

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

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for and on behalf **Reigate Society Transport / Logistics Sub- Committee**

Report No, 5---The case against LDF

CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES ; - Proposal for(12,500?) NEW HOMES

Reigate & Banstead LDF - (including the effect of and on adjacent COUNTIES)

1.0 OBJECTIVE ;-

To consider and discussion present conflicts, problems, and areas of difficulty. Review some of the environmental and personal needs of the local and distant members of our society.

2.0 Economic Background and origin of problems;

2.1 In the past we were advised that the loss of our manufacturing industry was of no great concern ;-

*We had the wealth arising from Oil and Gas exports to invest for future income.

*The Banking, Finance and Intellectual Property industries might replace the old heavy industries.

*Local Employment to be provided by new service industries, that will help to develop a low carbon economy by reducing the need to travel. Ref;- www.ice-breakwaters.com.

*After a relatively short period the Banking debt problems surfaced and extra borrowing was introduced to help Businesses refocus and earn much needed foreign currency.

*Some Local Authorities are considering the allocation of funds to Traffic Suppression. Has this Capital expenditure any overall benefit to the community ?

2.2 Many of our Brickworks, Tile factories, water mills, businesses units, service industries including Utilities have been sold, sometimes closed and redeveloped as housing units for profit but little long term income.

*Imported replacement materials hauled by road have a high carbon footprint and conflict with the objective of a low carbon economy.

*The new Business Rate levied on empty industrial buildings has stimulated a financial incentive to demolish workplace buildings.

*If work opportunities cannot be provided locally those seeking employment have little alternative but to travel.

*The South East Core Strategy needs to balance and accommodate these substantial areas of conflict and make safe provision for the established and growing needs of those travelling and seeking employment. (Reports 1,2,6&7.)

2.3 The population growth and Climate change need to be addressed for the medium and longer term. Various publications already predicted areas of conflicting objectives;-

A The anticipated Summer water shortage in SE, England. / The proposed population increase and the water needs./ Consider the carbon footprint of all options and the effect on the objective of creating a low carbon economy.

B The warning that winter storms will be more severe./ The building of homes adjacent to or on flood plains./ The loss of the Gatwick flood plain .area./ The need to conserve the winter rainfall / The need to provide balancing ponds in an attempt to prevent the flooding of property including property in Districts down stream and within the River Mole Valley. / To consider the reallocation of finances collected from households for the Surface Water Drainage maintenance service (Part of the waste water service that is not being effectively performed at present).

C The forecast that sea levels will progressively rise. / Approximately 3 to 4 mm per year. / **Consider the relocation needs of those at risk of rising sea levels.**
/ Consider the relocation needs and priority to be given to Transport and Utility Service Systems at risk from rising storm induced sea level surge.

D Waste disposal problems. / Consider the option and possible environmental solutions./ Consider the possible use of ash arising from incineration as a cementing material for Coastal Sea Defence works./ Consider low cost and low carbon means of transport./ Consider the increased use of Rail Night Freight.

3.0 Population Expansion problems & “The mobility of labour”.

3.1 Recent population expansion and the specialisation of labour has created a growing transport problem;-

New residents have three main options.

- A.** To find acceptable work locally if there are businesses or industries available.
- B.** To travel to work by cycle, scooter, vehicle, bus, train or a combination of transport systems all of which can be costly and time consuming.
- C.** To stay at home seeking support or other activities.

3.1.1 It is difficult to understand why some fail to appreciate that others may need an appropriate means of transport to arrive at the work place safely, on time, at reasonable or low cost and that provision needs to be made for the security of the transport used, both at home and at work. -(This can be a major problem for cyclists)-.

3,2 THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL :-

“To improve cycle storage facilities at up to 10 major railway stations during 2009-2010

At the **REDHILL HUB** It is proposed to build on the station car park and at **REIGATE Station** To build on the station garden rather than take the opportunity to encourage cycle use by providing a secure cycle park.

There can be no doubt long distance commuting, (that has ballooned in the last few decades), is expensive for the traveller, employer, the environment and needs radical thought because public bus transport is unlikely to be part of the solution;-

*Because of the time the bus journey takes.

*The detrimental effect on the low carbon economy objective.

*The May 09 ICE report states that-“Public bus transport becomes economic when the urban density is around 75 people per hectare.”

3.3 There are many reasons for the long commuting journeys some of which need to be considered at National Government level and at the local planning level as well as by the individuals concerned.

A The high cost of moving to a new home / This might be reduced by the introduction of a house log book. / The elimination of stamp duty, .

B The high cost of housing / Lack of space, or garden / Poor design or room size / Poor environment or travel arrangements..

C The fear of being out of the housing market at times of inflation./ Financial bridging problems.

D The unavailability or reluctance of owners to share space because of security fears.

