

CEF 31 – Evidence Paper for Each Theme

Housing

There was a significant correlation between the information gleaned in the survey and the pre-existing information from meetings and previous VDS consultation work.

The survey showed that most people do not see a requirement for any new houses in the Parish of Repton and Milton.

There are three main arguments against larger developments:

- a) the identity and character of Repton as a village and Milton as a hamlet
- b) lack of infrastructure to support a larger population
- c) the impact on the environment and availability of alternative, more appropriate development opportunities

There was strong disagreement over any proposal for developments over 10 houses, and 47 questionnaires said they wanted no additional housing. Milton was very firm as being a hamlet and it should remain as such.

In order to achieve new development and meet the Repton/Milton Parish commitments in the Local Plan comments expressed the view that brown belt and updating/replacement or modernization of current building should be developed first before the villages are required to accept new build on greenfield land. These comments referred to opportunities inside and outside the Parish.

It was broadly recognized that there is insufficient infrastructure for new developments. The list of factors in the comments includes

road width: traffic congestion: parking: damage to roads from HGVs: drains and sewerage pressure (current): lack of school places: lack of other facilities eg doctors

These aspects were surveyed later in the questionnaire, but it was telling that people chose to comment heavily within the Housing Section about these issues.

The survey supported SDDC adopted Local Plan Part 1 settlement boundary and the first draft of Local Plan Part 2. However, the second consultation draft of Local Plan Part 2 contained a boundary change off Burdett Way. This change was not supported by the questionnaire (CEF 29) nor feedback from organisations within the villages (CEF 16). Comments made said:

The green space between Milton and Repton should be preserved and the villages kept separate from one another
Village boundaries should be maintained and footpaths preserved

Where possible the Steering Group has worked hard to align NP policies with Local Plan policies. This is one area with a difference remaining. In October and December 2016 it was decided not to amend the Housing Policy on this basis but to take it to pre-submission.

Dislikes from the Village Party Survey (CEF 11) and the NDP questionnaire (CEF 29) show concerns with traffic / parking, infrastructure and loss of a rural setting, are key issues for residents. Development must be carefully planned to ensure we do

not make these factors worse. Concern that we are losing our rural setting and issues around the new developments already constructed, appear high in the dislikes chart (CEF 29). Although residents may use different phrases, the key reasons people choose to live and invest in the community are:

- 1 Countryside / Greenspace
- 2 Good Community / spirit
- 3 History / Architecture

Residents are proud of the historical and architectural importance of Repton (CEF 8). Having a Repton History Group (CEF 16) which is well supported is evidence. Both Conservation Character Statements (CEF 7) also note that Milton and Repton are Areas of Archaeological potential where there may be reasonable expectation that archaeological evidence relating to the medieval and/or post medieval periods may survive below ground. The Character statement comments that “One of the most remarkable things about Repton is that the historic core has changed little despite a huge amount of development in the 19th century”. This is largely because most of the large new buildings in the 19th century were built on infill sites. It is a continuation of this that the residents seek.

The Milton Conservation Area Character Statement 2013 SCCS supports the theme of a distinctive hamlet and distinctive rural approaches without strong enclosures. The features that it notes that makes Milton distinctive, correlate closely with the opinions of residents as articulated in the questionnaire.

Within the Parish, there was a strong feeling that The Dales should be re-developed for elderly care (CEF 29). This was supported by discussions with various organisations (CEF 16). The local population is aging and there is an increasing requirement for provision for older people, many of whom do not want to leave their Parish. There was much positive support for the area around Fisher Close remaining allocated for sheltered housing. The age demographic and membership of clubs for the elderly in the Parish suggest that there are many people who may rather move into specific provision homes for the elderly and free up their existing family housing stock in the village for sale than remain in houses they struggle to maintain and feel safe in. We recognize that freeing up existing stock is not recognized as a contributor to government housing targets, however, new development for elderly people on the Dales site should be regarded as new development.

In terms of affordable homes, the questionnaire showed general support (CEF 29). There was also support for such houses to be preferentially allocated to those with a connection to the parish (CEF 29). Affordable housing should be within reach of facilities and local transport. Many of the job opportunities within the villages are within the catering and cleaning areas and therefore of low income. To enable people to live near to their employment requires affordable housing stock to be available.

Open Spaces/Environment

Building in the past, in both villages, has been mainly along the valley floor, with the views from the outlying areas revealing a rural landscape with trees dominating (CEF 6; CEF 7; CEF 8). Up until the present the majority of new housing has followed this precedent, however the new developments in 2015/16 impinge on the skyline and have damaged the rural aspect which comments from the survey show is so important to residents (CEF 29; CEF 11). St Wystan's church is a monument of considerable historic importance and together with the Cross is central to the identity of Repton. The spire has dominated the local skyline for centuries. It is therefore imperative that any new development should ensure that this historic view is not disturbed.

