

### **So - Why did H-in-A decide to go for a NP**

I am sure that you know where Hampton is but let me tell you roughly the Parish boundaries - in the north its from Jct 6 of the M42 along the A45 Coventry Road to Stonebridge so adjacent to the NEC and the site of the proposed HS2 Interchange Station, from Stonebridge along the A452 Kenilworth Road as far as a Lincoln Farm Cafe then follows the River Blyth to the south to the Grand Union Canal, follows the canal as far as Damson Parkway then cuts back to the east below Bickenhill as far as the motorway and back to junction 6.

The 2011 Census shows we have 803 dwellings and a population of 1,834 so very much smaller than your forum area.

I should mention that a small part of C-de-B village being that part on the Hampton side of the canal is within the parish, the greater part of the village being un-parished.

In recent times the community has felt vulnerable and a little bit under siege because:

HS2 will go through the village

Solihull Council has published its proposals for UK Central with, significantly, a Garden City around the HS2 Station

The airport runway extension and resulting airspace change which is still not resolved

Continual pressure on the Green Belt which surrounds both Hampton in Arden village and that part of C-de-B which is in the parish

Proposals for burial grounds near to C-de B but again within the parish

We also fought, unsuccessfully, against the building of B`ham Dogs home within the parish. Incidentally, so called non material changes approved after the original planning permission has resulted in a development that looks more like an industrial estate and the local community is again upset by decisions made at officer level. In my opinion it is just this type of development that reinforces the need for a NP.

Currently and in addition to those just mentioned we have proposals for:

A new Motorway Service Area, said to be the largest yet in the UK, at C-de-B within the Parish and the

Relocation of Bickenhill Recycling Centre to a green field site in the Green Belt and still within parish

I think it's important to say that we do try to take a realistic attitude over future development and the PC recognises the need for economic development which is being promoted by Solihull Council but, at the same time, we are very keen to protect the Green Belt and maintain the semi-rural nature of the Parish. It is for these reasons that we decided to go for a NP and in many ways, for us, the Plan is about mitigating the effects of development and attempting to ensure that suitable infrastructure is in place for these new developments that will, in all probability, take place.

### **Well - where are we now and how did we get there?**

Proposals for a NP were first discussed by the PC in late 2011 and were launched at the Annual Parish meeting in April 2012 when, pleasingly, the proposal was enthusiastically received by residents.

You will know that a parish council is an accountable body and, therefore, we did not need to go through the process that you have in order to set up your forum. The application for Designation of the NP Area was submitted to Solihull Council in November 2012 and approved in June 2013. We formed a Working Group comprising, amongst others, Parish Councillors, representatives from the Hampton Society, the George Fentham Trust and C-de-B Residents Association. Following a very great deal of hard work and consultation the Draft Pre-Submission NP was eventually published for the 6 week statutory consultation on 3<sup>rd</sup> August this year and closing on 14 September. We sent the Plan for consultation to 64 organisations and individuals; it was available on line and we received just 17 responses. Depending on your point of view you could say that was a disappointing response although my take is that the small return rate suggests that we were on the right track.

We are now finalising our consideration of the responses to the consultation which will be incorporated into the final version of the Plan for submission to Solihull Council early in the New Year. Some responses we have accepted either in part or in full, others we have rejected. It is necessary to fully record the reasons for doing so.

We are also in the process of compiling the final documentation to accompany the Submission Document which is proving to be quite onerous:

The Consultation Statement is a document which has to:

“contain details of the persons and bodies consulted, how they were consulted, summarises the main issues and concerns raised, describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and how you have dealt with them”.

The Basic Conditions Statement has to set out that the Plan “has appropriate regard to national policy, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for Solihull, is compatible with human rights requirements and is compatible with EU obligations” – easy!!

### **So, to return to the starting point...**

Well, I certainly do not say “**don’t do it**” as, potentially, the effects of the “made” plan will be very beneficial to the community, a special bonus will be the enhanced Community Infrastructure Levy which it should bring – always assuming that current legislation is not changed.

It many ways it will depend on whether you decide to write your own plan or pay a consultant to do it for you. This decision will depend on what expertise you can call on from within the community and available funding. We were constrained by funding of the project from the outset. Estimates for employing a consultancy firm were between £20 & £30k, money that we did not have available to us as our income is totally dependent on the parish precept, but the PC did agree an initial budget of £1k. We were fortunate in the people that came forward to help and we quickly found that we had the right voluntary skills available. When we applied for a government funding a maximum grant of £7k was available from DCLG and we were successful in obtaining a grant of £4221 which had to be used to cover the cost of printing, postage and meeting room hire. It was necessary to spend the grant within an agreed time frame or lose it. In the end we overspent by £5 and we have yet to call on the £1k budget from the PC.

So, how and where did we begin? We already had the Parish Plan published in 2010 and the Village Design Statement published by the Hampton-in-Arden Society in 2003 both of which had been endorsed by SMBC so we needed to update these and relate them to the local plan and NPPF. We then took as our starting point the need to know the views and opinions of households and business were on a variety of issues and decided on fairly detailed questionnaires. After much deliberation we discounted anything requiring completion on line and went for a paper survey. The topics covered and questions asked were framed with advice from SMBC. We opted for postal delivery with names and addresses being taken from the electoral register. SMBC also helped to identify local companies by letting us have a list of Business Rate payers. We supplied pre paid envelopes for the return of the questionnaires and were able to identify non returners who were sent reminders. Eventually we achieved a return rate of 40% from householder but only 25% from the business community. Replies were analysed and the comments and responses used to inform preparation of the draft plan. We talked to the local community groups, held consultation events, reported regularly to the PC and kept the Planning Officer informed of our progress taking advice as and when necessary.

Importantly we decided against identifying any potential development sites other than the one site mentioned in the SLP in the Plan as to do so could set hares running!

Both time and effort are obviously big factors in the preparation of the Plan. Whatever you estimate I suggest that you at least double it and be prepared to miss target dates and suffer many frustrations.

Do work closely with the Planning Officer, ask for and listen to their advice. Both Emma Tinsley and before Emma, Sarah James, have been most helpful throughout the process. It is worth remembering that, inevitably, your Plan will be examined by a planner and it needs to be written with that very much in mind.

Do look to make use of any relevant existing local publications you may have. I mentioned earlier that we have a Parish Plan entitled A Vision for the Future and the Village Design Statement. We also have the Conservation Area Appraisal confirmed by Solihull in March this year which updated our Conservation Area in force since the 60's.

Don't try to reinvent the wheel – there are plenty of good examples of successful Plans out there. See if you can find one where the local issues are similar to your own.

Do keep as much detailed information as you can as it will be needed for your Basic Conditions and Consultation Statements needed part of the final submission documents and they are both a sizeable piece of work.