E The present system of allocating and taxing company cars.

3.4 Unless there is a solution to some or all these problems it can be anticipated that most of

us will commute because it is the only form of “**mobility of labour**” that is available. It is anticipated that as fuel prices rise drivers will transfer to lower cost forms of transport, electric cars perhaps, but certainly ultra low emission cars, scooters, **cycles**, specialist campers and public transport where reliable, available in the right quantity at the right time.

3.5 In previous reports the risk of road injury accidents to cyclists has been addressed together with the need to segregate commercial vehicles from the cyclist and pedestrian. The very high road traffic accident figures of 68,500 in one year, together with the associated distress, costs and lost time reported by Hospitals in London can only be mirrored in Surrey if similar systems are adopted or allowed to grow.-The Kingston cycle lanes at the River Bridge are rare exceptions.- (Report No. 2.)

3.6 The lack of off street parking at Home, Stations and Place of Employment is resulting in the serious obstruction of the “**Right of highway**” which in turn results in extended journey times, delay, increased costs, fuel consumption, accident risk and pollution for all users. The delay to bus public transport and Industry is detrimental to the concept of a Low Carbon Economy.(The OFT Report on Bus Transport is noted).

4.0 Detailed notes for consideration.

4.1 Water Colour -a new estate-

In general the new estate is attractive with homes comprising three or more bedrooms,- but all to a sub Parker Morris standard room size (now defunct) - with very small gardens (not large enough for a kitchen garden, which might be made available to the 1 in 6 households without income or the option of a secure allotment recently recommended by the minister).

4.2 The local Industrial Estate has been partially demolished after closure and it is understood that more homes are to be erected. As a result some residents are not employed locally and commute. Larger secure station cycle / car parks now needs to be provided if the parking obstruction of A23 carriageway and footway through Merstham village (**a conservation area**) is to be resolved in a reasonable manner.

4.3 Garages provided within the new estate are alleged to be too small and vehicles are causing obstructing by parking on footways that are not designed to carry vehicle loads. If larger garages are not an option in future, perhaps design changes might be made so that the footway can be diverted round the desired parking bay or alternatively designed to accommodate both pedestrians and parked vehicles (3 to 6m wide) as are used in the City of Westminster.

5.0 A23 BRIGHTON ROAD AREA (In the past considered a corridor of opportunity for Development) The London-Brighton Rail line and the A23 effectively divide the Borough and the County. Transport access across or under the Railway is poor and limited.

5.1 Because many of the 10,000 (12,500 ?) homes have yet to be allocated plots or sites some of the problems of this traffic route are reviewed below.

5.2 The London-Brighton Line, running parallel to the A23 , has four tracks that divide the **East Surrey Hospital** and it's **A&E Unit** from Gatwick, Crawley, Horley and the remainder of the Borough. Access to the Hospital from Tandridge in the East is poor.

A. Residents to the **West** travelling **East** via Three Arch Road to the Hospital, adjacent housing and sports facilities have to negotiate a major crossroads on the **A23** and also pass through a narrow rail over road bridge with one footway but without a safe cycle lane. It is suggested that safer facility be provided by using one of the arches and providing a grade separated junction at the A23. All depending upon the chosen route and location of

the proposed **Reigate and Redhill Bypass Relief Road**. (see report No, 1)

B. Copsleigh Avenue ;- It is suggested that the existing pedestrian crossing of the four fast lines on this railway will be unsafe if redevelopment takes place on both sides of the railway and that a new wide pedestrian / cycle tunnel will be needed to connect the cycle lanes and communities.

C. Honeycrook Lane;- This possible industrial and housing site has a non standard height bridge (13'-6") and alignment under the railway tracks and reconstruction is necessary to provide safe cycle lanes and safe high vehicle access.

D. SALFORDS STATION;- **Improved service and capacity will be required however it is reported that the four rail lines are operating at or close to capacity.** Parking at this site is inadequate and a new access is required with provision of a secure cycles and vehicle park together with improved provision for pedestrians. Existing industrial facilities on both sides of the railway may need to be adjusted to provide employment opportunities for new residents.

E. SALFORDS INDUSTRIAL SITE ;- This relatively small development is mostly involved in the service industry and has limited employment and export potential at present. The site does not have adequate rail sidings for export.

F. CROSSOAKE LANE ;- This substandard rail over road bridge (13'-0") with no footway or segregated cycle lane provides the main access to new, possible developing housing estates and needs improvement. There is also a low bridge in Ladbroke Rd. (11'-6") that provides access from the Housing estate to the A23.

G. The B 2036 Balcombe Road over Rail Bridge at Horley . This bridge is substandard and needs to be reconstructed if safe facilities are to be provided.

