

Update on the proposed new town development between Escrick & Stillingfleet - 19-8-22

An Extraordinary Meeting was held 18th August by Escrick Parish Council to discuss the proposed new town development. This was well attended, not just by concerned residents of Escrick, but also residents of other villages in the area who are keen to get involved in halting this process. To be clear, this is not a village as it is being marketed, with an end population of up to 12,000 people it is clearly a town that is being proposed. To give residents an idea of scale with the level of occupation predicted, this new town is equivalent to a population twice the size of Tadcaster on our doorstep. Selby District Council have selected this proposal as their preferred site for large scale housing development in their Local Plan; until the end of July we had been informed that the Burn site was the preferred option, but both this location and Church Fenton have now been dropped, leaving Heronby to be selected by default – a decision making process that is neither balanced or logical.

A local action group with members from all local communities has been formed following the PC meeting, please keep an eye on the PC website / Notice board / Facebook for updates on how the group evolves and anything you can do to offer support – their first meeting is to be 23-8-22.

We are approaching the Selby DC ‘consultation period’ which lasts from 29th August to 7th October, so we urge all residents who do not want this very large new town on our doorstep, to come forward and oppose this proposal even if you did this already in the first feedback stage in March 2021. The decision makers at all levels need to be made aware of the depth of feeling on this proposed new town and the negative changes it will bring to the whole area. We are told that Selby DC will provide a means of giving feedback via their website from 29th August, so our latest advice is you wait until that time and use selected prompts listed on page two of this update as reasons why you oppose their planned new town – please write to Selby DC rather than your Parish Council.

The Parish Councils of Escrick, Stillingfleet and Riccall all stated in their March 2021 feedback to Selby DC that we did not wish the development to proceed. Escrick PC detailed reasons for this position, which are briefly summarised on page two as previously stated. Sadly the views of local Parish Councils were not taken into account by Selby DC to the extent that they reached their opposite conclusions and selected the Stilligfleet site as their preferred option, without any further local consultation. As a Parish Council, along with our adjacent Parish Councils in the area, we intend to again write to Selby DC to oppose the development in the strongest terms.

Proposed new town development at a glance

Indicative capacity in Selby DC consultation document: 3,387 dwellings by 2065. This has been changed to “it will deliver up to 4,000 homes” in the latest document from the developers, already an increase of 18% - approximately 945 homes to be built within the Local Plan Period to 2040, including one of the two new Primary Schools.

Provide a minimum of 20% affordable housing in order to create a new socially inclusive community.

A new care village on site to meet the needs of older people, two new primary schools, a new secondary school.

A new waste water treatment works should be provided to support the development of the site.

Brief summary of key reasons Escrick Parish Council rejects the new town proposal

Initial consultation was in lockdown, local awareness has been poor, justification for the need for development has not been made, the new town location has been sanctioned at the last minute because the other two sites were ruled out following a hidden evaluation process that has not been justified. How can it take so much time & money to decide the other two sites are not suitable?

The A19 is already congested and getting worse with the Germany Beck development in Fulford.

City of York Council have previously stated that the A19 north of Escrick is “currently assessed to be at close to maximum capacity at peak times during weekdays and weekends”.

Various roads west of Escrick already close each year due to flooding such as Cawood Bridge and Naburn Lane, traffic congestion at these times would be much worse if this site is developed.

Escrick is further from a train station than any other Tier 1/Tier 2 village in the Selby District so why locate a new town at this location?

The promoted cycle track is not a realistic commuter route. The surface is poor, the route unlit, remote, unfit for mass transit & unsafe for certain lone users.

The loss of around 200 hectares of good quality agricultural land that is increasingly important to the UK is not acceptable, this land should be protected from development.

Housebuilding on this scale should be focused on previously used brownfield sites close to existing public transport hubs and employment centres.

The site would be many miles from large employment opportunities with no real option for new residents other than to use private cars mostly or buses at best – there is no train station here.

Most land immediately around Escrick is part of York Greenbelt and needs to be protected from adjacent development.

The Escrick Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) detailed that residents objected to the existing level of A19 traffic/wanted to keep the existing rural setting/only minimal local housing development was seen as appropriate over the life of this NDP.

Planners often overlook the strain the local infrastructure is already under from the 140 chalets at Hollicars park, the planning permission given for 323 holiday accommodation units at the former Noth Selby Mine and the near 250 boarders at the private Queen Margarets School in the village.

The new town would only be 600m from the development limit of Escrick village, over time leading to a merging of the settlements and loss of the distinct character and heritage of Escrick.

The environmental impact on ancient woodland would be acute despite assurances given, Heron Wood in the centre of the site and the adjacent Moreby Wood would have delicate ecosystems damaged beyond recovery during the build period.

In summary

We really hope everyone takes this last chance to make their feelings known before the local landscape and quality of life is changed forever, for the sake of future generations who like us, should be able to enjoy the tranquil rural setting of our historic surroundings.