

SOUTH LAKELAND  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
RECEIVED

10<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Dear Mr Hudson

**LDF Land Allocations**

11 AUG 2011

*Comments on some Alternative Sites Castle Ward* **RESOURCES**

We now have a situation where just five people have proposed two sites RN154 and R100 for housing. We don't know their interests or reasons. We do know that those sites were previously proposed and we understood were discounted for housing. We do know that there are people in the locality who see that what was being done in that previous discounting was "to protect the view for the Castle Green Hotel". A way of thinking which surely is unsound. The land opposite that hotel predates it by many years and that land bore a mild form of protection before it was an hotel by being classed as **land of County Landscape Value**, not because an hotel (it was a home and offices before) may have overlooked it, but because it was a visual amenity for the many who came into Kendal on the A684 and saw the views across the valley and towards the Lakeland hills. It is to some extent, we think, being used as a political distraction from R121M.

R121M may previously have had some local support for housing had it not been proposed as 147 homes and had it not used R56 as its means of access. But we have written about this previously. However the alternative proposal that ON50 be public open space if R121M and RN302 are developed beggars belief. ON50 is already open space as a landscape of field and has no buildings upon it. Whether or not it can be called "public" is another matter. So why the carrot? To sweeten the blow of R121M? And as for RN302, where has that appeared from? It must be that part of R141 that is required for access to R121M. It is this cobbling together of schemes with people falling over themselves to grab at anything going to secure development irrespective of the effect on either people living in the area or of the devastating effect on the landscape that is really beginning to annoy.

Another previously considered plot is the backland labelled R17 with the alternative proposal by Gibson Architects for housing. We have seen the proposal and the drawings for up to three dwellings. We presume this is not an outline or full planning application. We can see that the owner has concerns over the land being termed "public open space" or "open space" or even "amenity space". But if it is any of those three then it clearly cannot also be "housing space". Unless, that is, if it is taken in two parts where the brownfield part may be allocated as housing but the greenfield part as "space". Were this to be the case we could see the sense in that. One house as shown on Gibson's drawing on that brownfield site is sensible; two, with one on the greenfield space, is a push too far; and three as shown is aggressive development despite development lines, building angles and shrubbery. Amongst other concerns the proposed narrow gravel drive would have a particularly acute angles at the bottom of the site such that delivery lorries and emergency vehicles would be impeded.

The parcel of land MN22 which has taken a long time to come upon the scene should be discounted outright because it is well outside the dotted development boundary, seeks to gain access to Parkside Road at a junction and to the A684 with bends in that road which limit visibility.

*Earlier End Date of this LDF?*

No, we do not think there should be an earlier end date. Why the hurry of only eight years to expand SLDC towns before the next round of allocations? The cost and time devoted to this LDF means it should be made to last for longer, as value for taxpayers' money. We cannot kick-start the economy by building houses and industries in the SLDC area outside of National Parks, or by selling off the silver of our landscape capital to do this.

*Sites for development should be allocated in small villages and hamlets?*

Of course they should, and why wasn't this considered in the first place? Some villages and hamlets may have kept their small schools and shops and post offices had this been done years earlier. There was some mention years ago by a local surveyor of creating new villages. Can we not build anywhere a new village? Can anyone think of a few eyesores both outside and inside of the National Parks which might be better as a village or hamlet? With employment land of course. In a very real sense, sadly, many farms have already become embryo hamlets.

*Final comments*

What is beginning to worry us is that the allocation of land for development may be seen as an official SLDC agreement for a Change of Use, and that this expensive and time consuming public consultation process is doing the developers' work for them at the Council Tax-payers' expense. Landowners and others will seek to make as much money as they can from development, and if not actual money then at least a possible increase in land value, but why should the rest of us pay for this, and will they still have to apply for change of use?

We are beginning to question the need for over 2000 extra homes in Kendal when we see so many homes for sale and rent advertised in the SLDC area. We are also beginning to question the need for extra employment land when we see so many shops and office spaces empty and, for example, that large ex-United Utilities site on Mintsfeet near the railway, empty and becoming derelict.

One day someone may have to bite the bullet that is the second-home issue. Of course no-one is suggesting a ban on such ownership but to increase the tax burden upon them. But tax by itself is insufficient. They could be considered as "employment land" or "business" and not "residential" and a form of taxation that reflects their true cost to a community. If for example 40% of the homes in a village (eg Grasmere) are second or holiday homes then that is quite a chunk of employment land or business land, and not truly residential, but do they collectively contribute 40% towards the locality by any measure? Or would that 40% of land be better used for real jobs? Beds, anoraks, activities, eateries: is that it? This is getting ridiculous: people live in the National Parks of the SLDC areas but many will have to find work outside of those Parks, in the towns of SLDC, because the National Park authorities will not allow housing or employment sites to grow in those Parks. Now when we spend time in those National Parks and return to Kendal we feel that we are entering a conurbation, not the rural town it once was.

Yours sincerely