H. REDHILL HUB;- (i) The long term transport problems at this site are too numerous to be addressed in this report. The substantial through traffic flow problems on A25, A23 and the A217 alternative might be eased when the **Reigate and Redhill bypass Relief Road** proposal are implemented. (see Report No. 1)

(ii) The relative costs / benefit and carbon footprint of road traffic signal schemes might be compared with the costs / benefit of new and existing planted roundabout schemes. That all proposals are consistent with the objective of securing a low carbon economy.

6. NEW HOMES and PROBLEMS that NEED to be ADDRESSED.

6.1 Recent Government statements have set out the following objectives;-

- (i) That priority be given to the provision of three bed roomed homes for families.
- (ii) That the new zero carbon rated building Regulations will come into full operation in the year 2016. (staged operations in 2010, and 2013.)
- (iii) That every effort be made to grow our own food on farms, small holdings, kitchen gardens and secure allotments.
- (iv) That there be conservation measures for water, and fuel economy.
- (v) That the Economy should be stimulated to grow, with the objective of providing full or near full employment.
- (vi) The need to develop a low carbon economy.

6.2 TOWER BLOCKS ;- Bearing in mind the foregoing objectives together with the new Building Regulations. The building of tower blocks of flats may no longer be cost effective or suitable for young families, perhaps unsuitable for waste recycling and present a fire risk with high supervision and maintenance costs.

7.0 DRAINAGE and THE RIVER MOLE AREA;

7.1 The Salfords stream (Redhill brook), the Burstow stream and other brooks discharge into the River Mole South and West of Reigate, all have their flood plains. In 1968 a severe storm caused flooding and closure of Gatwick Airport for an unacceptable period. As a consequence the British Airport Authority constructed dams, banks and sluices designed to prevent further airport closure. Floodwater is now confined to the remaining flood plain which extends from Burstow, Horley through Sidlow to Dorking, Leatherhead and beyond.

The effect of the flooding is that of the periodic closure of the A23 at Salfords Bridge, and at Bonehurst, the A217 at Sidlow Bridge other roads are also subject to closure, problems have arisen at Flanchford bridge and at various locations within the Mole Valley District Council and areas further North.

Bridge reconstruction with a new vertical alignment should remedy this road flooding /closure problem but care needs to be taken to avoid the obstruction of the water that can at present flow over the Highway at the bridge sites.

7.2 In considering the disposition of new homes thought has to be given to the flood plain problem, as well as the limits of the **Green Belt**. It would be of poor design and unfair to tenants or owners if they were subject to the distress and costs of being flooded by storms that are known to occur.

7.3 The hard Surfaces provided by the proposed roofs, drives, footways, roads, playgrounds, cycle tracks, and retail parks etc. Will have the effect of speeding up the discharge of storm water to streams and the flood plain. This reduced time of concentration might be ameliorated by the provision of SUDS. However underground water storage does not operate well in cohesive soils and can result in very high maintenance costs that may not be accepted by the Water (Drainage) Company.

7.4 Proposed River Mole Country Park ;-

Because the villages of Brockham, parts of Pixham lane, Dorking and Leatherhead will be at risk of flooding with the increased run off from the new homes and development areas proposed, (Assuming that any SUDS are poorly maintained) it is proposed that a scheme be prepared for the retention of flood water within the River Mole, Redhill Brook and other stream flood plains by the use of banks dams and regulated weirs.

7.5 Waste Disposal and Foul Drainage;-

New or extended treatment plant will be required depending on the location and layout of the new homes. The estimated discharge from this plant needs to be taken into account when making provision within the flood plain and catchment areas.

Waste disposal options are listed together with water conservation options in the previous reports (Sand extraction in East Surrey dated;- 2004 to 2008).

7.6 Community support services;-Schools, Colleges with car /cycle parks, playing fields, sports fields, parks, meeting halls, retail parks, shops, garages, car parks, medical facilities, work places etc. will need to be provided in addition to the limited facilities currently available especially as it is proposed to restrict journeys to the Redhill Hub.

8.0 Development proposals within the Banstead area.

A. The policy of demolishing existing habitable homes and replacing them with new using imported materials needs to be investigated under the general heading of cost / benefit for a low carbon economy. (see audit commission report).

B. Previous comments about employment for residents on new or redeveloped housing estates apply in as much as that if work is not locally available then the option left is one of travel and appropriate provision needs be made..

C. What are the long term expansion plans for subsequent decades?

D. In considering the final total number of homes we can expect an additional 24,000 plus vehicles on the roads each day plus additional through traffic from the proposed new developments in Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and adjacent districts.

E. In considering the A217 traffic flows a case should be made for the completion of the **M23 LONDON--BRIGHTON Motorway as shown in draft on the Ordnance survey sheet 187** (see report No. 1).

JMC

for the Reigate Society. Transport committee. (September 2009)

T H E R E I G A T E S O C I E T Y