

# BURNTWOOD ACTION GROUP



NEWSLETTER No 4

JANUARY 2010

## **What is happening with plans to develop our area?**

This short newsletter aims to tell you what we know about the current situation.

- The decision by the West Midlands Region Assembly to accept or reject Government Inspector's imposition of an additional 2,000 new homes to be built in Lichfield District by 2026, on top of the original 8,000, is expected by the end of February.
- Lichfield District Council (LDC) is waiting for this decision before moving forward with the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework.
- The Panel Report from Government Inspectors recommends that additional housing should be considered to the North East of Lichfield or North of Tamworth.
- The Draft Core Strategy which was put out in 2008 by LDC for public consultation made provision for 750 new homes to be built in Burntwood & Hammerwich from 2006 to 2026. With your overwhelming support we strongly opposed it because of its use of greenbelt. Since 2006 around 300 new homes have been built or planned in our area. This leaves 450 new homes which, we believe, can be accommodated on previously developed land.
- As a result of our representations LDC has worked and is still working to identify suitable brownfield sites within Burntwood to alleviate any necessity to build on greenbelt.
- Negotiations are still ongoing regarding the LCP site opposite Morrisons. Its release for housing will depend on whether a suitable alternative habitat for wildlife can be found. We are still concerned that the decision to classify this land as of Biological Interest was taken behind closed doors with no rationale behind the decision being released.
- Our MP, Michael Fabricant has been quoted in the press as saying that if the Conservatives win the next election they plan to abolish Regional Assemblies and return housing planning to local control. This may happen but a new government could give it low priority and regional plans (those being published at the end of February and likely to lead to development on greenbelt) may be incorporated in LDC's revised Core Strategy before any change of government can have an effect. During and immediately following the election determined developers may try to exploit an uncertain political situation and submit plans for development on greenbelt.

## Where does this leave us?

- **Waiting** – By the end of February we should know whether LDC will have to completely rewrite its Core Strategy or move forward with existing or slightly modified plans.
- **Ready** to fight any revised plans which threaten our surrounding green land. In this eventuality we will again seek your support by asking you to write letters of objection as previously. This could happen in two or three month's time.
- **Wary** of promises made by politicians which could be difficult to fulfil in the challenging economic climate following a General Election. We must make sure that we lobby candidates of all political persuasions to support our case for no development on Burntwood's greenbelt. We must be on the lookout for any planning applications for development on greenbelt during and after the election campaign.
- **Continuing to work** with LDC to identify additional brownfield sites.
- **Developing closer relationships** with Burntwood and Hammerwich Action Group so that a co-ordinated campaign can be quickly instigated if revised plans threaten our greenbelt.
- **Responsive** to any changes which could affect Burntwood residents.
- **Optimistic** – The strength of opposition of yourselves to the Draft Core Strategy's proposal to develop on our greenbelt greatly overshadowed any other response. LDC has taken this on board and is now looking very seriously at housing development on Burntwood's previously developed land.
- **Contemplating** our future: When this campaign ends do we continue as an organisation with a watching brief to keep a lookout for any developments which could threaten our environment and keep Burntwood residents informed?
- **Thankful** for the support which you have given our campaign to date and **hopeful** that such support will be forthcoming, if needed, in the future.
- **Listening** for any issues that you want to bring to our attention or for any offers of help or advice.

**To contact us** please use any of the following:

- Our post boxes at Burntwood Health Centre, Hudson Drive, the Post Office, Swan Island or "Wild Orchid" flower shop, Rugeley Road.
- The letterbox of 37 Farewell Lane or 8 Church Road.
- Our website: [www.burntwoodactiongroup.co.uk](http://www.burntwoodactiongroup.co.uk)