

Matter 15 – Infrastructure delivery

Issue – Does the Plan set out a robust framework for infrastructure delivery which is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

a) – f) HVV response

What does the sentence in paragraph 3.12 in the Addendum which states “*However, a more strategic approach to sufficiency planning will be required across a wider geographic area, including Holme Valley, Honley and Meltham, Huddersfield South East and East and Colne Valley*” actually mean?

We note the thrust of the improvements are to strengthen links to Huddersfield. There appears to be little appreciation of the movement in and around settlements and small towns.

Our major concerns regarding the Council’s Infrastructure Policies are:

- a) The increased traffic flow caused by the growth in housing and the Spatial Policy of segregating employment sites from housing (as discussed in the Stage 1 hearings) will lead to an increased urbanisation of the rural areas.

The Holme Valley, in particular, is characterised by steep, narrow and twisty roads. Indeed, these are a distinctive feature, which Kirklees, apparently seeks to enhance and protect (Policy 2) not as the plan states “challenges to growth”. Changing the roads to accommodate increased traffic load will inevitably mean that the highway network will have to be changed.

We accept there is a conflict and compromises are needed to address the existing traffic congestion. However, we agree with Mr Gray’s findings in the appeal he heard against the Tesco application: there is no justification to add to the load if there is no realistic means of mitigating its negative impact.

We find Kirklees’ proposals unconvincing and at odds with its Policy 26. We believe the effect of Kirklees’ spatial policy will add significantly to carbon emission not reduce it.

- b) The policy states that “essential infrastructure must be operational no later than the appropriate phase of development for which it is needed.” We are well aware that development takes place in stages or a piece meal fashion.

We are also aware that Kirklees’ ability to claim Section 106 monies has not been good.

We are concerned therefore that whilst appropriate infrastructure may be proposed then the infrastructure needed will not actually be delivered.

The second point in this matter, is that many of the developers are small and that the cumulative impact of the increasing traffic load cannot be laid at the door of one developer. In this case, who will fund the essential infrastructure?

The third point is that many of the houses that have recently been granted planning permission tend to be large. Given the low density allocation in the Holme Valley, this trend is likely to continue and these houses generally have more than the average number of cars per household. This again will add to the increase in traffic volumes and carbon emissions

How will this work in practice? Will the developers be asked to contribute to a pot with the Holme Valley on its label and when there is enough money in it, the work will be done? We would respectfully ask the Council, through the Inspector to reassure us that our fears are not founded.

- c) Where will the funds for the works in the Holmfirth Town Centre come from? We note that this is a short term need but there is a gap in funding. (Appendix C)

We find the comments about the need for these works in Appendix F telling – “*Accommodates the impact of new development in South Kirklees at key strategic junctions, reduces congestion and improvements connectivity to Huddersfield and destinations beyond*”.

There is nothing about the quality of life, the value of tourism or the needs of local people and the local economy.

What regard will be taken of the Conservation area?

Why has New Mill Square and Honley Bridge been omitted when both are well known traffic hot spots and the former has been operating over capacity for some years?

Other points

Passing reference is made in the Addendum to Honley and Brockholes. We agree that improvements and increased services on the Penistone Line have considerable potential for reducing traffic volumes but recently land surrounding them which could have been used for car parking has been lost to housing. This is recognised in Paragraph 4.23 but no solutions are proposed. Indeed there is a proposal to lose even more land near to Honley Station to housing. This again begs questions about the seriousness of Kirklees' declared aim of carbon reduction.

No matter how good the footpath and cycle schemes are, other measures are essential if people are to be encouraged to get out of their cars. These must include locating employment and other service sites close to where people live and having vibrant local shopping facilities that people can walk to.

In paragraph 4.75 the Addendum states that the key route for a core walking and cycling network has yet to be identified. HoTT proposed a route some years ago and River Holme Connections is working hard (hence its name) at opening up the River Holme as such. Given the degree of local support, it is surprising that this scheme has not been brought forward and funding streams identified.

The comments regarding school places is at odds with local people's perceptions. We find it difficult to accept the amount of housing proposed for the Valley and the assertion that the type of housing that will result from the generous land allocation will not result in an increase in children wanting school places. It seems to us to be contradictory to say that there will be a need for early learning and childcare provision but not school places.

Local bus services were re-organised a few years ago on the spoke and hub model to improve bus travel into Huddersfield. The reductions in local services and around the Valley has forced more people into cars. It was interesting to hear Lord Adonis speak on the radio on the morning of Friday 17 November about the need for infrastructure improvements linked to jobs and housing. We cannot disagree with the principles: Houses for local people that they can afford and in places they want to live, more good jobs for local people in places they can easily get to without having to rely on cars.

