

Notes from the Public Meeting held in the Village Hall on 27 July 2016 at 7.30pm to discuss SODC Local Plan 2032

There were 151 people attending the meeting from Great and Little Haseley, Great and Little Milton, Stadhampton, Tiddington and Chalgrove. Apologies were received from H Harvey, K Sentance, F and D Heywood and S Hale.

The Chairman then went on to explain that the Parish Council had called the meeting to try to explain the process that SODC was going through in preparing its Local Plan 2032 and how it could affect The Haseleys and surrounding villages and communities. He then introduced the District Councillor, Stephen Harrod and then said that the Leader of SODC, John Cotton would be joining the meeting shortly.

The Chairman then outlined the way in which SODC had arrived at the figure of needing 19,500 houses over this time span. It had been established through a Strategic Housing Market Appraisal (SHMA) that looked at employment, growth in population and other elements. SODC in previous consultations had reduced this figure to 3,500 houses as sites had been found that would take 16,000 houses at Didcot, Banbury and other sites across the region plus each village would have to find sites for an extra 10% for larger villages or 5% for smaller villages. In the Haseleys case this would require eight or nine more houses, but this would be taken up with the six affordable housing already in the planning stage and the possibility of two houses on the Old School site.

This still left 3,500 houses unaccounted for and SODC believe that a new settlement would be the best solution. They therefore put forward seven sites,

Chalgrove Airfield,

Harrington (Junction 7 of the M40 previously known as Stone Bassett),

Culham Science Village,

Lower Elsfield (just off the northern Ring Road, west of Green Road roundabout),

Wick Farm (again, just off the northern Ring Road and a little closer to Green Road roundabout than Lower Elsfield)

Thornhill (close to the park-and ride)

Grenoble Road (close to the Kasam stadium)

The latter five are all green belt sites and were therefore rejected which left Chalgrove and Harrington, both of which have major implications for The Haseleys and surrounding communities. SODC had put forward as their preference Chalgrove Airfield which was currently owned by the MoD who were looking at giving it back to the government.

The Chairman then went on to outline the implications of both sites on the Haseleys say that Chalgrove would have a slightly lower impact because it was further away although there was the problem of rat running. Harrington would be a much bigger threat as this site could potentially take up to 15,000 houses which would be the equivalent to a small city.

The Parish Council had attended various SODC road shows and workshops to get as much information as possible.

During this time J Cotton joined the meeting. The Chairman then handed over to S Harrod for his input. S Harrod asked J Cotton why SODC was not waiting for the Growth Board to decide in September whether the figure of 19,500 was in fact the correct amount. Also, the SHMA was not up to date taking into account BREXIT and the possibility that less people from the EU may come to work and live in the UK. J Cotton replied that it was necessary to keep things moving as the current Local Plan had run out and there was a danger that developers would build houses anywhere and not where the Council would prefer to see them built. He also said that talking about green belt housing need in itself is not a reason for building in the green belt. He personally had made the decision to put Chalgrove first in the list of sites. He went to say that developers liked large sites as it was easier for them to deal with. A member of the audience said that it was morally reprehensible to say the large sites were best and he then apologized for this remark but still said that large sites were much easier to work with.

A number of questions were taken from the floor on “has due process taken place as the Council had put forward 7 sites but had discarded 5”, problems with traffic as roads were not suitable, damage to the environment and the fact that the Martin Baker, the ejector seat people would be staying on the airfield (although a different area) was it the right site to build houses with an explosives store and relocated runway. J Cotton said that to propose to build on a green belt site needs a very strong case that there are no viable alternatives.

J Cotton was asked what was the likelihood of either site taking place and he said on a scale of very unlikely, unlikely, likely and very likely Chalgrove stood at likely and Harrington at very unlikely although he did not wish to be held to this.

He impressed on everyone present that this was just a consultation and that any reply put in to SODC should be on planning issues and not just because we don't want this settlement. He was asked for a possible timetable should Chalgrove Airfield be accepted and he said that once the August deadline had passed, the results of the consultation would be collated and then probably a small consultation group would look at the outcome. It would be tested by the Planning Inspector and it would then go to Council probably in March/April 2018 with the first houses being built in 2018/19 or 2019/2020. He was asked what the main points should be in any reply and he listed:

- Transport
- Aircraft
- Flooding
- Environment

He then went on to say it was necessary to say why an alternative was better. He was asked by S Harrod what would happen to the Local Plan with regard to the possible change in Unitary Authority. J Cotton responded saying that whatever the form of local government they would need a Plan and if the one proposed had gone through the process and been accepted, they would use this. If it had not, they would go through the same process. An extension of the consultation period was asked of J Cotton who said he did not think it was in his power to extend it but would go away and think about it.

J Cotton was thanked for his time and answers and left the meeting.

The Chairman then asked people who had started to leave to make sure they picked up the possible answers to the questions on the consultation website and for those who were not on line, a form for them to complete.

The Chairman then asked those people who wished to be involved in a group to fight the decisions should come forward and contact details would be made available. A group came forward and the meeting closed at 10.00pm.