

## **Bassetlaw Local Plan - Statement from Retford Civic Society October 2022**

### **Matter 6 - Housing Allocations**

Issue 6.

The Society is concerned that constraints affecting the Ordsall South development have not been adequately addressed. In particular, although various highway works are proposed in the wider area, no improvements are proposed, or possible, to the pinch points at the river bridge or the railway bridge on West Hill Road. It should be noted that as traffic approaches the railway bridge it has to negotiate a section of road on which only one vehicle at a time is permitted to move.

The additional traffic generated by 1250 more households living at Ordsall South would be focussed on these pinch points and on Ordsall Road, which is also narrow, leading to more congestion at busy times, greater risk of accidents and a less pleasant environment for local residents. This should not be accepted as, in the Society's opinion, there is no need for the number of houses proposed and, even if the need existed, other sites could be identified where traffic would not be so concentrated on roads with limited capacity.

The Society is also concerned that viability issues do not seem to have been addressed, particularly in respect of the various community facilities which the Plan says would accompany the Ordsall South housing development. It is very unclear how these facilities would be provided and how they would be financed and operated in the long term.

The 23ha country park, 4ha of high quality recreational open space, and in-depth landscape buffer would be expensive to provide and need on-going maintenance. They are unlikely to be self-supporting financially and their extent is far in excess of what could reasonably be achieved with a residents' management company. Neither County nor District Council are likely to adopt and run them all.

Being at the edge of the built-up area, the 'local centre' would attract very little trade from people living outside the new estate. It is hard to see how even one small shop would be viable there by the end of the Plan period when there would be just 890 dwellings, or even in the longer term with 1250 dwellings. In many villages of this size established shops struggle to survive.

We have seen no evidence to demonstrate adequately that proposals for a general practitioner's branch surgery and community health care facilities, indoor and outdoor space for sport and changing accommodation, and a new primary school are viable and realistic.

There is a serious risk that few, if any, of the community facilities listed in Policy 27 will ever be provided. Should this occur, we would be left with just another large housing estate with minimal facilities, situated as far as it is possible to be from the facilities of the town centre. This would disproportionately increase the amount of travel by car and do little to benefit Retford town centre.

The proposed urban extension at Ordsall is not needed because the overall provision for housing in the Plan is excessive. It should be removed from the Plan. Even if it is concluded that there is a need for the houses proposed, this is a poor site with constraints and viability issues which have not been adequately addressed.