

Todds End, Todds Green, Stevenage, Herts., SG1 2JE.

N.H.C.

14 AUG 2024

NORTHGATE

Alistair Strathern, M.P.,
Member of Parliament for Hitchin,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London SW1 1AA

ref: 24/01462/FP Friday, 9th August, 2024.

Dear Alistair,

Firstly, congratulations on being elected M.P. for Hitchin, although as Chairman of the Hitchin British Schools Trust, 1999-2005, I would have thought remaining a teacher of mathematics would have been a more rewarding and satisfying occupation!

We are wondering what interest you might want to take regarding Hitchin Town Centre and the surrounding rural area, particularly in this time of such strong demand for new housing.

With regard to the former, enclosed is a copy of my formal objection to the current planning application to redevelop the former Woolworth's building in Hitchin High Street, and to the latter, a summary of the 1990 Chesterton Report into the expansion of Stevenage westwards. Planning permission was granted for part of it in 1999 under the Labour Government but was rescinded by the Conservatives, and kept very quiet since. The CPRE seems to be fanatical in defending the Green Belt and have made life hell for some in Todds Green. My next door neighbour has just been refused permission to build a bedroom extension on Green Belt grounds, which we feel is very unfair.

According to the local paper, in which you feature, planning permission has just been granted by NHDC for 2 developments, in Gravely and Spurberry Hill, St. Ippolyts, the latter being surprising as the road pattern is appalling.

Personally I found the planning regime under Labour, with its regional organisation and views better than the Local Plan system under the Conservatives. For example, under the former one could take a view of infrastructure matters such as the need for a south Hitchin by pass linking the Offley By Pass with the dual carriageway Wymondley by pass, thus removing heavy goods traffic from Hitchin Town Centre and opening up the industrial area to expansion plus providing much better linkage of the Motorways M1 and A1(M) and Luton and Stanstead airports. The Local Plan regime is unable to consider such matters

Also, a new "Park" style railway station situated between Hitchin and Letchworth with direct access to Gatwick airport and removing commuter traffic from the respective town centres would be of huge benefit in improving the locality for all.

When I raise these ideas with local councillors, they laugh. We shall see.

Yours sincerely,

S.T.Smyth.

Dear Anne
attached is a copy of my
letter to Alistair Statter M.P.
which refers to the Woolworths
building

S.T.Smyth, FRICS
Chartered Surveyor & Land Agent,
Todds End, Todds Green,
Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2JE.

With compliments.

Extracts from the Chesterton Report, 1990.

"4. Physical Constraints

The expansion of Stevenage westwards is still seen as a reserve option. The main thrust of local authority policies is to pursue the route of planned regeneration maximising the use of undeveloped, underused or redundant land prior to establishing new developments west of the A1. Once committed, there is no going back. Major infrastructure investment will be needed which will require a critical mass of development to pay for it. The decision regarding the expansion westwards will relate to the pace of regeneration, and that will become apparent over the next few years. However, the need to be able to switch from regeneration to establishing new development areas means that confronting these issues early on and carrying out a number of tasks in parallel to regeneration is essential in order to safeguard the Council's position.

This section examines the broad physical issues which will affect development to the west of Stevenage and uses this assessment as the basis for developing three development options.

4.1 Physical Issues

- Four main areas of contention are likely to emerge:-
-
- Access, linkage and infrastructure
-
- Facilities
-
- Landscaping
-
- Site capacity.

4.1.1 Access, linkage and infrastructure

The area to the west of the A1(M) will effectively be separated from the main area of the town by the motorway. Much of the motorway is currently a1-grade with beams and buffer strips in critical areas to mitigate the impact of noise. Public transport, vehicle and pedestrian links across the motorway are therefore likely to be limited and require major works, incurring significant costs.

However, as Milton Keynes shows, *(and over the A1(M) at Letchworth/Baldock)* much can be done to reduce any east west divide. There are a number of existing links:-

- At Clovelly Way to the north which links Stevenage with Todds Green and Lower Titmore Green. This is a two lane link that has the potential of opening up the northern area. It links with a series of residential routes serving both the Symonds Green area of the town and the A1072.

Early access could be from Clovelly Way where development could commence around the existing scattered communities, of Todds Green and Lower Titmore Green

New housing would be linked closely to the existing residential neighbourhoods of the Fishers and Symonds Greens providing a crucial mass of population that could support existing facilities such as schools where shortfalls may be current. Such mutual support may be important in the early years of development.

Development could then move southwards as infrastructure and other links become available."