

BREDON PARISH COUNCIL

South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy: Housing Site Allocation Exhibition

We are part of the West Midlands Region, and the Regional Assembly has prepared a strategy indicating where future development should go. This is called the Regional Spatial Strategy. This proposes that 24,500 new dwellings together with associated development need to be built in South Worcestershire during the next 16 years. The three local authorities of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon have joined together to plan where this growth should go. This is called the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy (SWJCS). The SWJCS has reached a Preferred Options stage (September 2008) which highlighted some potential areas for development (the Parish Council made a detailed response to the Preferred Options in October 2008). In respect of Wychavon District 9,100 new dwellings together with associated employment and infrastructure are required for the period 2006 to 2026. You may obtain more information by telephoning the SWJCS team on 01905 722 233, or by looking at the website - www.swjcs.org.

The SWJCS envisages that the majority of development will be adjacent to the main towns. However, some will be shared out among the more 'sustainable' villages (those with the most 'key services' and the best public transport links). Villages have been placed in one of five categories, with development being targeted at the higher categories in the following amounts: Category 1 Villages - 70-100 houses; Category 2 Villages - 30-50; and village clusters (i.e. a group of lower category villages which between them provide a range of services) 30-40 houses. These numbers come with a 'health warning' that they are subject to change.

Bredon, because of its key services (junior school, Post Office/shop, doctor's surgery, village hall, employment opportunities) is one of the highest ranking Category 1 villages. It is therefore likely to have to provide between 70 and 100 new homes during the next 16 years. Bredon's Norton, Bredon's Hardwick, Westmancote and Kinsham are all in the bottom two categories and are unlikely to see any significant new development. Neighbouring villages, like Kemerton, Eckington, Overbury and Beckford have provisionally been placed in Category 2.

Wychavon is now consulting on where the most suitable sites for development should be within villages. They have produced a Site Allocations and Policies Plan, setting out various possible sites that have been suggested in and around villages. This was exhibited at Bredon Village Hall on 5 March, **and is being repeated at Beckford Village Hall on 23 March (1:30-7:30 pm)**. At this exhibition residents will have the chance to discuss the sites with Wychavon planning officers and to put forward alternatives.

Residents are also being urged to comment in writing on the proposed Site Allocations in and around Bredon. They can do this by completing a Questionnaire. This is available at the Beckford exhibition, and online at:

http://www.swjcs.org/site_allocations/villages/questionnaire%20for%20villages%20for%202010.pdf. The Parish Council will also place a printable version of it on our website (www.bredonparishcouncil.org.uk).

The Parish Council is in the process of preparing its own response to the consultation. As soon as this is finalised it will be placed on our website for residents to view. We also aim to publish a list of the key points to make, for those who want to make effective responses, but who are short of time. Completed Questionnaires will need to be returned by 30 April.

Many people are asking what difference a change of Government would make to the picture. There is no clear answer to this. The Conservatives have pledged to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. However, it is uncertain what this would mean in practice. The existing Wychavon Local Plan expires in 2011, and planners will be under pressure to replace it. Even if Regional and Core strategies were abolished, much of the work that has gone into preparing them over the last three years would need to be carried forward into a new local planning framework.

Mitton Bank

J Shields

Clerk

BREDON PARISH COUNCIL

Alarminglly, the map accompanying the exhibition includes a large strategic (urban) site between Bredon's Hardwick and Mitton, known as Mitton Bank. This site is large enough for more than 2000 new houses, and if it were developed, it would effectively merge Bredon with Tewkesbury. Although Mitton Bank does not strictly fall under the village Site Allocations consultation it would be worth residents taking this opportunity to let Wychavon planning officers know their views.