



8 September 2011

Mr Alastair Mc Neill
Principal Development Plans Officer
Development Management Group
Community Investment and Development
South Lakeland House
Lowther Street
Kendal
LA9 4DL

Dear Mr McNeill,
Complaint about the process of "Further Consultation" for "Land Allocations"

We the undersigned feel that the Further Consultation process in connection with SLDC's Land Allocations has been deeply flawed and has resulted in residents' views not being heard.

We draw your attention to the fact that by 8 September only 126 respondents have responded to the Further Consultation, whereas 3,389 responded to the initial consultation. Our own anecdotal evidence is that very many people who might have responded were not aware of the Further Consultation and did not know that they could respond a second time.

While we appreciate that the extent and scope of the whole consultation may have put severe strains on SLDC's resources, we feel the results are not good enough for the following reasons:

Flaws in the Consultation Process

Not everyone who registered comments on the initial consultation received notification and map of the Alternative Sites put forward. Surely they should have done?

The poster "LDF Choosing Sites for Homes and Jobs – Land Allocations Further Consultation" has not been seen in Kirkby. As far as we know the only copy displayed in this area is in Ulverston library and Town Hall. Not all residents have access to the internet, but SLDC has discouraged responses on paper and has required residents to fill out a separate form for each site commented upon, apparently to make analysis easier, but at the expense of discouraging participation.

Making comments online is too difficult. There is no clear link from SLDC Planning home page to "Land Allocations". A reader would have to know to click "Local Development Framework" to find Land Allocations from this page.

Once on the Land Allocations DPD page, navigating to the place to view maps and make comments is very difficult. Some people would surely give up.

The map "Alternative Sites Put Forward by Respondents to Consultation" is not at all clear, and specific software is needed to view it. The use of the word "Alternative" was misleading and caused many residents to think that the fields coloured red on the original map had been withdrawn; it was not made clear enough that the new fields proposed were in addition to the others.

The colour coding of Employment Land in a vague mauve, with the Key quite small in the bottom right hand corner meant that some people didn't notice this change to the proposal made in the first map.

This second map was not widely distributed. Kirkby-Ireleth Parish Council has noticeboards throughout the village but these were not used to advertise the Further Consultation process.

The "Amendments to Maps and Lists From 29th July 2011" pdf is extremely misleading. Under Kirkby-in-Furness it records "deletion of R111# as having been proposed for employment use". This would lead a reader to assume this further proposal had been withdrawn. In fact it apparently refers to a mistake made on the original version of the Further Consultation List in which the whole field instead of part was listed as proposed for employment use.

Viewing responses made by other people is made confusing by the fact that the filter distinguishes between "Kirkby-in-Furness" and "Kirkby in Furness", showing different responses for each version of the village name.

Housing Need Survey

SLDC has commissioned a new housing survey to discover the extent of need in the village. After attending a Parish Council meeting at which Cumbria Rural Housing Trust explained their plans, we feel this survey is seriously flawed.

Firstly, it seems to be just a repeat of the survey already carried out in 2006 and has not been improved in any way.

Secondly the survey is sent to every house including "second homes and holiday lets and local businesses". There is also an intention to provide forms to "those with a local connection who would like to live here in the future and from people who work in the community but are not able to afford to live here". The survey is anonymous and there is no effective procedure in place to make sure there is no double counting of responses.

There are no clear definitions of "people in local housing need", "local people" or "affordable".

For all the above reasons we call into question the accuracy of the Further Consultation process. We would appreciate an acknowledgement of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Rushton

Julie Rushton

Kenneth Wilkinson

Mary Wilkinson

24/11/11