

From: Development Plans
Subject: FW: Land Allocation Consultation response

Sent: 11 August 2011 18:06
To: Hudson, Daniel
Cc: Development Plans
Subject: Land Allocation Consultation response

Dear Mr. Hudson,

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - PLANNING POLICY AND LAND ALLOCATION COMMENTS

Thank you for your letter of the 28th July 2011 inviting comments on the additional matters. I have not previously commented on South Lakeland District Council planning policy documents but I have been observing developments in the area where I live with considerable concern during the last 40 years or so I feel that it is time to comment.

For instance - The Arnside Silverdale AONB was designated in 1972, mainly because it was identified as being under pressure for commuter and retirement housing, recreation use (particularly caravan sites). It was suggested that practical guidelines needed to be established in order to direct and manage the greater demands being place on the area. Since then there have been some major improvements – the Arnside Link Road was stopped (after a lengthy public inquiry), a large new caravan site at Redhills Wood, Arnside, was also refused planning permission after a public inquiry (the land was subsequently sold to the NT) and the wholesale extension of housing development of the 1960's at Arnside, Storth and Slackhead has until now been effectively controlled.

However, despite a succession of policy documents and management plans, the situation on the ground has continued to deteriorate. Although slightly better in South Lakeland than the Lancashire section of the AONB - It is difficult to find many examples of outstanding design or developments that have improved the character of either urban or rural areas. Year on year the cumulative effect of many decisions, often for development that is not really necessary (in this supposedly protected rural area) or that is of mediocre design, have severely damaged the environment and traditional character of the villages and the overall landscape and wildlife value of the AONB. Small local farmsteads have been converted to residential use, local shops have been lost, pubs and Post Offices threatened with closure, making it harder to maintain truly rural communities.

You may argue that this is a national malaise in the countryside but if the planning authorities in South Lakeland and North Lancashire had interpreted their policies more strongly in the interests of conservation rather than development, things could perhaps have been different. It is well known that the planning system is heavily skewed towards the interests of developers.

From the recent government announcements on planning policy and the Local Development Framework documents that I have quickly scanned, I get the impression that the previous relatively strong policies (at least on paper) have been further weakened.

I have looked at the sites that have been put forward in the Land Allocation document and commented on line on some of those I actually know well. Many of the areas identified seem

excessive and inappropriate, such as practically a new satellite village for Milnthorpe, at Ackenthwaite - often on sites that have been previously been protected and in some cases refused planning permission!

How can this be sensible?

IT IS TIME TO STRONGLY OBJECT.

In regard to the additional matters you are seeking views about my comments are:

- Large development sites should not be allocated in small villages and hamlets – development in such situations should ideally be for slow incremental growth, primarily of affordable housing for local use. Other development should only be considered if compelling reasons can be made and detailed high quality design produced to demonstrate that the proposal would result in a landscape and environmental gain rather than loss.
- Large and expensive properties mainly suitable for retirement, commuting and holiday use should normally be stoutly resisted. Please refer to the Countryside Alliance report on affordable Housing that was published last Thursday and that stated:

"We understand that in the current economic conditions councils are having a tough time and house builders are similarly stretched. But the fact that so many local authorities are failing to even plan for a quarter of the needed affordable housing, clearly shows that providing inexpensive housing for people living in the countryside is way down their list of priorities.

Rural housing remains less affordable than in urban areas where average prices are 5.4 times the average annual earnings in the countryside. Those young people unable to find homes often move to urban areas, placing a further strain on affordable housing in towns and cities. This can also increase the distance people travel to work with the negative environmental consequences and, of course, the increased fuel costs."

I hope that these comments are of some assistance and I look forward to seeing the final policy document.

Yours sincerely

Roger Cartwright

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