

Borough Councillor's Missive. February 2010

The Diary.

Spring they say is just around the corner, I just hope it does not do a "U" turn. We have been fairly busy this month around the ward. We enjoyed the "Big Breakfast" at Ecton, always nice to have the "full monty" every now and then. I managed to attend both the Mears Ashby Council and Planning meeting and was committed to go to Ecton P.C. as against the Sywell Planning Meeting which unfortunately clashed. That was on top of my Borough Council meetings consisting of Planning, Full Council, Partnership Review, Audit and Performance, Development, West Northants JPC, Marketing Working Party and two further briefings followed by a meeting with the Council Leadership to discuss Sywell Aerodrome, more of that later.

Council

The pressure of cutting costs is unfortunately continuing to increase and we are now at the stage of reviewing alternative delivery options for just about every service we are involved with. This totals around 22 elements. Now one of the issues is that many services are complimentary with other Councils around the area, some are bigger than us, some are better than us but there is no "one size fits all" scenario so we are probably going to review degrees of mutuality in terms of overhead reduction and improved services with other "partners". This will no doubt take a lot of effort and time. Some of you in the WBC area may have received notification of a "*random private sector house condition survey*". This will be carried out by an organisation called Michael Dyson Associates. I won't bore all of you with the details but if you have been "selected" and have queries do give me a call and I will see if I can help with your concerns.

Planning

At this month's meeting two items of interest were on the agenda. Firstly the affordable homes project at Stonelea Rd I had previously voiced concerns on two aspects of this development, the level of "sustainability" and the close proximity to the extended flight path of runway 05/23. I am pleased that the developers have now raised the Code of Sustainability to 4 from 3 thus reducing the running costs. We also have an assurance from both the architect and aerodrome operators that the flight path will not affect the tenants/occupiers! On this basis the application was approved. The second application was for a Motocross site, parts of the borough have been plagued by "bikers" so an organisation in conjunction with WBC has made an application to create a sizeable motocross circuit in the Park Farm area, I welcomed this development and look forward to its success. I may even have a go myself! One item not on the agenda was the application for more glass houses and car parking at Beckworth Emporium the application looked like it was going to be difficult but after further consideration was allowed. I know the issue of the single track road is compounded by the success of this operation and we need to take a careful look to solve the problem possibly with "passing places".

West Northants Joint Planning Committee

At this month's member briefing/ training session the subject of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Housing Trajectory was discussed in detail. I have for some time been concerned in respect of the volumes of housing required. At this session we were informed it was in fact Government forecast figures, at the same time we learned that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) had determined there was a potential error of around 40%! That being the case and the fact this Government has no idea what the level of immigration is, it is pretty difficult to estimate the likely housing requirement with this number of infinite variables. The outline strategy of this group may well be, to in effect, back load the large volumes until the period 2018-2026. This will ensure a series of projections based on some quality history. If you wish to know more on this subject you can visit the WNJPC web site at: <http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org>

Wellingborough North Development (3,000 homes etc near Redhill Grange)

At the end of February we will learn of the decision of the Secretary of State whether he is going to overrule WBC and allow the Appeal for the development. Should he do so it will make the most farcical of positions. We should remember that a large part of the land is owned by Wellingborough Council in other words you and me and the Secretary of State could remove WBC as the Planning Authority and give control to Northants County Council with the request that they compulsorily purchase the land and sell it to the developer. He may have forgotten that NCC is a Conservative led Council and I do not believe they would seriously contemplate such an action. However if this Government were to be re-elected then watch this space.....!

Sywell Aerodrome

The Company's aviation consultant recently applied to WBC for a Simple Approach Lighting system for the North East and South West ends of the runway 03/21, stating that it would meet the latest CAA requirement for a non-precision runway. This consultant has been involved in this project for many years and is well aware of the Condition 13 of the approved Planning Conditions. This condition specifically excludes Approach Lighting. That being the case I do not believe it is a Planning matter but more a legal issue. The company had the same statutory period as everyone else to make comments on the Approval in 2007 but it chose not to do so, if that is the case then they have what they have and no more. However the Company wrote to Sywell Parish Council just before the Planning meeting on 19/1 and amongst other comments wrote " *The lights themselves are omni-directional meaning they can only be seen from one direction*". I leave you to consider the Latin or English meaning of this statement! (Omni = all) Equally it is not a recent requirement by the CAA in fact the CAA specifically state: " *The new paved runway does not need to meet non-precision runway criteria in order to be approved for use by those aircraft that require the use of a licensed aerodrome such as flying training or public transport activity*". So what is the purpose of this application I am not going to try and guess but what I do know is that if this Approach Lighting System were to be installed everybody in this area could be very seriously affected from CAP 168 Chapter 6

(<http://www.caa.co.uk>) 1.3.1 *The Air Navigation Order provides that a person shall not exhibit in the UK any light which is liable to endanger aircraft taking-off or landing or which is liable to be mistaken for an aeronautical light.* And Section 1.3.4 states: b) **For non-instrument runways** : *An area 220 m wide equally disposed about the centreline of the runway and increasing in width along the extended centreline from 220 m at the threshold to 950m wide at a distance of 3000m from the threshold.* This interpreted means that all lights in Overstone and Sywell will be to a greater or lesser extent controlled either directly or indirectly by Sywell Aerodrome Ltd.

For all of those who might have thought "It won't affect me" you may just want to re-think.

P.S. The hedge at the Sywell Wood has now been re-laid by the Company.

Sywell Aerodrome Joint Consultative Committee

The Committee will have a new Chairman, Secretariat and Vice Chairman in time for the next meeting in April. Following a meeting at WBC with the Executive and Leadership at the beginning of the month it was agreed that not only will the Committee have a new executive in total. But there will also be a new Aviation Committee within WBC. I am currently creating a draft Terms of Reference for that committee.

As ever if you have any queries please contact me and remember, I cannot help you if I do not know of your problems.

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This Missive can now be seen on the following web sites:

www.ectonvillage.co.uk

www.mearsashbyparishcouncil.com