

Sent: 16 July 2012 16:53
To: Development Plans
Subject: Land Allocations Development Plan Document NPPF-DPD
Submission

As a regular 'tourist' visitor to Kendal over many years I have taken a keen interest in the recent Land Allocation proposals and the events.

The aims of the NPPF are obvious and totally relevant - to jointly ensure that we enhance and develop our spatial resources; and that we do not destroy or misuse our valued landscape and heritage.

Perhaps the key point in the Forward is its final one - on the clear need for collective neighbourhood planning..

In order to fulfil its purpose of helping achieve sustainable development, planning must not simply be about scrutiny. Planning must be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives. This should be a collective enterprise. Yet, in recent years, planning has tended to exclude, rather than to include, people and communities. In part, this has been a result of targets being imposed, and decisions taken, by bodies remote from them. Dismantling the unaccountable regional apparatus and introducing neighbourhood planning addresses this.

In this Forward the NPPF clearly outlines constructive positive and inclusive process centred on the involvement of local communities and people in sustainable development. It is self-evident that local people are highly engaged in plans for their communities and it is clearly wasteful and improper not to make sure that close and meaningful consultation take place at key stages to capture their knowledge and wisdom.

All the recent processes up the various stages of the Land Allocation proposals have been concerned with plan making as detailed in NPPF (150-157). In particular (153) notes that..

Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision

and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made.

My perception is that there has been zero 'early' engagement and that in contrast to the call in the NPPF Forward, plans in South Lakeland have indeed been developed almost completely independently of local interests and communities. It has been widely reported that Kendal Town Council proposals have been ignored. It was also truly amazing to witness the major response of the public to the very detailed plans and highly disappointing to witness the resulting very minor (or to be more accurate) completely minimal response. The evidence is that the South Lakeland Council have excluded local people from their processes. They have then sought to impose highly developed and detailed plans on people who have had no opportunity to play any significant part in their development. This seems to be the exact opposite of the NPPF requirements.

At a more detailed level the Council's DPD seems to focus on getting its plans approved rather than seriously examining the sustainability issues; many of the plans appear to ignore and violate the key NPPF requirements for sustainability; particularly in terms of landscape, heritage, and biodiversity.

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