



30th August 2011.

Re: L.D.F. Land Allocations - Further Consultation.

Dear Sir,

I write as a member of the Levens Residents Group in response to your letter of 28th July 2011.

The results of the first consultation were delivered to you by the L.R.G. on 14th April 2011. The least popular site by far was R682 LVM (24 properties) to the west of Brigsteer Road, which was opposed by 73% and supported by 13% of those who expressed an opinion.

You will be aware of the Development Plan submitted by Story Homes (April 2011). I must say I was surprised that an interested party such as Story Homes were able to contribute to the consultation process at this stage. Their Development Plan includes R682 LVM but totals 70 properties covering all three fields east of Brigsteer Road.

I would like to comment on some of the statements in their plan.

Landscape and Visual Impact: They state in this section that because "the site slopes in gradient from east to

west this will assist to ensure that the wider views from existing properties on Brigsteer Road and adjacent the southern boundary are protected".

In my opinion this statement glosses over the true impact on views, not only to surrounding properties but to all villagers, visitors, cyclists and walkers who use Brigsteer Road and admire the stunning view.

Access and Accessibility: In this section they state "it is possible to access the site from north and south of the village along Brigsteer Road and as a result the future trips associated with the site would be evenly distributed between these routes, minimising the traffic impact upon the village".

Of course in reality the whole village is accessible from north and south so the same argument could be put for any site chosen.

As far as minimising the traffic impact on the village, I would suggest 70 new homes would mean more than 70 new vehicles with many families having at least 2 cars.

Let's say 100 cars as a conservative estimate.

This is without the additional traffic from visitors, family and friends, tradesmen etc. I wouldn't regard this as "minimal traffic impact" on the village.

Story Homes also conveniently make no mention of the traffic impact on the village from heavy vehicles during the lengthy construction period.

They go on to say "accessibility of the proposed site is very good. It offers good access on foot and cycle to a range of services including public transport, schools and local shops".

Again, this could be said of any site chosen in the village.

Services and Utilities: In this section they state "an assessment of the services and utilities required including water, gas, electric and telecoms has shown there are no constraints in this regard with most services easily extended From Brigsteer Road".

This is undoubtedly true and cannot be argued against.

Availability and Ownership: Here they state "Story Homes has an interest in the site by way of a legal agreement with the land owner". Why should this be considered relevant at this stage of the consultation process?

Other proposed residential sites in Levens:

Commenting on RSIM they state "it is considered this site is poorly related to the existing settlement, extending significantly eastwards into open countryside in an awkward and uncharacteristic fashion and would in essence represent a "bolt on" site which has no bearing on the historical development of the village".

I regard this as a rather vague, biased and meaningless statement with the sole intention to court favour with their preferred site.

Summary and Conclusion: In this Final section

Story Homes say their Development Plan can be achieved "whilst minimising the impact on existing residents". In my opinion the impact on existing residents of such a development would be anything but minimal for all the reasons I have mentioned.

There is a grave danger of losing the rural character

of a much loved village and becoming a large housing estate in the country.

I believe this site to be one of the most contentious in the whole of SLDC's LDF, let alone Levens itself.

In conclusion I would just like to say obviously Story Homes have their own agenda and have genuine reasons why R682 LVM is their preferred site, but I believe the people who's opinions matter most here are the villagers who responded to the consultation, of whom 73% were opposed to this site.

I hope and trust SLDC will give this serious consideration during their decision making process.

Yours sincerely,

