

Hearing speech.

Introduction.

The green belt surrounding Kirk Hallam is in my opinion of a high quality. It is not land washed over by the greenbelt which in many cases can be a whole mix of things including patches of derelict concrete. I know this because I used to be an Erewash Borough Councillor and served for over 30 years, many of those years spent on the planning committee.

For an abject example of low quality greenbelt land I have to go back to a planning application which was submitted to the planning committee just a few short years ago.

The application was submitted by a public house which still trades in West Hallam today. Like many public houses nowadays it sells food as well as drink, and boasts a substantial eating area. It wanted a modest extension to that area to enhance its business. However this caused it to encroach into the greenbelt.

I won't go into great detail in terms of the consideration of this application, but suffice to say it took several planning hearings punctuated by deferments before a credible recommendation for

approval could be proposed. The encroachment was a patch of crumbling concrete which was a former car park that just happened to fall into the greenbelt. That is what I mean by differing qualities of greenbelt land.

Contrast that with the green belt earmarked for deletion in Kirk Hallam, one has to conclude that by comparison there is a massive difference.

I feel it should also be pointed out that history indicates Monks from Dale Abbey deforested much of this area to turn it into the fertile arable and pasture land it is today because they wished to raise animals and grow food. Again I rest my case by saying that they wouldn't have done this with inferior land.

Turning now to concentrate on Kirk Hallam itself, 1300 houses are planned to be built there, with a further 200 to be built in the Cotmanhay area of Ilkeston. We therefore have 1500 concentrated around the orbit of Ilkeston in the north of the Borough of Erewash, no house building appears to be proposed for the south of the Borough.

I have to say that as an ex local Councillor this comes across to me as a political initiative from the previous controlling group on Erewash Borough Council. To be crystal clear at the time the core strategy was submitted it is my opinion that there was a built in gerrymandering initiative to favour the then controlling groups political party that they subscribe to. In other words they saw an opportunity to get this one sided stunt past the winning post by using their knowledge

of the Borough's social demographics to fall in line with their electoral aims.

I will now concentrate solely on Kirk Hallam in an attempt to get my main point over. The land I refer to lies very close to an important and well used nature reserve namely Pioneer Meadows. This reserve is well used by local people who live in Kirk Hallam and people from further afield. The reserve also boasts green flag status.

It is I think reasonable to suppose that any house building which is too close to the reserve will compromise its facilities and level of enjoyment for members of the public, who are looking for relaxation and exercise among nature itself with all the benefits that gives to peoples lives, including of course benefits to both physical and mental health. I stand by my opinion that in present day Britain that is priceless.

It is my considered opinion that having all house building in one location namely the north of the Borough of Erewash which includes Kirk Hallam and Cotmanhay is grossly unfair and over intensive. It would be much better to spread the numbers around the whole of the Borough. This would also enable any deletion and downgrading of greenbelt land if this really has to take place, to be carried out in a manner that does not lend itself to over intensification of one particular area over another.

Finally I would just like to say that I do appreciate this opportunity to submit my statement, and I am sure

that it will be considered in a fair and appropriate manner.