

## Put the brake on plans for new homes

There can be no doubt there is a need for the provision of affordable housing in this area but the way the LibDem-controlled South Lakeland District Council is promoting this cause should concern to residents. The driving force is political dogma and the potential end result could be disastrous.

In order to make it financially attractive for landowners to provide land and developers to build houses, there is a need to build three times more houses than are justified so that one third of these is affordable.

This is clearly nonsensical and the result is that large swathes of open countryside will be developed just to provide a relatively small number of affordable houses that would better be accommodated in more suitable locations.

Many of the sites adopted by SLDC will attract premium prices and the affordable houses will only be affordable at first sale, after which they will simply follow the market, albeit at a small discount. Additionally, many existing affordable houses have already been extended to a point where they will no longer be accessible by first time buyers.

The haste in which the LibDems are pursuing this issue should be a concern to us all as the coming Localism Bill will prevent councils from treating residents in such a cavalier fashion.

The consultations that have taken place have proved to be a demonstration of contempt towards residents. The very same planners who produced the proposals, then considered the many objections and summarily dismissed them as "noted or taken into account" without any discussion of the merits.

A submission will be sent to the Government for consideration but I fear the points of objectors will be buried. The government inspector will not see the level of concern or validity of our arguments.

There has been no independent scrutiny of the consultations as the councillors simply voted along party lines.

There is an urgent need to apply the brakes and that can best be done by everyone who has concerns, signing up to the petition at [www.gadag.org.uk](http://www.gadag.org.uk).

Allan Teasdale  
 Swarthmoor

## Poor approach to the village

As a life-long resident of Arnside, as was my father and grandfather, I wish to protest vehemently at the desecration of the Arnside 'Station' field.

This field was an archaeological site, with lines of the ancient 'salt pans' still in evidence. It is overlooked by one of the oldest houses in Arnside, the 17th Century 'Saltcotes' Farm.

The field has been a feature of Arnside's approach for over 100 years and enhanced it's entrance. Now it has been completely desecrated.

A compound has been constructed by United Utilities, which will be used for several months by heavy traffic and machinery, causing a danger and hindrance on Station Road.

Just this last week I saw an emergency ambulance, with all it's lights and sirens

blaring, struggling to get through.

The field looks dreadful, too, because the farmer has removed much of the top turf, probably for 'intended lawns'.

Part of the field has been designated as a future building site in Arnside, but Arnside has been declared as an area of outstanding natural beauty, and these developments do nothing to uphold this.

Dorothy C. Maguire (nee coles)  
 Arnside

Site RN337#

PLEASE SEE  
 OVERLEAF



## Do not ruin green spaces

The current development plans for thousands of new properties in South Lakeland are nonsensical (Gazette, January 12, 'The winners and losers').

The public is now asked to respond on the proposals and say whether we think the council followed the proper procedures during consultations or if we

believe the potential sites are deliverable and sustainable.

I don't know much about proper procedures but given that many valid points made against each proposal only have the response 'noted', I don't think that is proper.

What does 'noted' even mean? I suspect what they mean is 'ignored'. These are people's genuine concerns which should have genuine answers.

In terms of being sustainable, I can't see how building all over green field sites is sustainable when there are so many brown field sites and empty properties already.

I'm sure most of the housing need could be met that way and they must do that before ruining the green spaces that we all love this area for.

**WESTMORLAND  
GAZETTE** Martin Wilson  
2 FEB 2012 Kendal

## Petition to block homes bid grows

A PETITION has gathered 1,800 signatures to appeal against South Lakeland District Council's plans for land to accommodate 6,000 homes.

Campaigners hope it will be one of the biggest the authority has ever received and prompt SLDC into holding a special debate into sending a poll out to residents

across the district.

It has been organised by the Green Spaces Committee, a coalition for residents' groups campaigning against the land allocation proposals.

Originally established in Kendal, the group has expanded and signatures have been received from Ulverston, Grange-over-Sands and

Milnthorpe as well as Kendal.

"We have been overwhelmed by the response of the public to our petition," said chairman Dennis Reed.

"Virtually everyone we ask is keen to sign up.

"We aim to make this petition one of the biggest ever received by the council and we hope they will listen this time - having

ignored the results of their earlier consultation."

Mr Reed wants SLDC to draw up a poll on the land allocation document so that residents can directly tell the council whether it should go through or not.

The petition, available at [www.green-spaces.org.uk](http://www.green-spaces.org.uk), closes on April 30.

WESTMORLAND GAZETTE 29 MARCH 2012

## Local people need homes

Having received a tourism brochure about the Lake District, I turned to the section on self-catering, houses, cottages and flats to let. I found there were 2,206 units to let for holidays, including 16 units owned by the National Trust!

Add on others advertised elsewhere, plus the second home owners, and you are probably around the 6,000 mark.