Residents of the parish appreciate the rural nature of their communities and feel strongly this should be preserved, it is reflected in the responses to potential development beyond the village envelopes, as well as the retention and enhancement of existing open spaces (CEF 29; CEF 11; CEF 9). This theme features prominently in the 'likes' section of the survey (CEF 27) which also said that the rural appearance should be enhanced through further planting of trees. The survey supports both the retention of hedgerows and support of wildlife, encourages the planting of trees, together with fostering tourism (CEF 29). Repton Village Society has planted bulbs, Repton Parish Council, trees, and an Arboretum has been established in Repton.

Open spaces are spread throughout Repton and are much appreciated by residents. (CEF 29: CEF 1). Broomfields has been designated a Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust to ensure future protection. Milton has the orchard and wide verge where a seat is located is a much valued open space in an otherwise narrow main street and a key element in the character of the settlement, similarly the green at the lower end of Mount Pleasant Road.

The rural identity of both Repton and Milton should be preserved and the following statements from the Repton Village Design Statement (CEF 9) are highly relevant.

The approaches and entrances to Repton should retain their open nature with development restricted to one side of the road.

High-density developments on the edge of the villages are to be avoided to preserve the traditional open approaches to the settlements.

New buildings or extensions should not encroach significantly, visually or physically, upon open spaces or fill gaps that afford views of the surrounding landscape and rural skyline.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows contribute positively to the character and amenity of an area supporting both biodiversity, health, and well being. Attractive surroundings encourage walking which in turn supports 'Healthier South Derbyshire'. Repton is on the edge of The National Forest with the potential for growth in tourism. The village itself is of historic interest with frequent groups visiting the church and surrounding area, and this potential needs to be supported. The Leisure, Culture &

Tourism page of SDDC web says 'The beautiful villages of Melbourne, Ticknall, Repton and Newton Solney are well worth a visit.' Tourists will therefore expect attractive surroundings.

Outside the old buildings on Repton High Street, the roads are edged by grass, hedges or trees, either as banks, verges or green spaces. This can be seen on Burton Road, Milton Road, and Main Street. Newer developments have followed this village characteristic which gives a rural feel; Chestnut Way; Askew Grove; Springfield Road; Wystan Court and Pinfold Close. The new development at Mount Pleasant appears to continue the theme, but the other new developments, Clayfields and Longlands do not, and are inappropriately designed for the rural edge of the village.

Amenities/Services

The main themes that came up from the questionnaire (CEF 29) included, education, poor access to health care, accommodation for the elderly, improving the appearance of the villages, and the importance of the Village Halls.

There were mixed responses to the question regarding renewable energy, most answers were in support, but with the caveat of the importance of the visual impact. There were not enough opinions to bring the subject forward as a major issue.

Derbyshire County Council with responsibilities for education did not agree with the views concerning the primary school being full, and therefore this issue was not considered for the NDP, but placed in the file for Future Consideration.

Repton Health Centre is misnamed as it provides only some podiatry localised health care and is an administrative centre for the provision of community health teams. The front line medical services and the chemist are in Willington, a mile away, with a limited bus service and a dangerous cycling and pedestrian route. Car or taxi is the only effective safe means of access for those who are in need of health care. The age profile of Repton Parish shows a high proportion of elderly residents who will require access to Doctors and the chemist. The number of new homes being built in both Willington and Repton will increase the pressure on the Surgery in Willington. This was felt to be an important issue and therefore a policy.

The provision of health facilities was strongly supported by the questionnaire, together with a number of comments, which included; 'Need doctors and a chemist in Repton'; 'Not actually sure of the services that the Health Centre provides.'; 'Repton Health Centre appears to offer no supplement to this village over what Willington doctors surgery provides.'; 'Health care facilities not adequate for elderly or new development.'; 'Better use of Repton Health Centre. Doctor available at least 2-3 days each week. Chiropody practice opened.'

Informal discussions with elderly residents and at village events, such as Repton & Milton Lunch Clubs, Books Browse and Coffee, and Soup & Cheese Lunch (CEF 16) supported these comments.

There were strong views expressed concerning the closure of The Dales, residential centre for the elderly and lack of sheltered accommodation for the elderly. This

subject overlapped with general aspects of housing in the parish, and so was considered under the policies for housing.

Although many respondents clearly wanted the village surroundings improved, the comments did not give any clear indication as to what was meant, and it was felt that it would be better to integrate this subject into Open Spaces /Environment.

The importance of the Village Halls was highlighted in the survey. Repton has been designated a Key Service Village and Neighbourhood Hub which will offer a wider range of formal sport, physical activity and play opportunities. Some of the facilities exist but some will need to be developed or improved. One aspect is an indoor community facility for informal sport and physical activity, and local community events. Repton Village Hall is becoming structurally unsound with poor access for the disabled and needs to be redeveloped to provide these amenities. Comments from the questionnaire all support a new Village Hall in Repton. Milton Village Hall has been refurbished with excellent kitchen facilities and has access for the disabled. The provision of Village Halls was felt to be an important issue and therefore a policy. Evidence as to the importance of both Milton and Repton Village Halls is provided by the bookings they both have for the provision of social events, physical activities and play for the young. Also, both villages have worked hard in raising money to support them. Milton Village Hall is a major amenity for the village and is used extensively. It is a hub which allows both social interaction and support for the elderly through the provision of meals. Repton Village Hall needs replacing and there is an Appeal Committee which has already raised over £60,000 towards the total needed. Without these amenities the parish would not be able to provide the accessible facilities the community needs for its social and cultural well-being.

