

MEETING WITH WOOLFOX AGENTS 19 MARCH 2019

A meeting was held with John Edmond, a Property Lawyer who is a consultant to Andrew Granger & Co, and Adam Murray from Grangers, the Agents for the Hill family, the Landowners.

The aim of the meeting was to brief us on the current plans for a 7,500 house Garden Village, schools, shops and employment activities on the Woolfox Airfield site and the adjacent Hill owned land.¹ This development when completed would be a town larger than Oakham.

The Hill's aim is to get the scheme into the evolving Rutland Plan, at the expense of the St George's development if necessary. They believe that the present Rutland plan with its development concentrated on Oakham and Uppingham, along with St George's is flawed as it is not in line with the August 2018 Government Garden Communities Prospectus.² They strongly believe that the Woolfox plan could meet Rutland's needs until 2036 and probably to 2050 obviating the need for further development of Oakham and Uppingham. Woolfox would offer certainty, jobs, schools, affordable housing, council housing, as well as high quality market housing.

The site is in the A1 corridor and well placed within the circle of Peterborough, Grantham, Leicester and Nottingham. It would be part of a cross boundary working involving other local authorities. Phase 1 of the scheme for some 2500-3000 houses would not entail access problems for the present A1 as it has adequate capacity. They also believe that this phase, provided it received the necessary permissions, could commence in 2023.

We were briefed on the way ahead for this scheme. Importantly a meeting with Government is planned to discuss to discuss the Garden Communities Prospectus and garner support for it. An Appraisal Report will be handed to Granger's development team next week and when agreed it will be forwarded to RCC. A public meeting in Victoria Hall, Oakham is planned for 12th April. A website will be up and running shortly. A meeting with Highways England is scheduled to discuss the wider strategic A1 corridor. No details of the financing of the scheme were given and no Developers had yet been briefed.

¹ The Hill family are landowners with properties around the country. They are not developers

² This prospectus sets out how we can support local areas who want to create new garden communities, and the key qualities that we expect proposals to demonstrate.

It offers tailored government assistance to deliver garden communities of at least 1,500 homes, with priority given to those of over 10,000 homes.

The following comments were given:

1. We were sceptical about their views on the present capacity of the A1 to cope with even phase 1 of this scheme.
2. They appeared not to have grasped the effect of the vast increase in cars that these houses will generate and the effect it could have on Great Casterton in particular. The plans for the North Stamford development means that GC is the “meat in the sandwich” between these two developments.
3. Rutland is a rural county with pretty stone villages connected by rural roads. People come to live in Rutland for those reasons and for that reason the house prices are dearer than in the surrounding Counties. They would not be happy if a large new town was built in their vicinity.
4. It was not clear where people living in Woolfox would work. Moreover the nearest shopping town would be Stamford which already has a parking problem. Extra bus services will not solve that dilemma.
5. Consequently we could not give our support to this scheme. This was understood and accepted, but they would like to keep in touch with us.

Mark Bush
Chairman Parish Council
19th March 2019