

12 April 2011

COMMENTS ON THE LAND ALLOCATION DOCUMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Land Allocation Document.

I would like to make a few points, outlined below.

I understand that there are a great number of centrally driven targets and objectives around the allocation of land for development that need to be considered. However, as a resident of Kendal I would like to see a much greater recognition of:

- The likelihood of this timeframe (current to 2025) as being A period where we will need to significantly adapt, or at the very least have started to adapt, to the impacts of climate change and peak oil. The date of 2025 is well within the estimates of the International Energy Association and the Governments Chief Scientific Adviser for “Energy Gaps”. I see in this plan the assumption that it will not only be business as usual but that it will be growth with no recognition that external factors may halt or reverse this. If we plan to ignore these crucial factors we risk planning to fail.
- The Town Centre plan refers to retail being the priority, if the need for retail drops due to economic hardship how will the plan allow for a thriving Town Centre? There needs to be flexibility built in so that community groups and social enterprises can occupy central locations where their aim is to maintain and build on a thriving and resilient community.

The work from the New Economic Foundation clearly gives the benefits of local spend and the multiplier effect on the local economy of keeping local pounds in local circulation - <http://www.neweconomics.org>

For a recent example of how a similar sized town can integrate many levels of planning into an approach that plans for the future (up to 2030) see the Energy Descent Plan for Totnes - <http://totnesdap.org.uk>

- There is insufficient recognition to the importance of the future use of rural hinterlands in supplying and supporting the urban areas, particularly Kendal. As the need to de-carbonise our supply chains, especially food, becomes more and more urgent the remodelling of our countryside will require a sensitive and coherent plan and this current plan must lay the way for this to be achieved. Connected to this point is:

1)

Draft Policy S7 (Housing in the Countryside). Low impact developments are vital if we are to enable a sustainable (economic, social and environmental) rural community. Examples can be found in Pembrokeshire National Park and there is scope for SLDC to build on these initial examples and pioneer a planning and land allocation policy that supports and enables the sensitive development of rural areas around diverse rural enterprises.

2)

Under the Sustainability Appraisals the document states that farming is less viable with negative local impacts as a result. We need to recognise that conventional farming in many marginal landscapes may become non-viable in a food

production sense but that a new approach to farming – smaller scale and more diverse and linked to local economies - may well be the alternative. The policy needs to allow for this as the opportunities develop and this is most likely to be through low impact housing and farm land allocation for market gardens and micro rural enterprises.

For examples of how this can work see the recent report -
<http://ecologicaland.coop/projects-small-successful>

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. I hope that you take on board my key concern that the current plan does not sufficiently plan for the likely circumstances we will face by 2025 and as such risks the resilience and future prosperity (in an economic, social and environmental sense) of our district.

Yours Sincerely

Gareth Thomas

Writing as an individual, also a member of SLACC TT.

12/4/11