

Society calls for major future growth on west of town

Susan Sollohub

Massive future expansion of Bury St Edmunds should be sited to the west of the town, says the Bury Society.

Members are backing developing 110 hectares of land on the edge of Westley/Horringer, earmarking it as their top choice in a St Edmundsbury Borough planning consultation. The Society has defined 'Bury St Edmunds West' as its preferred option, recognising the many advantages of locating more than 3,500 new homes, a secondary school, a new replacement hospital and other facilities on the same site near the A14 road.

Landscaping and screening the nearby village of Westley would be crucial, as would a strict masterplan for the new development. The highest standards of architecture, sustainability, insulation and energy conservation should be vital features of a scheme looking to 2031, says the Society's response.

To help cope with increasing traffic congestion, it also recommends new town link roads, improvements to the A14 and more use of the railways.

Crucial to safeguarding Bury's individual character and charm was protecting the open views east from Abbeygate Street. Attractive green spaces included No Man's Meadow and the Leg of Mutton field, a 'lung' between Moreton Hall and the main town.

"The society is passionate about safeguarding these spaces which are essential aspects of Bury's unique character. They must be sacrosanct," said chairman Sarah Green. The amenity group considers that Moreton Hall growth has reached saturation point and that other options have major drawbacks.

Urging much improved infrastructure, the Society calls for two new link roads, one to ease congestion at the Northgate roundabout and the other at the Southgate roundabout. Also proposed are a link from Etna Road across the allotments to the Ram Meadow car park, while the second route would be from the Rougham roundabout near Rushbrook Lane, connecting with the A134. The allotments should be replaced elsewhere.

On rail transport, the Society supports a night goods train system for carrying all containers to and from Felixstowe by train instead of via the A14. It also wants to see a Station Square at Bury West with a 15 minute local service to the town at peak times.

A second Station Square would be needed at Bury Central with frequent hopper buses using Enviro Fuel, circuiting the town. The need for Park and Ride is also highlighted in the body's response to the document Core Strategy Preferred Options and Strategic Sites Issue and Options.

Consultees hope to influence decisions about the long term growth of Bury, Haverhill and the villages. Bury's share of housing growth should be limited to 35 per cent of the total rather than the 40 per cent proposed, says the Society "Good planning for the future is very important – life will change a lot by 2031", said Mrs Green.

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