

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 9 MAY 2013

REPORT OF THE BARWELL & EARL SHILTON SCRUTINY GROUP

WARDS AFFECTED: BARWELL



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

This is the first draft of the report of the SUE subgroup to Scrutiny and I apologise to my fellow SUE members for the short time they have had to read the report and submit comments, but if any other comments are received or amendments requested, these will either be reported at this Committee or at the next meeting. Two of the Councillors are also on this Committee and I am sure they will be prepared to express their opinions of the usefulness of this subgroup and of the meetings they attended.

May I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors for their attendance at the Committee meetings as well as all the Officers and Outside Bodies that took part. I feel the meetings were extremely useful and a number of interesting discussions and questions were raised at them and I hope it will continue when the Earl Shilton application is submitted

Purpose of Report

To inform members of some of the issues and outcomes that came from the Scrutiny Sub Committee formed to discuss the Planning application for the SUEs in Barwell, but to also include the expected SUE application for Earl Shilton.

Recommendations

To confirm the ongoing formation of this subgroup to look at the Earl Shilton SUE application when submitted.

It is recommended that once the Earl Shilton application is received that the Traffic Impact and the Traffic Modelling be put to public consultation as soon as possible.

That if possible pre-application discussions take place with the Developers to ensure that no more flats or apartments are built in Earl Shilton unless they can prove, without doubt, that there is a need for them and that instead town houses or similar are built.

That the same legal advice that was sought for the Barwell application, be sort, if necessary, for the Earl Shilton application to ensure that the best financing of all Infrastructure Improvements are fully and properly funded by Section 106 money or CILs.

That a close eye be kept on the proposed STW pipeline to ensure that it is completed in 2013 as promised so that no additional capacity is put on the Earl Shilton Sewerage systems or Sewage works.

Background to Report

At the first meeting a programme of work to be discussed at future meetings was drawn up :-

1. To meet first with the Developers, Leicestershire County Council and our own transport consultants.
2. Sewage works (Severn Trent to be invited)
3. Infrastructure Plan (including PCT, Education)
4. Financing infrastructure improvements including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
5. Affordable Housing
6. Strategic Transport Assessment
7. Employment

Highways

The first meeting was with the Developers and LCC and it became apparent right from the start that the Highway issues were going to be the most difficult because the developers were using their own Highway Modelling system in their Transport assessment, whereas the County Council were using their own LLITM (The Leicester & Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model). The County Council & the Developers had apparently started pre-application discussions during the Summer of 2011 and discussions were still ongoing when we met with them. My first question to them was, is there likely to be agreement between them both in the near future and they said that discussions were ongoing but they hoped to have all issues sorted soon. We also asked whether the final report would be in a format that we could all understand and in plain language. They again said it would. We also asked if it would be going out to public consultation and again they said that it would. We also asked whether the developers had taken into account all the additional planning applications that had been submitted or approved within the surrounding areas including adjacent Authorities, and to make sure we gave them a list of the ones we knew about. They thanked us for the list and said they would take it back to ensure all the facts were taken into account.

One of the main concerns we had with highways were the narrow congested streets that were already present in both Barwell and Earl Shilton. The main ones in Barwell being, The Common, Chapel Street and Stapleton Lane which have traffic parked on one side of the road causing problems for passing traffic and thereby congestion. These roads are also used by people from Hinckley & Burbage as a short cut to Stapleton Lane Recycling Centre or to get to Ashby Road and then to Woodlands or Market Bosworth etc. There are similar roads in Earl Shilton. These concerns were mentioned at the first meeting with the Developers & Highways and at every subsequent meeting we had with Highways.

At our final meeting we had with our officers and LCC Highways on the Traffic Assessment and modelling this problem was again mentioned and they said that in Barwell, traffic lights would replace the roundabout in the centre of Barwell and that these roads would become self regulating. They said that this meant that vehicles using these roads would find them congested and busy and when they find that they are being delayed, they will find an alternative route using main roads, which may be longer, but, in the long, run faster. We may not agree with their findings but that is their decision. I understand that there is a condition in the Planning Application which states that if there are problems concerning traffic then that problem can be revisited.

We had several meetings with Leicestershire CC and our officers and consultants, but in April at our final meeting on the Transport Assessment we shared our frustration at the amount of time taken by both the Developers and the Leicestershire County Council to reach agreement on all the aspects of the Traffic assessment and modelling. This took so long that the date for the Planning application to be heard had to be changed and it also gave very little opportunity for consultation with Parish Councils in villages affected by increased traffic or the general public. We asked that when the Earl Shilton application is submitted that the traffic assessment be carried out quicker. We were assured that the Earl Shilton SUE was taken into account when the Traffic assessment and modelling was done for the Barwell SUE. This is why we are asking for the recommendation stated.

Severn Trent Water (STW)

The meeting with STW did not go according to plan as all relevant organisations were present to discuss sewage arrangements for the SUE but STW did not show, but instead sent a written statement which outlined their plans, but left lots of questions unanswered. One of their comments concerned the Earl Shilton Sewage Works and in their statement said that they didn't know whether they were going to close it, but the Environment Agency had objected because the treated sewerage effluent flowed into a local stream and if this stopped, the stream would dry up and they didn't know what effect that would have on the

local environment. So they then said they might move it to another place. Members of the panel also raised concern over the Barwell Pumping Station stating that even in moderate rainfall the system could not cope and overflowed several times a year. We requested that Severn Trent be invited to another meeting to answer all the unanswered questions.

When Severn Trent came to the meeting they stated that the Earl Shilton Sewage Works would remain and that to ease the pressure on it, a new pipe line would be built between Barwell and Hinckley Sewage works during the Summer of 2013 and we were shown a plan showing the proposed route. Questions were asked about various works on the plan i.e. how were they going to get under the railway line and all major roads without causing congestion. It was also pointed out that under no circumstances could they close Sapcote Road, Burbage and Brookside at the same time as it would cause chaos in Hinckley by closing two of the major roads leading into Hinckley, they said that they would take that point into consideration.

They were also asked about the survey on the sewerage system in the Leicester Road area that they promised would be done in 2011 /2012 and as far as we knew this still had not been done and secondly, where was the sewerage from the Leicester Road site that is now under construction going and how was it going to get there, as the Leicester Road sewerage system is already at capacity and in times of heavy rain causes flooding in other streets off Leicester Road. They did not know and said that they would get back to us, we are still waiting to hear on both questions, despite repeated requests to Simon Wood to get an answer.

Infrastructure

We were given regular updates on what was proposed and at the last meeting we were given the final infrastructure improvements and the CIL agreements that had been reached.

Affordable Homes

In talks with the developers we stated at the outcome that we did not want flats building but would prefer town houses or similar, but requested that they look into the sort of houses that were required by people on the waiting list etc. This they agreed to do.

General

All the other items mentioned at the beginning were discussed at various times throughout our meeting but the items listed above were the main items of discussion that merited the most attention.

I understand that some site works concerning the new STW pipe line is already taking place so that hopefully the new pipe line will be in operation before work is commenced on the Earl Shilton SUE, if approved.

Most of the final details were included in the report submitted to the Planning Committee and I am sure that all members will either have read them or been told about them.

Background papers: None

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