

Matter 7/Issue 1: Directing Development to the Right Place

I do not believe that Scraftoft is the right or sustainable location for further large-scale development. As a village, Scraftoft has already experienced extensive housing growth over recent years, fundamentally changing its scale and character. The infrastructure has not kept pace with this development, and the cumulative impacts are now being felt by residents on a daily basis, through the Scraftoft one way village and adjacent roads. The local highway network is already operating at or near capacity during peak periods. Traffic congestion has become a significant issue, with increasing difficulties entering and leaving the village and adjacent road, with longer journey times on local roads. Further large-scale development alongside the Thorpebury site would place additional strain on an already overstretched network.

We are at a loss as to why this land has been identified as a viable and sustainable allocation when there appears to be alternative sites within the area, particularly along the A47 corridor, which are less constrained and would not result in the loss of productive agricultural land. Recent objections to the Mulberry site have cited infrastructure limitations as a reason why development should not proceed in that location. Given the existing pressures already experienced within Scraftoft, it is difficult to understand how this proposal can be considered the more suitable option. This raises serious questions about whether the allocation has been properly justified and whether a consistent approach has been applied in the assessment of alternative sites.

Matter 7

I have serious concerns regarding the continued allocation and expansion of development within the Scraftoft settlement area. Any further building in this location would not represent sustainable or effective planning. The area has already absorbed substantial growth, and further expansion would inevitably worsen existing infrastructure and traffic problems. I believe there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that safe, effective and deliverable highway solutions can be achieved without causing additional harm to traffic congestion, road safety and accessibility. For these reasons, I believe further expansion through Policy AP01 should be carefully scrutinised in relation to its deliverability, viability and overall soundness.

5.. Policy AP01 criterion 4 Development in Settlements

Green Wedges and Areas of Separation

I strongly object to any reduction in the Green Wedge and Area of Separation between Scraftoft and neighbouring settlements. These areas serve a vital purpose in preventing the coalescence of communities, preserving the distinct identity and character of Scraftoft, and maintaining an important transition between the village and the surrounding countryside. Scraftoft is a historic village with a strong sense of identity, a Conservation Area and important heritage assets. The remaining open countryside, Green Wedge land and Areas of Separation contribute significantly to the setting and character of the village. Any reduction would be detrimental to the community would increase pollution, transport and result in irreversible harm to the character of the area and residents mental health. It is also important to protect the distinctive character of Scraftoft as a historic village. Continued

encroachment into these areas risks turning Scraptoft into an urban extension rather than maintaining it as a separate village community. Once this identity and character are lost, they cannot be restored. This character is extremely important to local residents. Continued expansion risks eroding the qualities that make Scraptoft a distinct village and threatens the setting of its historic environment.

Agricultural Land and Food Security. The land proposed for development is productive land that contributes to food production. At a time when there is growing recognition of the importance of protecting agricultural land and supporting long-term food security, the permanent loss of valuable farmland should only be considered where there is an overriding justification. This land is high quality agricultural land that is farmed on every year and preferred land should be that of poorer quality. In this case, I do not believe such justification exists.

Biodiversity and Wildlife

The area supports a rich and diverse range of wildlife and forms an important ecological network. Residents regularly observe badger setts, badgers, roe deer, owls, muntjac deer, hedgehogs and otters within and around the site. The hedgerows, fields and green corridors provide important habitats and movement routes for these species. Of particular concern are bat commuting and migration routes which rely upon established hedgerows, mature vegetation and dark corridors. Development in this location would risk disrupting these routes through habitat loss, increased lighting and landscape fragmentation. Development of this site would inevitably lead to a loss of habitat and increased pressure on wildlife that depends upon these important countryside corridors.

Issue 1. 12. No provisions for Secondary schools - Education Capacity: Whilst the proposal includes provision for a new primary school, there appears to be insufficient consideration of the longer-term educational needs arising from the development. A primary school may accommodate young children initially, but it does not address where those children will attend secondary school. Local secondary schools are already heavily subscribed and under pressure, and there is understandable concern within the community regarding the availability of school places in the future. The proposal does not appear to demonstrate how additional demand for secondary education will be accommodated, nor how this issue can be addressed in a sustainable and deliverable manner. This raises further questions regarding the overall viability and sustainability of the development and whether the necessary supporting infrastructure has been adequately planned for.

Issue 2. 6. Cycling and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure: Whilst the proposal refers to new cycle routes and active travel opportunities, these do not appear to provide meaningful connections to key destinations outside of the development itself. The cycle paths largely circulate around the estate rather than connecting residents to schools, employment centres, healthcare facilities, local services or wider destinations in a practical and convenient way. As a result, it is difficult to see how these routes would significantly reduce car dependency or traffic generation. In my view, the inclusion of cycle paths that do not meaningfully connect to the wider transport network should not be relied upon as evidence of improved infrastructure or as justification for the sustainability of the development.