There should be an enforcement order on all these people to rent out 50 per cent of their holdings, to local people at a fair rent. The Lake District is now full of 'the needy and the greedy'.

I worked and walked in the Lake District for 40 years. I always dreamed of living there, but could never afford to.

B. Walker, Morecambe



Site RN337#



Extracts from several issues of  
the 'Westmorland Gazette',  
together with a photograph  
of Site RN337#, showing  
it subject to extensive  
flooding.

At the South Lakeland District Council meeting on January 18, councillors voted by a majority of 24 Liberal and Labour councillors against 12 Conservative councillors to adopt the Local Development Framework allocations of land document.

This policy adoption will result in up to 6,000 new homes being built in the areas of South Lakeland that are not in the Lake District National Park.

It is clear all these new homes proposed are both not needed and not wanted and Conservative councillors will continue to oppose this large number of new homes mainly on green field sites. We do need to have an LDF in place at some point, but we need one that has much more emphasis on jobs, the economy, transport, and provision of public services. All this should come before huge numbers of houses that communities simply don't need and can't sustain.

With the advent of the new Localism bill and much more emphasis on neighbourhood plans we need not rush forward with the LDF.

There is enough time to work with the town and parish councils and local residents and concerned local groups to try to get an acceptable compromise instead of the sham consultations which ask for views, consult them and then push on regardless as has been the case here.

It is also disappointing that SLDC has not worked with the two National Parks and instead seen these huge numbers of homes squeezed into the ever-decreasing area of South Lakeland that's not in the Parks.

Now that this document has been adopted the electorate of South Lakeland need to be quite clear that it is the Liberal Democrat administration who are wholly responsible for the bulldozers' arrival, and for the potential collapse of the South Lakes housing market.

Peter Thornton, the Cabinet member in charge of housing, has made it quite clear on several occasions he hopes this massive influx of extra homes will drive down house prices by at least 20 per cent - not much comfort for those people already facing negative equity and certainly not the answer to the provision of more affordable and social housing, which we appreciate is acutely needed.

He has also looked to scare councillors and residents into believing that if the Land Allocations were not adopted at this stage we would see rampant development everywhere. This is simply not true.

We will continue to work with residents we have been elected to represent and call on our MP Tim Farron to work with us to stop yet further urbanisation.

**Coun James Airey, Leader, Conservative Group at**

**SLDC, Low Furness Ward  
Coun Tom Harvey, Deputy  
Leader, Conservative  
Group at SLDC, Grange  
South Ward**

**And all 15 other SLDC  
Conservative councillors:**

**Janette Jenkinson,  
Kevin Lancaster,  
Norman Bishop-Rowe,  
Brian Wilkinson, d  
Roger Bingham, Joss  
Curwen, Anne Hall,  
David Williams, Brian  
Cooper,**

**Caroline Airey,  
Ted Walsh,**

**John Holmes, Ben Berry,  
Andrew Gardiner,  
Jamie Samsond**

## Who will buy the houses?

Your headline 'The winners and losers' (Gazette, January 12), as a result of the plans for 6,000 new homes in South Lakeland, suggests the winners are those who will be exempt from the arrival of new homes in their locality, and the losers those who will have to fight, probably unsuccessfully, to stop any development they prefer not to have 'in their back-yard'.

If South Lakeland faces a "housing crisis", then the needs of the resident population deserve priority.

With little manufacturing industry left, many jobs here depend upon the needs of visitors to the National Parks. There is also the work of serving the local population and providing care for an increasingly older population.

That essential workforce has to be maintained, the workers need some-where local and affordable to live, and should not be expected to commute miles to work!

The decline in the UK economy has resulted in job uncertainty, growing unemployment, reduced mortgage lending, and a virtual standstill in the property market.

A leading internet website for property sales reveals in the towns and smaller communities involved in this new housing plan in South Lakeland, that there are currently 1,081 properties (any type with a

minimum of two bedrooms) advertised for sale - 377 in Kendal, 201 in Ulverston, and even in a popular retirement town like Grange-over-Sands, 117!

What defines "affordable" housing?

By my reckoning any freehold property above £150,000 is beyond the reach of most local people, particularly first-time buyers.

Many local authority houses are now privately owned and offer good value for buyers, usually below that £150,000 price tag.

But out of that total of 1,081 properties for sale, there are only 222 (20.4 per cent) with an asking price of £150,000 or less - not much choice for those who can't afford more!

So if only a small part of those 6,000 new houses prove to be "affordable", who's going to buy the rest?

As anxious as many building firms are for work, there's the land, planning, and finance to secure, and then the uncertainty of the property "market."

Obviously many new builds will be designed for the retirement/second home buyers - but are they still out there?

Perhaps we should all look at the bright side? 6,000 houses will create new employment in the building industry and for its suppliers; increased revenues eg Council Tax; and more shoppers keeping our retail outlets open.

