



Land development north of Habberley Road, Kidderminster

Following recent presentations to Kidderminster Foreign Parish Council (KFPC) & Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) together with delivery to local households of a communication from “Richborough Estates” we as your Parish Council wanted to bring together for you the facts that have led to this situation. Many of you will be only too aware of these but we are also conscious that it is easy to forget.

On our website www.kfpc.org.uk you will find past Newsletters, Agendas and minutes of current and past meetings along with other useful information. Our monthly agenda & minutes are also pinned on the P.C. Noticeboards prior to each meeting which is held on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7.30. We always welcome the public to attend and contribute, particularly in the “Public Open Forum” at the start of each meeting.

In **August 2017** every household in this Parish received a “Wribbenhall and Arley Matters” newsletter. On the front page was an article about Wyre Forest District Council's Local Plan Review. It outlined that the consultation process had been launched and urged all residents to look at the two formal consultation options and gave details of 3 ways to submit comments. At that point the assessment was for up to 5,500 houses to be built between 2017-2034, approximately 300 houses per year across the District. The same article also stated “Regrettably, it does not appear that all of the housing demand can be met from Brownfield sites and that there will have to be some development on greenbelt land and hence the need for a greenbelt review and the strategic release of some greenbelt land.”

In **November 2018** the same newsletter delivered the unwelcome news that the Government belatedly published revised household projections, this meant that the District had to allocate an increased number of about 6,300 plots. This included a 15% buffer for the non-delivery of some sites. It also stated that “about 2% of the greenbelt will need to be released.” In this same newsletter, and for **the first time**, the parcel of greenbelt land at Low Habberley known as WA/KF/3 was listed as being “considered” for 120 dwellings. The dates and locations of 7 local drop-in sessions across the District from November 16th – November 29th were also provided along with where responses to the plan could be sent. We know that many of you took advantage of these very informative sessions and as a result also sent in objections to the plans. At our Parish council meeting on November 19th 2018, 22 concerned members of the public attended the meeting to join us and voice concerns to the District councillors, who were also present at the meeting. On 10th December 2018 the Local Plan Review was once again an agenda item at our Parish council meeting and 27 members of the public attended. The minutes of that meeting, that can be viewed on our website, state “There was much opposition voiced by those present”. The Kidderminster Shuttle also outlined the consultation dates in an article. Comments on the District Council's consultation document were duly submitted by the Parish Council, before the deadline, strongly objecting to the proposed development.

In **January 2019** the Parish newsletter, which is delivered to every household in the Parish and can also be viewed on the website, had an item on the front page about the Local Plan. It also showed the parcel of land identified and informed everyone that “the Parish Council had now submitted formal opposition to this in comment to the District Council Local Planners”.

In **August 2019** WFDC sent a green and orange card to “The Occupier” of every household in the district entitled “Our Local Plan 2016-36 Pre-Submission consultation”. They re-opened the consultation process as they had made some amendments to the plan. Once again the public were encouraged to go along to one of 4 dates between September 17th and September 28th at sites across the district to view the changes and speak to the planning team. The plans could also be viewed at other sites including the Libraries. On this occasion the deadline for comments was October 14th. There was also an item in the Kidderminster Shuttle outlining this opportunity. Any comments already received as a result of the previous consultations would also be carried forward.

September 2019 The Parish Council contacted Alvan Kingston at WFDC who inspected the Habberley Road site and on our behalf placed Tree Preservation orders on several Oak Trees.

On February 20th 2020 at an Extraordinary meeting of WFDC the **Draft Local** plan was approved, contrary to the comments and objections lodged by the Parish Council, and was, subsequently, in **April 2020**, submitted to the Secretary of State and is now up for public examination.

The Examination hearing to look at this Draft plan is currently still in progress. WFDC will let us know when they hear back from the Government Inspectorate. This stage of the process, like so many things during 2020, has been delayed by the Covid 19 pandemic.

All hearings are free to watch on the WFDC website.

Late December 2020 Richborough Estates contacted the clerk of KFPC asking if they can use Zoom to present the council with “outline plans to develop land north of Habberley Road”. January 7th was provisionally agreed and the Parish Council studied draft outline plans ahead of the meeting.

Early January 2021 Communication from Richborough Estates with the requested plans attached for us to study. Elsie Whitehouse, the Parish clerk co-ordinated councillors comments to the plans and emailed them to Richborough ahead of the meeting. There were 15 comments/questions which covered a comprehensive range of concerns, including; The increase in the number of houses from 120 to 137, the style & size of the houses, the TPO status of all identified trees, flooding, water run off, & sewage issues, solar panel & other eco-build initiatives, issues related to the oil pipeline that crosses the land, street lighting & light pollution, additional services including schools, nursery places, bus stops etc., and not least the considerable concerns regarding additional traffic coming out onto Habberley Road and what plans were being proposed to cope with this.

January 7th 2021 Zoom presentation arranged by Richborough Estates, at which all 7 Parish Councillors and Parish Clerk were present.

Week of January 18th Local residents receive in the post a card from Richborough Estates giving details of their proposals and links to a consultation website www.habberleyroad.co.uk They are requesting feedback by Monday 8th February.

Richborough Estates have put together what is called an “Outline Planning” and they will seek, once the Government have approved the Local Plan, permission to build. A housebuilder will then put in plans for the actual building. These plans will go to the planning department of WFDC who in turn will send KFPC a copy and ask for our “Comments”. Any member of the public can also view the plans and submit comments. The district council will read these comments BUT the decision to approve or reject the plans will be made SOLELY by the district council planning committee.

The consultation website above gives the following timeline:

January 22nd - 8th February - Pre-application virtual community consultation

Late February - Target outline planning application submission.

Once again, as we have in the past, we would encourage all residents to take advantage of ALL the opportunities offered by Richborough estates and in the future by WFDC to comment on any proposals/plans put forward in respect of this land. A loud, collective, numerous voice will stand more chance of being listened to. A lack of comments is always in danger of being seen as passive agreement.