Without genuine connectivity, most journeys are likely to continue to be made by private car, placing further pressure on an already congested road network. There is no adequate bus service serving the area, resulting in a heavy reliance on private car travel, while the nearest catchment medical centre is located over five miles away in Billesdon, limiting convenient access to primary healthcare services.

I would also like to add that the roads adjoining Station Lane and Station Road are already hazardous. Traffic levels are significant, and visibility when exiting side roads and driveways is often restricted. Only last week, a vehicle was involved in a collision while attempting to exit Pulford Drive. The Council's response states that there have been no reported accidents in the area. Whilst this may be technically correct, many incidents are not formally recorded unless the police attend the scene. The absence of official accident data does not necessarily mean that the road network is safe. Residents experience near misses and dangerous manoeuvres on a regular basis. Any increase in traffic generated by further development would exacerbate these existing problems and increase the risk to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. Indeed, given the current traffic conditions and safety concerns, many people would already feel reluctant to cycle on these roads. It should not take a serious injury or fatality before effective measures are introduced to address these issues. We fail to see how this encourages cycling.

Issue 2: Key Development Sites- The proposed housing mix does not meet local needs. Residents were informed that bungalows for older people or the disabled were not being considered because they "do not sell". Instead, accommodation for older residents was suggested above a café or commercial area. This is neither practical nor appropriate for many elderly people, particularly those with mobility issues. The proposal fails to demonstrate how it will meet the needs of Scraftoft's ageing and disabled population and appears driven by housing numbers and finances rather than community need.

Impact on Existing Residents - Leybury Way- Insufficient attention has been given to the impact on existing residents. I am particularly concerned that insufficient consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed development on existing properties along Leybury Way. Whilst there has been discussion regarding landscape screening for homes on Station Lane, there appears to be little or no consideration of the impact on existing properties that back directly onto the Diocese land, including my own home. My property is one of several bungalows that back directly onto the proposed development site. The attached photographic evidence clearly demonstrates the significant rise in land levels behind our properties. The land rises considerably and housing built on this elevated ground would overlook existing homes, resulting in a significant loss of privacy and residential amenity. This impact would be particularly severe for bungalow residents, whose properties are especially vulnerable to overlooking from higher ground. I do not believe this issue has been adequately assessed or addressed within the proposals.

Issue 2 Key Development Sites

X) Taking all matters into account, I do not believe it has been demonstrated that the site is realistically viable, deliverable or sustainable. The number and complexity of the constraints affecting the site raise significant concerns regarding whether development can be

delivered within the proposed timescales whilst adequately addressing infrastructure, highway, environmental and community impacts. For these reasons, I do not consider the allocation to be justified or effective.

Vi) -Flood Risk and Drainage: Flooding is already a problem in this area. Several homes have experienced flooding when the brook and drainage system have been unable to cope with heavy rainfall. My own property is affected by the underlying springs on Spring Hill and clay soil. The evidence provided does not convincingly demonstrate that development of this scale can be accommodated without worsening existing flood risk. Until this can be proven, the site should not be considered a viable or sustainable location for development.

Conclusion

We are not planning experts and, as mentioned earlier, have only a limited understanding of what is a very complicated process. I have spent a lot of time trying to understand these proposals and what they could mean for our community, but the information provided has often been difficult to follow and understand. It is important that information is clear and accessible so that everyone has a fair opportunity to take part in the consultation process. While I have been able to spend time looking through the documents and evidence, many residents may not have the time, confidence or knowledge to do the same.

What many of us do understand is that these proposals could have a significant impact on our community, and that is worrying. People want to be able to understand what is being proposed and how it could affect their daily lives so they can have a meaningful say in decisions that will shape the future of the area.

On behalf of the Scraptoft Core Group and more than 250 active community members in our group, we raise significant concerns regarding this proposal. The evidence demonstrates that Scraptoft has already experienced substantial levels of development and that existing infrastructure, highways, schools, healthcare provision and local services are under increasing pressure. The proposal fails to adequately address these existing constraints and would result in unacceptable harm to productive agricultural land, biodiversity and wildlife corridors, the Green Wedge and Area of Separation, residential amenity, and the distinctive character and identity of Scraptoft as a village settlement. It would also give rise to overlooking, loss of privacy and further urbanisation of the rural edge of the village. Taken cumulatively, these adverse impacts significantly outweigh any perceived benefits of the scheme. The proposal does not represent sustainable development and should therefore not be supported. We respectfully request that the application be refused as it is quite frankly insane!

Please see the attached photographic evidence in support of my previous Regulation 19 objection and the concerns outlined above.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Oldham

Lead Member, Scraptoft Core Group

On behalf of residents of Scraptoft and over 250 active community members.













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