Our Government, both national and local, will foresee the need to improve our 'infra-structure' - utilities (drainage, energy), public transport, roads, schools, colleges, hospitals, care for the elderly, and more opportunities for manufacturing, and youth employment; while leaving enough 'Green land' for our farmers to produce food for us.

As a result we may all manage to live within our means.

Or, at the worst, 6,000 houses and their residents will provide a short-term benefit to the local economy, and reduced Government spending will fail to support the maintenance and improvement of essential

services. In that event, we will all be losers.

**Roy Cansdale  
Kendal**

The Westmorland Gazette  
MARCH 22 2012

## Concern over green fields

Patricia Hovey's letter about SLDC's 'Land Allocations' was perfectly correct (Letters, March 1, 'Save green spaces from urban sprawl').

As secretary of Kendal Civic Society, her letter was clear, balanced and informative.

How right she is in her assertion that councillors have ignored the views of their electorate and in addition, the recommendations of previous public inquiries.

Do local residents, including councillors, really understand what 'sound' means?

Plans may be effective, justified and consistent with government policy but members of government do not live in this area.

Local residents are not interested in the 'soundness' of documents - they are more interested in the loss of green fields and all the consequent negative effects.

**Pat Lowther  
Kendal**

PLEASE SEE  
OVERLEAF





**GREEN SPACE THREAT:** Angry resident Dennis Reed points to land close to Oxenholme which could be given over to homes and a business park under the South Lakeland DC proposals

# 'No-one is listening to opposition'

At the Kendal event, MP Tim Farron said there were 1,000 private homes lying empty locally and South Lakeland District Council was working with homeowners to bring these into use.

Using an Empty Dwelling Management Order, believed to be the first in Cumbria, the authority handed the keys of a house, in Mintsfeet Road, to Kendal man Peter Kitching, and his family, last year. Both the council and Lake District National Park Authority have earmarked land they believe suitable for housing in a bid to help developers provide more affordable homes.

**WESTMORLAND GAZETTE 2 FEB 2012**

## ► Campaigner angry at land plan 'stitch-up'

by SCOTT KIRK

**CONTROVERSIAL** plans to zone land for thousands of new homes in South Lakeland have moved forward, despite a public outcry.

More than 100 people attended a South Lakeland District Council Cabinet meeting to discuss the authority's Land Allocations Document, which details where nearly 6,000 homes could be created over the next 13 years.

Many left the meeting with a sense that their views had not been listened to – and Dennis Reed, chair of a group campaigning against plans for a business park and 100 houses at Oxenholme Road, Kendal, summed up their feelings.

He said that there was 'overwhelming opposition' to the plans to site a business park and houses in the green gap between Oxenholme Road and Burton Road.

Individual submissions had been made by residents with 246 opposed to the idea and two in favour.

"SLDC has conducted an extensive consultation over many months at large public cost – the only problem is that it has ignored the outcome,"



**DIFFERING VIEWS:** Coun Peter Thornton, far left, and Coun James Airey

he said. "What have we got for all our efforts and arguments? We've been well and truly stitched up."

Mr Reed said the business park had been confirmed and the housing estate increased.

"The outcome for this site and many others around the district was preordained and the whole consultation was a farce," he said.

The Liberal Democrats said South Lakeland desperately needs new housing while the Conservatives argued against 'the unjustifiably large number of new homes on green field sites'.

"Please stop trying to scare members and the electorate into supporting your urbanisation agenda," said Coun James Airey, leader of the Conservative group.

"It is clear that the 6,000 new homes proposed for South Lakeland are both not needed and not wanted."

Speaking on behalf of Kendal Town Council, Deputy Mayor Coun John Willshaw said: "This document will lock

the town into an outdated and outmoded pattern of urban development."

Coun Peter Thornton, the Lib Dem's portfolio holder for housing, said that without the document development would be uncontrolled and extra houses would help combat soaring house prices.

"We are not pushing through large amounts of housing as has been said. We are making sure demand can be catered for," he said.

"Without this plan, development will happen in a more random way. The infrastructure providers will not have confidence to invest and all our land will be potentially at risk of inappropriate and uncontrolled development."

Coun Graham Vincent, portfolio holder for enterprise, said that the document would 'allow the delivery of a prosperous future for South Lakeland' by creating jobs.

The document will now go to a six-week public consultation when the 'soundness' of its proposals will be tested.

2 FEBRUARY 2012

**12 NEWS**

thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news

## Homes fund

**SOUTH** Lakeland's empty homes could be brought back into use after the Government created a £100 million fund.

The fund, announced by Communities and Local Government Minister Andrew Stunell, could help create affordable homes in the 1,000 empty properties locally. Visit [www.grantsadmin.co.uk](http://www.grantsadmin.co.uk) for more information.