

Much Wenlock Civic Society
Rep number: C1041, C1042 & C1043
Received: 07/12/2006

Dear Sir,

Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Consultation.

Following my telephone discussions with Mr Liam Cowden I am writing as Acting Chairman of the Much Wenlock Civic Society.

In our letter of the 28th March 2006 we complained that, contrary to the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement, this Society had not been invited to make a submission at the initial stage of consultation. This omission has been repeated at the latest stage where, once again we have not been informed of the consultation nor have we been invited to respond. Once again we have found out about the consultation by accident.

We therefore contend first that the plan fails to meet the soundness test on either criteria 1 or criteria 2A.

We also contend secondly that the plan fails to meet the soundness test on both criteria 5 and 7.

The basis of our argument in relation to criteria 5&7 relates to the apparently entirely dismissive nature of the plan in relation to the town of Much Wenlock. Throughout the maps within the plan fail to show Much Wenlock as one of the main towns of Shropshire, though in population it is bigger than either Bishops Castle or Craven Arms which **are** both shown on all of the maps.

Moreover the evidence is equally flawed in relation to its identification of Conservation Areas. The Much Wenlock Conservation Area, one of the first to be designated in Shropshire, is not marked at all !

Were these omissions merely omissions in terms of documentation they would still be serious. However the omission in terms of documentation is symptomatic of the extent to which the County Council continues to forget all about Much Wenlock in implementing its policies to protect and enhance the environment. This is well illustrated by the failure to seek our views either at this stage or at the initial stage of consultation.

The Inspector will no doubt wish to be aware that Much Wenlock is widely regarded as the longest continually settled urban site in the whole of Shropshire, having a longer history than Ludlow, Bridgnorth or Shrewsbury. It was its historical and architectural importance that initially occasioned the early designation of its town centre as a Conservation Area.

Despite this, and the importance of the Shropshire Hills AONB including the Wenlock Edge, little attention has been paid to protecting and enhancing the Historic Environment of the town or its surroundings. The extraction of

minerals from the Wenlock Edge, from one of the largest and longest established quarries in Shropshire is continuing. This results in a constant flow of heavy quarry traffic directly through the town Conservation Area. The SCC has done nothing to reduce the environmental impact of this traffic.

No steps have been taken since the 1971 publication of the Shropshire County Planning Department booklet on the Conservation Area, to remedy the problems identified so many decades ago. The 1971 booklet, entitled *'Much Wenlock: Planning and Conservation'* stated that this quarry traffic introduces *"fumes, dust, noise, vibration, inconvenience and danger. These affect both people and buildings."* Nothing has changed, this description continues to be relevant in 2006.

Unless and until the document attributes to Much Wenlock the importance that it deserves the plan will remain unsound. More importantly the policies will remain of no value until their implementation affects the realities experienced by local residents. Their views are already well documented, on the basis of well researched evidence, in the Much Wenlock Town and Parish Plan, copies of which were forwarded to SCC in April 2006. The people of Much Wenlock had understood that SCC was committed to regarding such plans as vital to informing policy. We trust that this plan will not continue to be ignored.

Yours sincerely

Howard Horsley