

From: [mailto] **On Behalf Of** Stephen Banks
Sent: 25- Mar- 11 13:37
To: Development Plans
Subject: Comments on developments.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Having viewed the proposals for development in South Lakeland I would like to voice both some concerns and suggestions.

I do realise that there is a lack of housing, especially for first time buyers, and this needs to be tackled. It would appear though, that even the least expensive properties in the area are mostly beyond the reach of anyone seeking their first property and that, coupled to the present worsening economic climate and difficulty in obtaining mortgages, seems likely to mean that it will be very difficult to meet that need. If this is the case why is there a proposal to increase the size of Kendal and the surrounding villages at all? Surely any new built houses will not solve the problem as they will be far too expensive and the proposed shared equity scheme does not reduce the overall monthly cost to the part purchaser/part tenant.

A more vexing issue for me personally is the proposal to continually erode the green land surrounding Kendal, particularly when the development is to be for retail and industrial use e.g. Oxenholme Triangle. I am not aware of any evidence that suggests a need for this and I am concerned that it is being advocated on the hypothetical basis that it will somehow stimulate the local economy and create more jobs.

As there are a fixed number of inhabitants in the area who would use such facilities with a decreasing amount of disposable income I cannot see how this will be the case. The number of shop closures in Kendal continues to increase, the new and vastly expensive development at K Village is deserted most of the time and you are proposing to build more retail units. Such homogenisation of yet another British town to the point that individual characteristics are virtually impossible to detect makes it less attractive and far more dull.

Surely it would be better to concentrate on enlivening the town centre by enhancing its historical characteristics, aesthetic appeal and pedestrian/cyclist friendliness. The waterfront development scheme to replace the ugly car park is an excellent idea for example. Spending scarce cash on improving and protecting what we have that is good seems a far better approach than developing bland retail parks which destroy more of the environment, encourage shoppers to use cars rather than walk or cycle, spreads the available spending money more thinly and undermines most small retailers in the process. The current proposal only favours the huge retailers such as Asda, who will clearly be delighted if the remaining meagre competition is undermined.

Please reconsider this approach and build on the Transition Town status by encouraging characterful, diverse retail in an already embattled town centre. Spend money on enhancing what we have rather than providing the bland and dull that we do not need and which serves only to undermine the appeal of the town to locals and visitors alike. Do not further destabilise a precarious town centre economy as it will reach a 'tipping point' where it becomes unattractive to shoppers and sees a sudden, significant decline.

The vast majority of visitors to the South Lakes drive straight past on the bypass. A more attractive town centre should serve to persuade more of them to stop in Kendal. More cycle lanes, fewer, completely unnecessary, road signs, and stricter rules on shop frontage to maintain local character would all be examples of enhancements - I'm sure you're aware of these and more.

The economic situation appears to be a long term problem, please stabilise and enhance what we have rather than expand in a time of economic decline.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Banks

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