Community, Leisure and Education

The development of this theme was the result of studying input from a number of sources. The original impetus was the result of the VDS work. The document has sections on Community and Economy, and it seemed logical to build on that solid foundation. This idea was tested against SDDC Local plan Part 1. This contains policies on Employment and the Economy, as well as Infrastructure, covering Leisure activities. Comments from sources such as the Village Party questionnaire (CEF11) made it clear that community issues were important to many people. It was also clear to the Working Group that people appreciated the Leisure activities available within the parish. Employment obviously had potential to influence future development, so was included. The idea was verified by reviewing other NDP documents, which frequently contained similar sections.

The questionnaire contained questions that deliberately focused on matters pertaining to development issues. Many questions sought to understand if facilities were adequate for community or leisure based activities. Another sequence of questions sought to explore employment covering existing and new businesses of different sizes. An open text field allowed other comments to be made, as people saw fit.

The main input to the formulation of policies was the evidence from the questionnaire (CEF 29). Analysis of the quantitative data showed certain questions produced no clear bias to positive or negative responses. These questions included those relating to provision for sports facilities, children's play areas, meeting places for clubs and the range of activities for the young and old. Conversely, questions related to the retention and enhancement of the village halls produced a strong positive response. Food and drink venues were clearly valued as were small business employment opportunities. There was a far less positive response for new business opportunities.

The Working Group then reviewed the comments to try to understand what had produced such trends. It became clear that the importance of leisure activity provision was demographically influenced. Essentially, people were positive about provision that affected them. This trend was bucked by the widespread recognition that the village halls provide essential community and leisure facilities. The employment comments occasionally asked for things beyond the powers of the NDP, such as a wider variety of shops or a complete relocation of retail. It was clear that large-scale employment developments were felt to be inappropriate in a rural parish, but people did appreciate the smaller businesses and home-working opportunities. These views were strengthened by face-to-face meetings, both with businesses and community groups of all ages.

This analysis gave the working group confidence to draft a set of policies. It was decided that the retention and enhancement of the village halls sat best in the Amenities and Services theme. Comments to the Parish Council made it clear that enhanced play equipment for younger children would be appreciated, especially if sited to give better access across the villages. Such provision was a realistic ambition, knowing that housing developments often produce funding for such activities. The policies on employment addressed retention of existing businesses. This was to provide local employment opportunities but also to retain local retail, thus enhancing sustainability. In addition comments made it very clear that people expected businesses to be good neighbours. Parking is a key issue for many. In the recent past, growth of some retail businesses has created considerable friction due to parking issues. It was clear that the NDP offered an opportunity to avoid this happening again. Promotion of small businesses and home working was another way to enhance sustainability, although people had no appetite for large-scale businesses.

Travel and Transport

The survey provided the first evidence regarding the choice of themes and the comments provided additional weight to many issues that had been raised both informally and formally at Parish Council meetings or to Councillors verbally over many years. (CEF 11; CEF12; CEF 29) Whilst the survey raised a number of issues important to the respondents it was not possible to translate all of them into either workable or coherent policies. However, by discussion the issues were gradually refined to reflect as far as possible the views obtained from the questionnaire.

Of major concern was speeding, parking and congestion, in addition to the impact that further development both internal and external to the Parish of Repton would

have on an already overloaded road system. The theme selected, reflected the concerns expressed over parking by suggesting that any viable opportunity to increase parking provision should be considered especially off-road parking.

Whilst many of the respondents to the questionnaire wished to increase both walking and cycling opportunities many felt that it was not safe to do so and that more effort to keep cyclists and pedestrians away from road traffic was required. The Policies selected reflected the concerns expressed over providing cycling and walking routes that could be separated from vehicular traffic. (CEF 29).

Many felt that the bus service was inadequate both in frequency and scope. The bus service between Burton and Derby runs close to only the historic centre of Repton (Cross and Church) and therefore does not serve Milton at all and does not run close to the location of the majority of housing (including new development) within Repton (CEF 1). The Policies selected, reflected the concerns expressed over public transport particularly frequency, timing and routing and how less accessible parts of the Parish could be served by public transport.

It became evident through the course of developing the Policies from the Themes that many of the Themes could not be turned into meaningful policies because many of the issues in particular concerning speeding, parking and congestion were either not matters that could be dealt with at local (i.e Parish of Repton) level or required major strategic consideration (such as additional River Crossing of the Trent).

In general it was difficult to write policies that reflected to strong views of the respondents to the questionnaire without being in conflict with National, County or District pre-existing Policies.