



COMMUNITY CONCERN
2 DOUGLAS ROAD
BINGHAM
NOTTS
NG13 8EL

8th November 2008

Mr K. Clarke, QC, MP

Dear Mr Clarke,

Bingham Area Issues

We have arranged to meet you at 1pm on the 15th November and as we have only a brief time would be grateful if you could spend a few minutes reading this background information.

Background

I am Chairman of this apolitical, self-funded community group formed two years ago in response to general concerns about the deteriorating quality of life in this area.

We use facts and logic to present our cases and try to work with local authorities wherever possible.

Mr Suthers OBE, our County Councillor, knows our organisation and our methodology.

Our prime concerns have been the severe traffic congestion in the area, the lack of parking facilities and the need for a new health centre.

Traffic – Parking and Congestion

Last year we presented more than 1600 petition signatures to Rushcliffe Borough and Notts County Councils in support of our proposals on parking and traffic congestion. These two conjoined issues affect the daily lives of thousands of people. They present health, safety and economic problems to us and are gradually eroding the quality of life in this area.

Please note that we used Council statistics to support our case.

Despite many fine words, several meetings, dozens of letters and hundreds of emails there has been no significant action taken by either body to tackle the issues.

The situation has since been exacerbated, by the sanctioning, by both Borough and County, of more house building (and with it, more cars). They have also implemented Civil Parking Enforcement without providing the safeguards that we requested to prevent consequential parking in residential streets, which has brought misery to many residents.

We have suggested practical, long-term solutions to these problems; these have either been rejected or ignored yet neither body has made any serious alternative proposals.

We notice that other Nottinghamshire towns have had new one-way systems, bypasses and improved town centres to alleviate similar problems.

We also note that there has been no significant investment in this area for decades.

Health Centre

A long overdue project is underway to build a replacement for the current cramped and run down premises. The NHS PCT and LiftCo have examined ten possible sites.

The existing health centre site, which is in the town centre and easily accessible, is the site overwhelmingly favoured by residents and the local health professionals.

The County Council owns this site together with the adjacent library, which would need to be relocated. The County Council has taken a negative, inflexible stance on this issue (the attitude has been described by Mr Suthers and others as 'intransigent') and this has been a major factor in its removal by the PCT from the list of possible development sites.

Another obstacle has been the lack of support from the Borough Council which has indicated that planning permission may not be given and that it sees the current site as the last potential retail development site in Bingham. We find this appalling, as there is no local plan and fail to see why retail development should - without any public consultation - have priority over a health centre. Again, this is quoted by the PCT as a reason for rejecting the site.

I should add that the PCT have other objections to the current site and have nominated three alternatives, all of which have drawbacks. Consultation is underway.

Summary

This is a pleasant, friendly, community, which is coming under threat as a consequence of neglect by the two local government organizations supposedly responsible for its welfare.

There has been no significant investment here for decades.
There is no local plan and no sign of infrastructure improvements yet new growth is continually sanctioned

Traders complain that they lose business and residents complain that they cannot access shops and services because of parking and congestion issues. The lives of many others are blighted because of these issues, which are getting worse.

Our urgently needed new health centre may now be sited in an area that will demand vehicular access for many or on one of the last green spaces in town.

The needs of the residents seem totally irrelevant to the Borough and County Councils.

Representation

We have tried to get change through our elected Town, Borough and County representatives and also by direct communication with the Borough and County Councils.

We notice the vast amount of time spent by these Councils talking about community, communications and consultation.

We read the enormous and almost impenetrable websites containing hundreds of charts, plans, minutes, initiatives, strategies, buzzwords and clichés.

We also notice the large number of peripheral organizations such as the Nottinghamshire Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership that purport to ensure that communities get what they need.

What we don't see is any action to address the real needs of *this* community.

Request

The democratic process is failing us. Can you please help?

I attach sample support documents.

Best Wishes

Tim Chamberlin, Chairman, Community Concern.
cc Martin Suthers OBE, Mr Neil Clarke (RBC), Mr Mick Burrows (NCC).