

More Houses

Or More Hostages to Fortune?

By

John Burrows

Since the War, Governments have demanded more and more houses. But (a Big But), at what cost? Thousands of acres of Open Space have been lost and “England’s Green and Pleasant Land” is fast becoming a dream in the race for political “Brownie points.”

Presumption in favour of Approval is being drummed into Local Councils, and this is well known to “Developers” keen to make mega-bucks of profit and: “To Hell with Local Plans and Policies”.

“Developers” don’t give a damn about the extra demands on existing Public Services and Utilities. Neither do they care for the feelings of Local People most likely to be affected by their “nightmare dreams”.

I am sure that they assume the Local planning Authorities will just “roll-over” and place mere cosmetic conditions on granting Permissions. Refusals often mean Appeals, which (again as Developers well know) can be expensive if a Council loses – for its own Taxpayers must foot the Bill!

In Humberstone/Hamilton Ward (in Leicester) for instance, an Appeal is proceeding against a refusal for houses behind 6 Vicarage Lane. In the meantime, the applicant has submitted another Application *on the same site* for slightly fewer houses! Many Local Folk are “up in arms” as you might expect.

I spoke of the loss of Open Space. Here are some other items on the debit side.

Demands for Gas, Water and Electricity will rise. How will they be met?

Sewerage disposal: Will existing Plant works cope?

Domestic Waste and Rubbish increase in direct proportion to the number of People in the “New Housing”. How will Councils manage this?

The “Newcomers” must, of course, be provided with Medical, Surgical and Dental Care. The N.H.S. is already bearing a heavy load with our existing (and ageing!) population. Who will wave the “Magic Wand” to solve that, I wonder?

More People mean more Children, who will need Schools. “Please Sir, Where will our Kids go to School?” Some schools are already at capacity.

Traffic loads on existing roads is something, again, that “Developers” have (perhaps wilfully) ignored as their access roads spiral ever further outward. Yet more noise and pollution? Do “they” care?

Will Public Transport (Bus Companies, for example) be able to meet the demand, or, as I fear, will cars continue to increase as People move in?

Space for Play areas for all age groups: Has that, ever been thought through? With many Playing Fields sold off for Housing – what else – what will happen then? The nightmare scenario is that Victoria Park and our other “Green Lungs” will be buried under concrete and bricks! The precedent exists. Part of Spinney Hill Park was lost to build a Police Station!

So, there’s the Bill. As to who will pay, are you willing, or, will you fight to preserve our limited living space?

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