

Dear Sir,

Masterplan Consultation

Your report in the 5th June 2009 edition, regarding the 'Core Strategy Revised Options' document produced by the Council's planners, potentially does a disservice to your readers by underplaying what is involved.

The options provide for up to 33,965 new homes, of which 70% would be built on Greenfield land. This is over double the number of new dwellings projected to be 'needed' as a result of the natural growth in the number of households and population. Presumably the additional 18,000 housing units is the result of inward migration from Sheffield, the rest of the UK, and overseas.

The new community at Waverley has been regularly referred to in your newspaper. The highest growth option also provides another 7,000 housing units at Dinnington, nearly 3,000 at Wath, and 2,000 at Wales/Kiveton Park.

All three options provide for over 7,000 more within Rotherham itself, plus another 3,600 in the Basingthorpe Farm area. Although no detailed plan is included this development appears to extend from Fenton Road, through the Clough and Car Hill, to New Stubbin.

Up to 1,090 hectares of land could be taken out of the Borough's Green Belt.

Essentially the Council is planning for an increase of between 20% and 25% in the number of homes in the Borough over the next seventeen years. The number of new houses is greater than that built in many of the New Towns of the 1950's. A very high standard of town planning skill will be required to ensure that the Borough's environmental character and identity is not destroyed by these developments.

I would urge local people to become involved in this consultation process, and make their views known to the Borough Council's Forward Planning Team. It will be no use getting involved in a few years time when a planning application is submitted for the local farmer's field. Then it will be too late; the die will have been cast.

It is also important that our elected Councillors are asked to justify why they bid for New Growth Point status when this results in a much higher rate of growth than that agreed during the last round of public consultation less than 18 months ago.

Equally our three Members of Parliament should be asked to justify why the Government is imposing a scale of new development on the Borough which probably dwarfs anything that has gone before.

Yours faithfully,