

I am concerned about the significant level of housebuilding that has recently taken place in Cross Houses. Whilst the Local Plan currently does not allocate any significant new housing settlements to Cross Houses it none the less still defines it as a Community Hub, thus allowing the possibility of future development in the next few years when a 'refresh' to the Local Plan takes place.

I want Cross Houses to remain as Open Countryside and not be designated as a Community Hub so ensuring that no significant housing development will be allowed to take place for the life span of this Local Plan.

I do not believe that Shropshire Council's evidence to support its' proposal that Cross Houses should be reclassified as a Community Hub to be sound.

The residents of Cross Houses have had to put up with large housebuilding sites in the village for several years now with all the problems this entails such as increased traffic, construction traffic noise and fields where we were once able to walk our dogs being turned into housing estates. I believe that the majority of residents in Cross Houses do not want any more large scale development of their village.

Recently the Parish Council sent out a Community Led Plan questionnaire. Nowhere on this consultation document did it state that Cross Houses is still classified as Open Countryside and it did not ask a fundamental question of the recipients as to whether they would prefer to remain Open Countryside and hence have the option of not having to accept any further large scale developments.

I would ask that the Inspector at the Public Inquiry specifically looks into this issue and asks why this most important of questions was not included in the Community Led Plan questionnaire. There were 4 parish councillors on the working group that developed this plan and I am concerned that the Parish Council were too involved in the delivery of this Plan.

Whilst the basic question of whether or not residents wanted any more housing in their village was not asked many residents still took the opportunity to note the fact they did not want any further development of the village but I would ask that the Inspectors ask the Parish Council / Community Led Plan Chair why these most important of questions were not asked in this survey.

I would also urge the Inspectors to investigate if our County Councillor has had any involvement in the production of this Community Led Plan – something that should not have occurred due to conflict of interest matters. Our County Councillor is also the Chair of the Parish Council and as County Councillor has repeatedly voted for the Local Plan in its current format. Any evidence that our County Councillor has at any time been involved in the drafting of the Community Led Plan should be deemed an infringement of roles and responsibilities due to the conflict of interest between our County Councillors' responsibility to our village and her duties in supporting the policies of Shropshire Council.

What should be being undertaken is a full scale needs assessment survey so that Shropshire Council can fully understand just exactly what it is that the village wants. The community led plan that was eventually finalised by the Parish Council clearly evidences the significant opposition to further housing development. It is now evident that the recent 80 house development that is nearing completion in our village has delivered very

little in the way of new community assets apart from the minor upgrade of the existing kitchen facilities in the local village hall amounting to around £20,000 of a CIL investment in community assets. This is balanced against payments from the developer to Shropshire Council of around £1.2m. I am afraid that I cannot provide specific figures as I have been unable to get Shropshire Council to provide me with any specific details appertaining to these payments.

Until a full needs assessment is completed I am not sure how Shropshire Council Planning Department can confidently understand what is right for our village and hence promoting our village as a Community Hub cannot be evidenced.

Moving onto the way in which Cross Houses has been selected for Community Hub status I would make the following points

The proposed Hub status is based on a points system and there are several areas of contention in the scoring of services, facilities and employment for Cross Houses.

1. Cross Houses had points awarded for having a Library - in the context of the scoring system, called the Hierarchy of Settlements Assessment Document, a library refers to a static permanent fixture as are all other facilities mentioned.
A mobile library which visits twice a month for 25 minutes does not constitute having a library which people could, if required, visit daily for leisure or research purposes. A static library is not mentioned in the Hierarchy of Settlements Assessment Document and appears to have been added specifically to qualify. Currently the library service has not visited the village in over 3 months. I do not believe that the village should be given points for having a library service.
2. Children's Playground – single provision only - not multiple as stated
3. Amenity Green Space – single provision only - not multiple as stated
4. Outdoor sports facility – which I presume is a playing field – which is not owned by the Parish and which is simply a field which has over the last 6 months November 2021 – May 2022 been regularly flooded so unable to be available for sporting activities
5. A local pub which over the last 2 years since the findings of the draft local plan were published has regularly been closed due to the lack of tenants to take on the business. A pub which I understand is now not currently serving food. Can this local facility really garner the points that have been allocated to it in the draft local plan as proposed by Shropshire Council.

I would request that the Inspector at the forthcoming Public Inquiry comes and inspects all these facilities to determine if this points scoring assessment by Shropshire Council is appropriate.

A small deduction in points will result in Cross Houses retaining its current planning status of Open Countryside. Something that the vast majority of local residents would welcome.

Of course if a school was to be provided for our children or a doctors surgery for our villagers who need medical care or better forms of public transport provided then our community may view Shropshire Councils proposals with more positivity. However at the moment the lack of basic infrastructure associated with a village that in planning terms is reaching the status of a small town is palpable and I would urge the Inspectors to reject Shropshire Councils assertion that Cross Houses should be reclassified as a Community Hub.

I understand that a colleague of mine – Mr Brian Oakley will now be attending Matters 1 and 3 to seek clarifications regarding how Cressage has been selected by Shropshire Council to be classified as a Community Hub, as I am seeking clarification for the village that I live in – Cross Houses.

In both of these villages and indeed other proposed community hub sites around Shropshire should significant further development take place then I am also concerned about the ability of Shropshire Council to meet its commitments to its climate emergency statement made in 2019 that commits Shropshire Council to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. The plan to build, particularly in rural locations that have limited access to public transport or active travel opportunities will result in many more longer distance car journeys being made – so increasing carbon emissions rather than helping reduce emissions.

Whilst I appreciate that as the Inspectorate your role is to determine if the proposed draft Local Plan is sound it cannot make sense that this plan will materially impact Shropshire Councils ability to deliver on its own climate emergency commitments. If there was anything that the Planning Inspectorate could do to try to ensure that our future generations do not look back at this piece of legislation and ask how we as a County ever allowed this plan to be approved in its current format – a plan which will ensure that their futures are put at risk – then we should take this opportunity now to ensure that this draft Local Plan is rejected and that Shropshire Council are required to re-submit.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter

Regards

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