

The South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Team
Urban Environment
Orchard House
Farrier Street
Worcester
WR1 3BB

October 27th 2008

Dear Sir or Madam:

The South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper Response

I am writing to provide my views on the Preferred Options as they affect the area covered by the West Worcestershire parliamentary constituency, as defined by the boundary commissioner for the next General Election.

I object strongly to the top down imposition of these housing numbers from the Regional Spatial Strategy. I believe it would be much more sensible to plan on a parish by parish and town by town basis. Nevertheless, I believe that such an approach would be consistent with housing growth of approximately 4,900 homes in Malvern Hills District in the next 20 years, since this is consistent with what has been achieved in the last decade.

There is a general acknowledgement that housing is very expensive in Malvern Hills and Wychavon and more affordable housing provision is needed.

The following points reflect both my own views and those of the many local residents who have contacted me and the residents who attended two public meetings on this topic during the consultation period.

Overall Spatial Vision

Malvern Hills District does probably have a need for 4,900 homes over the period covered. However, the SWJCS now puts as many as 10,000 in the district. I strongly object to this allocation of Worcester City overflow into Malvern Hills.

West Worcestershire is already suffering from underinvestment in infrastructure. The Southern ring road from Junction 7 of the M5 is already well over capacity.

The rail link to London along the Cotswold line is the slowest and worst performing rail line in the country.

No major housing growth should be started until funding for better infrastructure is in place.

Policy CS1 Settlement Hierarchy

West Worcestershire is a large, rural area and will always rely on some form of personal transport. Carbon emissions from personal transport will gradually reduce through more efficient engines and car pooling. Electric cars can be charged using green sources of electricity. It would be wrong to plan housing for the next 20 years on an assumption that there should be no growth in category 3 settlements because personal transport is unsustainable and these communities lack public transport. I live in a Category 3 (or 4) settlement in Worcestershire and my parish supports building affordable dwellings on a rural exception site. I believe more of the 4,900 homes planned for Malvern Hills should be built in Category 1, 2 and 3 settlements, rather than in vast urban extensions on green fields. This would help falling rural school rolls, rural post offices, rural pubs and shops and allow public and community transport to be more viable.

Policy CS3 Major Urban Extensions

I object in the strongest possible terms to the two planned major urban extensions to the South and the West of Worcester. This is simply putting Worcester City overflow into green field areas in Malvern Hills District.

The location of an urban extension of 3,500 homes at Lower Broadheath will put through commuting pressure on the villages of Ombersley, Holt Heath and Hallow. It is simply implausible to believe that everyone living in this urban extension will cycle to a nearby workplace or take public transport.

The settlement of 3,000 homes near St. Peter's concerns residents of Kempsey who fear losing their village identity. It is essential that the community of Kempsey is protected to the North and East by an area of green belt.

Policy CS4 Malvern

I object to the large areas of green field development proposed as urban extensions for Malvern. By increasing the assumption on windfall and by encouraging greater growth in category 1, 2, and 3 settlements, the need to build such huge estates on green fields should be reduced and potentially eliminated.

Policy CS2 Location Strategy

I challenge the assumption on windfall development that has been used in the SWJCS. The South Worcestershire windfall development level in the last 5 years has been over 450 per annum. The SWJCS assumes a cautious level of sixty homes per annum in Malvern Hills for the years 2011 – 2026, 52 in Worcester and 50 in Wychavon. This is a dramatic decline from 450 to 162. **This cautious assumption is not justified.** If the 2008-2011 assumption of 339 is used for the last 15 years, windfall would be 5085. If windfall continues at the current rate, then it will be 6750. The current assumption is

only 2430. This means that the SWJCS unnecessarily results in green fields being zoned for housing.

Policy CS 11 Infrastructure

I strongly support dualling of the Southern Ring Road around Worcester

I strongly support investment in the railway infrastructure, especially the dualling of the Cotswold line and the establishment of a Norton Parkway station. If the South Worcestershire Councils and the County Councils approach Network Rail by the end of 2008, before Network Rail settles its plans for the next phase of investment, then the development of this crucial site could happen sooner than you assume.

Policy CS12 Moving around

I strongly support the development of transport links using the old railway branch lines in Worcestershire.

I support the enhancement of walking, cycling and public transport facilities but I do not think they will ever be adequate to meet the travel needs of the South Worcestershire rural community.

Policy CS15 Rural Exception Sites

I strongly support rural exception sites and community development land trusts. These should be used where possible to meet the affordable housing needs of South Worcestershire.

Policy CS19 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

I support the increase in renewable energy sources in Worcestershire. Great care needs to be exercised about the appropriate location of these facilities. For example, wind farms should not be encouraged when visible from areas of outstanding natural beauty and biomass plants should not be built a long way from the grid.

Policy CS22 Open Space

I support the improvement of open spaces, particularly in the urban areas. In Malvern there is a need to designate an area of open space for the development of recreation for young people. Land that used to be a BMX track that lies adjacent to Townsend Way would be suitable for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Harriett Baldwin