

APPENDIX 4

Eco-Town Select Committee Public Questions and Local Input

Comments made at 4th June Select Committee meeting – Yapton Village Hall

C.J. Heriot - Arundel Town Council

(Full transcript available www.arun.gov.uk/ecotown - Supporting Information)

In principle not against Eco-Towns but Ford not the right location.

1. Adverse impact on local tourism due to impact on lower Arun Valley – an attractive area. Eco-Town could be four times the size of Arundel.
2. Local infrastructure is inadequate to support development of 5000 homes, commercial uses and community facilities.
3. Transport – A259 and A27 are already badly congested. By-pass wouldn't come online early enough. This would be a prerequisite.
4. Flood impact. All forms of flooding possible simultaneously at Ford, especially in light of climate change.

R. Field (Chairman) - Ford Parish Council

(Full transcript available www.arun.gov.uk/ecotown - Supporting Information)

Comments regarding proposals:

1. Building of 5000 eco-friendly dwellings on Greenfield land stated as “immaterial” by FAVG. Rubble in ground cited as reason not to call land Grade 1 agricultural land. Proposers trying hard to overlook quality of existing land.
2. Funding for A27 by-pass (essential according to proposers) has been backed up with little evidence. A259 link also highlights differences between two groups.
3. Energy provision x 4 enabling sell on to national grid
4. Prison upgrade, “putrid” sewage plants and HGV transport

Two bids presented to Government for “purely money” reasons. Profit the driving factor. Avoiding Aldingbourne/Westergate development the motivation for FEB bid.

Peter Jones - Yapton Parish Council

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Not about “NIMBYism” but supporting quality of life for existing villages. Three villages have distinct character that is highly valued which would be lost should development go ahead and shift from rural to urban environment. North-south link road would increase pressure for further housing development. Land required is not identified in Local Plan. Identity lost. Loss

of strategic gaps between villages. Loss of grade 1 agricultural land. Significant increase in residential and commercial traffic onto surrounding road network. Problems with water dispersal. Water levels in adjacent areas would be increased substantially. Little spare rolling stock on rail services - - 42 level crossings between Hove and Havant. Peak public services already at limit. Hospital restructuring plans should cause concern at future development in this area due to St Richards downgrading. Regeneration of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton would be adversely affected.

Barbara Edge

Residents of Climbing Action Group

(Full transcript available www.arun.gov.uk/ecotown - Supporting Information)

Roy Haycock – CPRE Sussex – Slindon resident

Support totally the statements made by CAFÉ over 6 days.

Re: Section 106 and figure of £200m. What is the cash flow forecast for this money?

Who would be putting these funds forward and when?

Peter Bryan - Walberton Parish Council

Walberton Parish Council passed resolution to oppose eco-town at Ford based on information available. The Select Committee process has not changed view. This would be an ecological disaster.

CAFÉ closing statement

(Full transcript available www.arun.gov.uk/ecotown - Supporting Information)

Nothing has changed initial view - essentially elderly development proposals, which had been given a hurried coat of green paint. Proposals not properly thought-out- designed to persuade the Government eco-friendly, but eco-attributes repeatedly either modified or abandoned. e.g. link road, bus facilities, Science Park, energy and waste – to be provided from a combination of natural gas and energy from waste, brought into the site by road from all over West Sussex. Uprooting families from Bognor Regis and Littlehampton - damaging re-generation policies.

CAFÉ remains convinced that the concept of an Eco-Town at Ford is a badly thought out idea which is simply aimed at facilitating the long-desired development of an isolated housing estate in the rural countryside.

Points made by members of the public:

Angry at expenditure of personal energy to oppose such crazy plans. Infrastructure is clearly insufficient and currently being downgraded (e.g. hospitals). In UK 600,000 empty properties. Better to get councils to identify these empty properties, clean them up and make available. Money saved from government schemes such as eco-town would be better spent.

How is building equipment and staff going to be brought into the site? Sustainability considerations. Policing levels? Water availability?

If eco-town given go-ahead can development continue unabated? Human rights violations taking place as a result of this?

Like A27 bypass, improvement to A259 also key. FAVG are purely profit driven so ignore their green claims. Presumably the FEH members will either live in Ford, Yapton or Climping or will move to new eco-town based on their concern for local community?

Prior experience of urbanisation of Stourbridge – poor personal experience. It will not work.

With all financial uncertainty, what happens if development not completed and left with half an eco-town?

Son received advice from RSPB concerning planning and protecting wildlife. Hedgerow regulations may allow protection by the District Council. Could this be route to prevent development?

Ford Road resident

20,000 vehicle movements added to already congested peak-time road. Development would require 3 storeys and likely be uninsurable, based on location.

Horsemere Green Lane resident

Residents are the ones who will have to put up with this. But shouldn't have to. Strange that concrete left for a market but Greenfield destroyed for housing.

Climping resident

Energy scheme stated as only having 40 year lifespan. Not long enough. Assume afterwards this would require new installation - problematic as retrospective fitting is not possible.

Yapton resident

Why first tranche of housing to be built on Greenfield if the genuine concerns are that of sustainability and transforming brownfield land?

Comments made on i-forms:

POLITICAL PROCESS

- Concern about the political process, lack of consultation and opportunity to be involved.
- Concern that this development represents a radical change in planning policy that allows remote green field development.
- Concern that the Government's support of Eco Towns goes against the stated need for regional and sub-regional planning rather than national specification (DCLG paper Best Practice in Urban Extensions).

- Concern that the proposals do not meet the Government's own criteria for an Eco Town.

PHYSICAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Concern about the capacity of local water and power supply, sewers and drainage to cope with additional pressure.
- Concern about potential negative impact on surrounding villages.
- Concern about the delay in provision of additional infrastructure and amenities until after 1/3 houses are built. Concern about additional pressure on infrastructure.
- Concern that the development will not be able to provide sufficient finance to fund all the required physical and social infrastructure needed or proposed by the developers to make this a self-sustaining community.
- Concern that the developers will only make land available upon which public sector funded facilities may or may not be built and maintained to meet the additional demand for infrastructure.
- Concern that the theory that establishing Community Trusts, funded by payments in lieu of commuted sums, to the local authority, is flawed as commuted sums do not accurately reflect the true, long-term cost of maintenance.
- Concern about healthcare provision in the local area given additional demand.

ENVIRONMENT

- Concern about the siting of a large scale development on a floodplain.
- Concern about the loss of habitat for wildlife, particularly, for barn owls, tawny owls, long-tailed tits, deer and sky larks.
- Concern about the impact of renewable energy generation methods on the River Arun and associated wildlife.
- Concern that opportunities for renewable energy will be sufficient to meet the need for power of the Eco Town.

HOUSING

- Concern about providing housing for immigrants.
- Concern about the shortage of local housing.
- Concern about the provision of additional housing using small unsuitable 'in-fill' sites without provision of infrastructure.
- Concern about the lack of evidence for a shortage of housing.

ECONOMY

- Concern about whether local employment opportunities would increase in line with the increase in need.
- Concern that there is little potential for a viable science park associated with the proposed Eco Town at Ford.
- Concern about a potential increase in unemployment in the local area.
- Concern that there is no guarantee of any employment development in the proposal.

- Concern about how the development is going to impact on the regeneration of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

EXISTING LAND USES

- Concern about the loss of countryside.
- Concern about the loss of 'rural block' between the towns of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.
- Concern about failure to use brown field land in favour of use of green field land.
- Concern about the loss of agricultural land.
- Concern that unpleasant smells from the water treatment works in the centre of the development will become more of a problem with increased sewage and for an increased number of people who are housed in new properties in the immediate vicinity of the Water Treatment works. Concern that the vast majority of green field land is to be allocated to industrial use or public open space which is not to be developed by the promoters but made available to others to develop.
- Concern about the loss of amenity in terms of footpaths and land for dog walking.
- Concern about the trees, lakes, wildlife, footpaths and hedgerows.

TRANSPORT

- Concern about impact of development in terms of car use on road transport infrastructure. Concern about potential for railway infrastructure to meet additional demand. Concern about delays caused by level crossing. Concern about the increase in HGV traffic arising from the development. Concern about the traffic generated by the proposed anaerobic digester.

UNCLASSIFIED

- Concern about whether there will be more than 5,000 houses.
- Concern about air pollution, noise pollution and light pollution. Concern about whether the development is sustainable given majority of accepted planning policy and good practice.
- Objections on the basis of strong local opposition.

Questions

- What facilities are proposed to promote the health of the new community?
- Does the Government not think that 5,000 houses will not generate more pollution through use of cars and the like than will be saved by Eco friendly homes and buildings?
- The proposal and bid for Ford Eco-Town is singularly lacking in detail; it refers only to making land available for commercial and employment development; who will pay for these structures and what happens if this does not materialise and the majority of residents end up commuting?
- It was stated that the area has the wind and sun and river to harness power. What will the wind do as it was stated that there was no wind generators being installed in the Eco town?
- Is it the intention to place turbines in the River Arun restricting flow and what would the effect of this be on the fish and other wildlife?
- Eco Towns are supposed to use primarily brown field sites. How does this equate with the proposed Eco Town, which would gobble up 87% of prime quality arable Greenfield land?
- What proposal is there to preserve the picturesque country footpaths used by ramblers and dog walkers?
- How can a new Eco Town be justified on the River Arun Flood Plain, especially given the prospect of rising sea levels due to global warming?
- What assurances will be given that home owners will be able to insure against flooding, as already the River Arun floods in Pulborough, Bury and Arundel?
- Is there enough industry to support 7,500 full-time workers?
- What are the unique selling points of Ford in order that it should successfully attract scientists, entrepreneurs, start-up business managers, venture capitalists and IP specialists given strong competition from other potential sites for employment?
- How can the government impose this 'eco-town' on Arun when the DCLG paper Best Practice in Urban Extensions and New Settlements states "[there is a] need for regional and sub-regional planning rather than national specification".
- Is anyone going to buy these houses in the current climate and do we actually need them?
- As the infrastructure will not be in place prior to the building of the houses why should people in the area have to suffer the high increase of lorries, noise, pollution on the existing roads?
- Who is going to want to live near a waste disposal plant and an open prison where the prisoners are now more dangerous and currently regularly just 'walk-out'?
- How can it be ecological to build so many houses on all this farm land?
- Without a bypass how will the construction traffic to this 'eco town' get there?
- How will these 5,000 households be expected to travel for shopping, schools etc?

- How would this development affect Littlehampton and Bognor Regis' regeneration?
- It is proposed that a third of the housing will be developed before shops, schools, health services, policing and recreational facilities are provided. How can the existing amenities in Yapton, Ford and Climping cope with this influx?
- When the next greedy farmer wants to make a quick buck from the sale of land, does he brand his out of town, green field housing development as an eco town?
- Can the scheme be delivered without recourse to massive public subsidy?
- Why do so many people want to live here?
- If these horrible people cut down all those lovely old trees and put thousands of people there instead and thousands more cars as well, how are we going to be able to breathe?