



Droitwich Spa Civic Society

SWDP Team
Orchard House
Farrier Street
Worcester
WR1 3BB

3, The Orchard Lea
Droitwich Spa
Worcs
WR9 7AL

11/11/11

Dear SWDP team

Civic Society response to the Draft South Worcestershire Development Plan..

1. Population Projections/Demand for Additional Housing

(Paras 2.6,2.7,Summary Document)

We are disinclined to challenge the population projections on which the plan is based. However, we do not share the assumption that the higher **number of households** will necessarily translate into an equivalent **demand** for additional dwellings on which the plan is based. Already, extant planning permissions for housing are not being actioned because of insufficient demand. The depressed housing market will persist for some time and the assertion made by interested parties that making land available will itself help stimulate demand is special pleading by developers rather than hard analysis.

2.Emphasis on Job Creation and Economic Development.

The Civic Society supports the emphasis on economic development and its recognition in the plan. The hard copy of the draft plan mentions “maximising potential to improve economic prosperity through high technology and high value”. We support this laudable aim (for example, the Civic Society did not object to the recent Bosch application on the east of Worcester for this reason). Retail, leisure, tourism are mentioned in the documentation but in the case of Droitwich Spa, they merit equal emphasis. In spite of the town’s potential interest, visitor numbers are modest, the town’s attractions are often understated (historic buildings, small museum), hopefully temporarily closed (Brine Baths), unexploited (e.g. canal). The Town Plan (Picturing the Future) saw great potential for development and employment in leisure, recreational and visitor attractions (see Page 4, community facilities) and should be supported.

In this context, we would highlight important specific developments for Droitwich Spa if the aims and aspirations in the consultation document are to be realised:

- A brine facility :
- Development of the Netherwich Basin to attract visitors, and find their way into town;

- A country park on the south of the town, linking the Community Woods, The Woodland Trust shelter belt on Pulley Lane and Yew Tree Hill:
- Infrastructure works to ease access to and from Vines Park and the High street on the lines in the report submitted by the Civic Society some years ago. It is not an issue of road safety but integrating the Park/Waitrose/High Street. If not meeting road safety criteria (number of deaths, accidents) be an insurmountable obstacle, perhaps the Civic Society should ask for volunteers to arrange accidents to meet the qualifying number of incidents!! :
- Upgrading monuments(e.g. the Upwich Pit):and
- Private leisure facilities in the centre as part of the Kandahar's promised (but hopefully intended) redevelopment of the shopping precinct.

3. Housing and Green Field developments.

(Paras 17.4,Urban extensions,9.1,Green Belt.

We remain unconvinced that the case for development on the south of the town (Copcut) is stronger than one of the north of the town linking up with the Bays Meadow development. One of the plan's objections to this option is risible: it is said that a 'northern' development would be cut off from the town by the ring road and then goes on to propose the much larger Copcut development which is further from the centre of the town, schools and medical facilities and **also** cut off by a very busy ring road!!!! And in the case of the former option, access could be **under** the bypass.

We also take the point raised by others: some green belt land is less worthy of protection than some green spaces, for example Yew Tree Hill, aesthetically superior to the land in question to the north of the ring road. An alteration of green belt boundaries to **increase** the acreage in the south at the expense of a small adjustment to the boundary in the north would be much, much more consistent with the aims of sustainability e.g .more people walking to the town centre, fewer driving to Warndon and Worcester for shopping and possibly work) than continued support of the Copcut scheme. Such a change would help secure the green area between Droitwich Spa and Worcester.

We note the argument that a northern extension to protect the green southern boundary would not produce sufficient land to meet housing targets. We have argued before that the shortfall could be met without making a mockery of your sustainability goals, by alternative sites for example the proposed Barratt development on Newland road. If feasible, this would have incidental benefits of less road noise for neighbouring estates.

Yours Faithfully

Stuart Haywood.

Chairman