

Rode Parish Council

Matter 3 – Selection of settlements to accommodate growth

(i) What is the justification for the selection of specific settlements to be the basis of the allocations of the 505 additional dwellings?

1. Rode has a Neighbourhood Plan adopted (made) by MDC in August 2017. At the time MDC submitted LPP2 for examination this plan was less than 18 months old and should therefore have carried some weight. It showed that with current permissions and recent construction the target for dwellings in Rode had already been exceeded. Any additional housing should be for the benefit of local people who wished to move to smaller more manageable properties. The submitted LPP2 made no provision for additional housing in Rode.
2. The lack of justification for finding settlements for an additional 505 dwellings has been outlined under Matter 1.
3. In Rode's case, the selected settlement is for a development of 26+ dwellings on land belonging to the owner of Merfield House outside the development boundary and adjacent to The Mead. This is further described below in section 4.2 (i) where the historical context for bringing forward a development on this site is outlined.
4. We argue that this proposal should be removed from draft LPP2 given that Rode already has an excess of development. Should the landowner choose to do so, they can then bring forward a planning application at a more suitable scale and on their own terms for processing by Mendip in the usual way.

(ii) How does this relate to the SA (Second Addendum) and HRA Addendum?

1. Rode's response to the Sustainability Proposal - Second Addendum is essentially laid out under Matter 2.
2. The addendum to the Habitat Regulations Assessment draws attention to the importance of bat colonies in our area. It records the presence of Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats and Bechstein's bats. Remarkably the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) records that this area includes hibernation sites for 15% of the UK's Greater Horseshoe bat population. Nearby Iford SSSI has the fourth

largest breeding colony of Greater Horseshoe bats in England and one of only 15 breeding roosts in the country.

3. Clearly any proposed development would need to be tested against these sensitivities. Scale is important because, for example, street lighting has been shown to cause permanent disruption to bat flight patterns. The HRA Addendum simply assesses the impact of RD1 as 'uncertain' with a potential loss of foraging habitat.
4. This adds up to another objection to the inclusion of RD1 in LPP2 given it requires a minimum of 26 dwellings to be erected on the site.

(iii) Is the balance between edge of town and Primary Village sites and dwelling numbers appropriate? If not, what should the balance be?

1. Rode along with the Primary Villages of Norton St Philip and Beckington has already significantly overprovided new dwellings (built and with planning permission) even though the plan period has another 9 years to run. (See the Appendix to Matter 1)
2. It can be reasonably speculated that the three villages are strongly favoured by development companies because here rural properties can be marketed at a premium. A major reason is they are within easy commuting distance of centres of employment in Frome, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge and (especially) Bath and the rail stations at Bath and Westbury, while providing a taste of country life.
3. Conversely, as shown in Appendix 1 to Matter 1, the 5 major towns in Mendip have so far all under-provided.
4. Allowing yet further development in these villages simply to accommodate demand conflicts with other policies, notably *SA09 Encourage more sustainable travel patterns* and *SA11 Meet housing needs whilst providing suitable housing for all in appropriate, sustainable locations*.
5. As argued elsewhere, there is a sound argument that more effort should be focussed on finding appropriate development sites in underprovided areas of the District that are more sustainable including the 5 major towns.