Response to Consultation

Stretton on Dunsmore – Site number 134 -Land at Plott Lane

1) Greenbelt

First and foremost, we strongly object to any further land being taken out of Greenbelt. Land was classified as Greenbelt to protect it from development, to keep it as productive agricultural land and support wildlife. Local farmers are already struggling and many will not survive as land they rent and farm is being taken away from them.

Removing land from Greenbelt to be built on is an easy option and makes a complete mockery of the system. RBC clearly advise that is has to be preferable to make use of existing structures before creating new ones and churning up Green Belt. Even though the Labour Government has less regard for the protection of greenbelt land, it still advises that brown sites should be considered first and that taking land out of greenbelt should still be a last resort.

The excuse offered by RBC that the Houlton site will not be built quickly enough is NOT a justifiable reason.

2) Major Settlement

Stretton On Dunsmore is classed as a Major Settlement because it has a Doctors surgery and a school, but it must be taken into consideration that both of these do not just serve Stretton, they also serve many surrounding villages that do not have these facilities, Eathorpe, Marton, Birdingbury, Frankton, Bourton and Draycote. Whilst Princethorpe and Ryton have schools, they do not have a Doctors surgery. RBC also advise on the subject of Green Belt that it is better to allocate land including rural settlements where development can support vital village services. However, the school is FULL, the Nursery is FULL, the Doctors surgery is FULL, public transport is virtually non existent, and there is insufficient access to secondary education.

3) Implications of 83 additional houses prior to Site 134

Before considering any further developments within Stretton On Dunsmore, we must wait for the development of 55 properties to the north of Squires Road and the 28 properties of the Orchard to be built and occupied. There is very real concern regarding the effect of these new dwellings on local flooding, sewage treatment and traffic flow on the single track lanes leaving the village and congestion in the centre of the village.

Any surveys undertaken before these new dwellings are occupied will not be accurate and decisions will be based on out of date and inaccurate information.

Of particular concern are

a) Flooding to the centre of the village, this already happens and with the new developments there will be increased surface water run off, which will make flooding more likely and on a more regular basis. The proposed plan identifies that surface water discharge will flow to the existing surface water location at the junction of Plott Lane and Squires Road(please see slide 12 in Call for sites master doc) This already cannot cope with the current water run off – as confirmed by the recent floods in the village – gardens in Squires Road already have excess water due to poor drainage, so the additional 55 houses in the process of being built will only make this worse.

b) Traffic flow. Slide 11 of the Master Document(Call for Sites) also advises that there will be access of Plott Lane which is single track – as well as via the new development at the top of Squires Road – this road was built originally as a cul-de-sac so can not accommodate any extra traffic – it remains to be seen what the impact of 55 additional properties will have. Plott Lane and Freeboard Lane are both single track and were not built for heavy traffic. The road surface and the side verges are already severely damaged with the current level of traffic. The centre of the village and along Brookside, is congested now and has a lot of parked cars. This is an historic area, many properties were built before cars were invented and therefore do not have space to accommodate parked cars. The junction of Brookside onto Fosseway is another accident blackspot. The current mini roundabout layout struggles with the current levels of traffic flow and any increase in traffic levels will also lead to an increase in the number of accidents. The increase in traffic levels will be significant, because apart from the aforementioned limited single bus route, Stretton has no access to other public transport at all. Therefore, any additional houses will lead to a detrimental impact on green and sustainability targets as there will be a significant increase in cars within the village.

c) Sewerage – Severn Trent already collects sewerage from the local treatment plant in lorries as the treatment works does not have the capacity to cope with the current level of sewerage. The amount of sewerage will significantly increase when the new development North of Squires Road is completed and the properties occupied. It will then increase again when the Orchard plot development goes ahead. Until the effect of these new properties can be accurately monitored and assessed, no further decisions should be made.

4) Detrimental effect on RBC NetZero & Sustainability targets

The fact that Stretton On Dunsmore has no public transport except for one limited bus route between Coventry and Rugby, and that there are no cycle ways/routes on any roads leading from Stretton to any of the surrounding towns/cities, means that anyone moving into the village will need a car. We have already expanded on the detrimental effect this will have on the roads and road safety, but it will also completely go against the Net Zero and Sustainability targets set by the Council.

5) Site not researched accurately

Slide 12 of the Master Document (Call for Sites) Site Number 134 specifically mentions a children's play area, yet there is a recreation field including a children's play area, directly opposite this site. This proves that the sites have not been physically looked at or considered in detail and we feel that it is such an important decision, deciding if these sites such be included in the Local Plan and will have such a major impact on the local area that every consideration and detail must be investigated in full.

Access and safety on the local road network is paramount. The detrimental effect of increasing traffic through the village or via Plott Lane/Freeboard Lane has been stated above.

6) More appropriate sites

Interestingly Site120, within the Call for Sites was refused as it is not close enough to the village – this again demonstrates the lack of awareness of the layout of the village. This is actually potentially a better option as it is close to the village and would not result in additional traffic via the village centre or the north/west side of the village that is only served by single track lanes, as there is immediate access to the A45.