In practice, this means that housing is concentrated in urban settlements which are close to places of work with jobs in sectors that are growing and are connected by footpaths, a flowing, safe road network and a public transport system that people want to use.

What Young People had to say:

In the Summer of 2017, 72 young adults aged between 15 and 25 responded to an on-line survey. About 60% told us that they felt as if they belonged in the Holme Valley and it was a really good place to live and bring up a family.

There were no significant concerns about crime, safety or substance abuse.

Generally, people in the Valley were thought to be healthy and happy but there could be more opportunities for young adults to be involved in the life of the Valley communities. They wanted their voices to be heard and nearly half thought that their contribution could be valued more.

Over half of the young people (55%) confirmed they knew someone of their own age in the Valley who had needed to access support for depression or any other mental health care conditions (including eating disorders, anxiety etc.)? This is supported by 90% of them stating that better support for people suffering depression or mental illness or bullying in the Holme Valley is needed.

Most thought that the support of their families was strong but more support was needed for those in debt, and to help carers and unemployment people find assistance including child care, training and work experience. Help for older people and young single parents could also be improved as could help to reduce the cost of fuel through energy efficiency.

About 50% felt that recreational facilities were sufficient and just over 30% thought there were sufficient attractions for their age group. Services, market and shops for day to day necessities were good enough for about 80%. The town centre was a good place to visit in the evening and night life was good for about 70%.

Public transport was good enough for over 60% and local people make good use of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes. About half were satisfied with the provision for outdoor activities but a third felt that were insufficient.

Being active and having access to locally sourced, cheap and health food was important to nearly 80% of young adults.

Better information is needed for family carers and about reducing the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

About half of the young people thought local businesses had a positive attitude towards young people wanting to stay in the Valley to work. Over 40% thought employment opportunities were not good and over 60% thought they would have to look beyond the Valley for a job and to gain experience.

Nearly 70% thought that better support was needed for those wanting to set up their own business and better places were needed to encourage people to come and visit the Valley e.g. camping and caravan sites. Around 50% thought the Valley should rebrand to encourage more tourism.

The top priority for young people was more affordable and appropriate housing. This was followed by:

- More access to health and wellbeing services, including mental health
- Increased employment opportunities for young people in the Valley
- More assistance to help young people wanting to stay, live and work in the Valley



What Businesses had to say:

In the Summer of 2016 we carried out a survey across the 1,000 local businesses registered in the Holme Valley. 100 organisations were involved in a professionally sampled telephone interview, with a further 147 going online to give feedback via a web survey.

Responses came from professional services, retailers, marketing and media businesses, IT, arts and crafts, manufacturing and other sectors, demonstrating the broad spread of businesses at work in the Valley.

Around one third of those taking part in the telephone interviews thought being in the Valley offered them many business advantages. 80% thought the Valley was a good place to live but a more positive approach to business could be taken by local people.

Most of all the participating businesses had traded for more than 5 years and nearly a quarter employed between 1 and 5 people.

Of those responding, about one fifth had had recruitment difficulties for staff at most levels and about three quarters had no plans to recruit in future. Of those who would be recruiting, they would be seeking professional and technical and operative staff, in the main. Overall, employment prospects in the Valley, including those for young people, were not good.

A significant proportion saw training and apprenticeship programmes as inadequate for their business and for young people. They also thought that young people were not taught the right things for their business needs and were pessimistic about their futures.

Support for new businesses, including that provided by Kirklees Council, was seen as lacking with over 80% believing

Kirklees and the Parish Council were not very supportive of businesses. More could be done to attract new businesses and industry to the Valley.

The Holme Valley, according to over 60% of businesses, needs a strong brand and more awareness is required across the rest of the country regarding the Valley's business and tourism opportunities.

The area was seen as traditional, affluent, creative, static and developing but was not seen as deprived, modern or technology driven.

Co-operation and partnership working between businesses could be improved though about 40% already worked with others. A business hub would be useful.

About half had growth plans and felt that help with accessing funding, developing new customers, improving existing products and services, networking nationally and marketing the business would help.

The lack of car parking affected about one in five businesses and traffic was the factor that mattered most to most businesses.

The other top priorities for all of the local businesses, including the web survey were:

- Encouraging entrepreneurs to come to the Valley
- Improving employment opportunities, particularly for young people
- The provision of education and training for all
- Visitor attractions
- Affordable housing

