

The Rockfield Road Development

Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate so far as is practical the environmental and economic impact of the housing development at Rockfield Road on the town of Monmouth.

Introduction

The new housing development being built at Rockfield Road, Monmouth will add 500 houses and an estimated 1,200 people to the town of Monmouth. This will cause a proportionally large population increase, between 10% and 15%. The car population will also increase, each house is to be provided with two car parking spaces. In 1981 the number of people owning a car was 60% of the adult populace, in 1991 it had risen to 85%. The peak vehicle traffic is estimated to double on the Rockfield Road.

Clearly the project will make an impact on the town. The project is a direct result of a 1997 declaration of the Department of the Environment that Britain would need 4 ½ million more homes by the year 2016. This is due to the rapidly changing patterns of home ownership in the UK. More single and divorced people are buying separate houses. People are also tending to live longer. As a result of this pattern change there is a larger demand for smaller low cost affordable housing. This housing project is part of the planners scheme for more housing.

Hypothesis

It is expected that on balance the new Rockfield Road housing area will have an overall beneficial impact on Monmouth. This hypothesis will be tested by carrying out the following tasks:

- 1) Describe pre-project Monmouth geographically, environmentally and economically.
- 2) Describe of the location, extent and nature of project.

- 3) Survey the public's awareness and record their opinions.
- 4) Research appropriate public planning documents.
- 5) Estimate impact of the project on Monmouth, both environmentally and economically.

Town Location

Monmouth is situated in the county of Monmouthshire, in Southeast Wales. It lies on the border between England and Wales. To the Southwest is Newport, approximately 25 miles away. To the North is Hereford, 17 miles away. East of Monmouth is the forest of Dean and to the west is Abergavenny, 18 miles away. It lies at the confluence of the rivers Wye, Monnow and Trothy. The Wye Valley is known as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Environment

Monmouth has the ambience of an old market town. There still is a livestock market on every Friday, and sometimes a larger one every five weeks. It also enjoys street markets. The town has substantial remains dating back to pre-Roman times. The castle, which was built in 1074 by William Fitz Osbern, is the birthplace of the king Henry V of Agincourt fame, it and the unique 13th century Monnow Bridge have made Monmouth a popular tourist attraction. The Nelson Museum is again another attraction reminding visitors of his links with the area.

Monmouth has slowly become a dormitory town as it has very good road links with the towns of Newport, Ross, Gloucester, Bristol and Cardiff. People like to live in Monmouth and are prepared to commute. There are not very many local employment opportunities. The town is said to have excellent educational establishments. It has

also has attracted a higher than average number of retired people, these are reported to be comparatively wealthy. The 1991 census gives Monmouth a population of 7,724.

Town future without the new project

Due to recent and possible developments along the M4 the attractiveness of Monmouth might be affected as more people are attracted into the area. This would result in more houses being built which would undoubtedly be built on the surrounding countryside, as there is nowhere else. Monmouth does not have much brown field land. More cars would be inevitable. There could also be an expected increase in tourists. Although the town does not offer too many jobs many people decide to settle there anyway, and this is known as counter-urbanisation. Others would be attracted as there are choices of very good schools, exceptional sports facilities, historic monuments, scenic and serene countryside, good health facilities, a shopping centre and also a wide range of entertainment.

The new project

The first proposal was to build on the outskirts of Osbaston, but this plan was quickly dismissed as it was thought that the access was unsuitable. The councils' next plan was to build East of the Hereford Road, but this idea was rejected as the site would be visible to the public coming from Ross on the dual carriageway and would detract tourists away. The third suggestion was on the suburbs of Wyesham but again this idea was finished with due to their visibility. Their fourth and final suggestion was just off Rockfield Road in Rockfield and this one was accepted.

Planning considerations

- Improve and provide access for transport and pedestrians, providing better pedestrian facilities encourages people to walk instead of using road transport. It is also a lot safer to have zebra crossings and will especially benefit the young, elderly and disabled

- Provide a school, community hall and recreation ground.
- Provide for the increase of car ownership
- Increase of counter-urbanisation
- Finance; large amounts of money is needed to improve the access but in the long term this will benefit the future residents, but the existing residents of Rockfield Road will go under lots of irritating noise pollution. Normal everyday traffic will be disturbed resulting in traffic congestion.

The site

Local authorities decided to situate the development in agricultural land next to Rockfield Road. Map ... shows that the site is a reasonable distance near the town, fairly easy to get to, and with a relatively low visual impact. The land had been classified as grade two agricultural. This is known as 'green fields' land and are usually rural areas with diverse wildlife. As a result many environmental and economic factors are involved.

Traffic

Map ... shows that there is already reasonable access from Rockfield Road and Watery Lane to support at least 500 cars per However to accommodate the projected 750 cars per ... Watery Lane will need to be widened. To do this the small brook, which flows along the side of the road, will be culverted. Rockfield Road itself needs to be enlarged and improved with pavements for pedestrians. At least one zebra crossings will be built for added safety. The increase of population more bus services will run. Parking needs to be greatly improved to reduce cars from parking on the road. The site does have a large amount of land and if you refer to the map, land has actually been reserved for a school, recreation and a community hall.

Utilities

Gas, water, electricity.

Social services

Doctors, dentists, clinics, police, fire, public transport, etc.

Construction phase

Inconveniences?

Duration?

Continuous or phased?

Methods**Method 1- details of the housing proposal.**

In order to collect the main results that were needed in this section a large amount of plans and maps were drawn of the site and the surrounding area. Also photographs were taken showing an idea of the sorts of housing that is to be built. Descriptions of the scheme were also needed in order to explain the maps and photographs, these were obtained from The Beacon office where

Method 2- Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment

To collect the results of this section more photographs were needed to show the environmental visual impact of the site by overlaying them with sketches. An environmental survey was also completed to see the differences of what the site was like and how it will be. A traffic count was also another way of getting the results to show the impact on the local road networks. Connection with the local Chamber of Commerce was also made.

Method 3 –Survey of local opinion

The results of the questionnaires ...
Figures ..
Graphs ...

Conclusions

In building the site on these green fields a large amount of wildlife will be lost. I don't think it was a good idea to build the site but instead in brown fields somewhere else in the town.

Pollution will undoubtedly increase like light, noise, fumes etc. Traffic will increase especially on the lower end Monmouth and with it will come angry drivers and fumes. In order to get rid of this problem they will have to build extra roads and traffic lights etc. But top do this they will have to use up even more of the countryside of Rockfield.

A good thing about the building of the development is that the population will increase and with it so will the trading of Monmouth resulting in higher profits for the traders