deliver development on this scale.’ There would be ‘Major Transport impacts.’

Remarkable the Issue of the presence of Leicester Airport is NOT addressed in this submission. However it is acknowledged as having potential for Contamination and for Flooding.

The site contains ‘Several Conservation Areas’ and ‘Numerous Listed Buildings.’

HDC consider it ‘Not Currently Suitable,’ but the sheer scale of the site is ‘likely to present opportunities for mitigation.’

To its Advantage: All the land is under Single Ownership making landowner negotiations with the Planning Authorities a relatively simple operation. It is under the control of a Master Developer. (In November 2020 Wellcome acquired for £506m Urban and Civic which is such a company.) Recently granted Leases (mainly agricultural) are noticeably short to fit in with the proposals.

The Proposal is for 10,000 Homes plus Associated Development.

Transport and New Roads Infrastructure would need to be addressed through careful Master Planning.

Much of the Proposal is within existing Green Wedge, not to mention a swathe of beautiful Leicestershire countryside including productive farmland and a thriving and popular Airport.

HDC consider it is achievable in 11 – 15 years time. (Therefore NOT currently suitable.) However it is possible that ‘Phased Development’ could begin in 6 – 10 years.

*Stoughton Parish Council observes:*

*The suggested target of 10,000 new homes, if occupied by 2.5 persons per home would create a population the same size as Market Harborough (estimated 25,143 in 2020.) Market Harborough is accessed by seven roads of which four are major roads. It also has a Bypass which is vital to relieve congestion. By comparison this suggested development is accessed by a couple of country lanes.*

*It goes without saying that to make this remotely feasible, there would need to be as a minimum a major road constructed between the existing large Roundabout just West of Great Glen on the A6 and a point on the A47 just West of Houghton (near Winkadale House.) This would be virtually identical with a stretch of the previously proposed A46 Expressway and would cost many hundreds of millions of pounds.*

*Many of Stoughton’s residents will remember the two previous incarnations of this scenario – namely Stretton Magna and the Ecotown. Both were completely and utterly rejected following universal local opposition as being totally impractical as well as being social, ecological and cultural disaster zones.*

*On the face of it may seem a ludicrous pipe dream requiring astronomical investment into new road infrastructure, flood drainage and sewage disposal. On the other hand we must remember that this project has been placed at huge cost into the hands of a very tenacious, experienced and professional Development Company who will be far more competent than the proposers of the previous two submissions.*

*To repeat, this is purely, at this stage, an exploration of possible future land allocation which we must all watch intently and in our minds weigh up what value we put on a large and particularly beautiful swathe of rural Leicestershire, its flora and fauna and its farming heritage.*