

## **Response to LDF consultation**

### **From Mary Wilson District Councillor for Cartmel and Grange West**

*During the consultation period I have attended events organised by SLDC at Grange and Lower Holker and those organised by Lower Allithwaite Parish Council at Allithwaite and Cartmel. I have also attended meetings of the Allithwaite steering group and discussed the proposals with many residents .*

*I intend to comment on generalities rather than specific sites.*

*Of the three communities which I represent, the main issues appear to be:-*

#### **Variable capacities to accommodate the numbers proposed**

Allithwaite seems to have a number of opportunities for development – an active steering group is examining a range of options which could be suggested to the community for assessment at a further round of consultation

Cartmel (including the part of the village known as Headless Cross)– it is far less obvious how and where the village can grow in a way which does not create two distinct villages – one inside the conservation area and one outside. I feel far more involvement of the conservation officer working with the community could produce more imaginative outcomes – once again there is a keen active community who want to play real part in making the best decisions for future growth.

Grange West – This part of my area, in Kents Bank, although a distinct part of Grange, is under represented on the Town Council and is split between two District Councillors. The concentration of development in this area would leave no further land available for development and growth in future years.

As a whole the land consultation process has highlighted the fact that apart from the three fields identified as maintaining a green gap between Allithwaite and Grange there is very little land that could be potentially developed in the future thus effectively mothballing Grange.

#### **Size and Scale of proposed developments**

Both village communities were shocked to find that proposals suggested that large estates of relatively high density housing were considered by development planners to be appropriate for these communities. The last development in Allithwaite, seen as totally inappropriate in a village context, has around 20 houses at a density of around 25 homes per hectare and yet densities of 30 homes are suggested with around 40 houses on each site for the areas proposed. While the density might be achievable for small developments anything on the scale proposed would have a hugely negative impact. At the first round of consultation the villages responded strongly with suggestions that appropriate development would be small in scale and scattered around the villages – they are fearful that as they were not listened to in the first round their views will be ignored this time too. I hope this is not so.

In Grange densities of 40 house per hectare are suggested for edge of town sites where neighbouring properties are typically very low density – I think this would pose a very challenging task for developers to integrate these developments into the townscape.

### **Second homes and holiday lets**

Generally there is a real fear that homes sold on the open market will go to second home owners or even property companies as holiday lets.

Cartmel now has around 30% of its existing dwellings which are not occupied as main residencies. There is opportunity in the core strategy for individual settlements to change the allocations of affordable / local residency restrictions . I would strongly urge the development team to look at making Cartmel a test case for changing the allocations with possibly making 100% of new developments designated as main residency only, and a higher proportion of rented property. A south lakes housing officer has reported to me that what he finds most in demand is two bedroom bungalows for elderly people wanting to downsize but stay in the area and then a range of family homes. He finds it difficult to let 1 bedroom flats. I hope the housing associations will be continuously asked for their opinions about the type of affordable property needed.

Developments in Allithwaite and Grange should be monitored as the first rounds of houses are completed and if the proportion of 2<sup>nd</sup> homes/holiday lets is too high the proportion of local residency/affordability and or main residency should be modified.

### **Infrastructure**

I will not comment particularly on roads as I know the County Coucillor for the area is doing that.

Drains and sewers and other parts of the infrastructure – There is too little detail in the land allocation document to give communities an idea of what the problems are and what solutions may need to be found – This is particularly the case for Cartmel where it would appear very little development can take place until major sewer capacity has been addressed . One fear of the community is that large developments have been proposed in order fund the much needed upgrade. It is essential that this need does not drive the planning process and that considerations of appropriate size and scale take priority .

There must be urgent consideration in all developments for support of the delivery of high speed broad band since many areas are seeing big reductions in speed as demand grows and many residents work from home using this service and it is much needed to support the local tourist providers and other businesses.

### **Other considerations**

#### **The National Park**

I feel that much more thought needs to be given to the way the National Park impacts on this area. For instance, currently there are a number of live work units standing empty about 100 yards from the park boundary in Backbarrow because of bankruptcy issues. Surely the completion of these and bringing them onto the market should take precedence over any development of greenfield sites.

Trying to find appropriate land for employment opportunities is hampered by the National Park boundary which in this area protects land of questionable value and leaves land of more value the target of forced development . I understand there is co operation between the two planning development areas to reconcile the needs of the wider communities. If this has been done then there seems to be little reference to it. Common sense would suggest that land for employment be designated to the east of Grange as this would give businesses easy access to the A590 and restrict the amount of traffic using minor roads through Cartmel or the narrow B road through the centre of Grange and Allithwaite. I feel planners should ask the question –‘ if the National Park boundary were not there where would the best place for much needed employment opportunities be?’ and then try and achieve this.

### **Landscape**

This area is a beautiful and valuable landscape area, which although it has no particular protection, needs particular consideration if it is to continue as resource to attract tourism. Although some consultation with appropriate bodies has taken place local knowledge and experience does need listening to in particular with regard to view points , well used footpaths and cycle ways and detailed knowledge of flora and fauna.

### **Planning gain and housing subsidies**

Much work with communities will need to be done to co ordinate the programme of development and any planning gains that the communities identify. Any housing subsidies gained through developments should be targeted either on a parish or LAP basis to help deliver exactly the type of housing needed. Both Cartmel and Allithwaite are currently reviewing their Community Statements and developing these into a Community Plan with the idea of expanding them into a Neighbourhood plan either on a parish or LAP basis. Much work is being done at the moment and I feel it is important that the emerging research is used to inform decisions in the next year as land allocations are finalised.

The implication of a LAP wide Neighbourhood plan could have important implications for drawing the National Park and SLDC planning developments together.

### **2025 and after**

Although planning post 2025 is not part of the remit of this consultation it is surely important to be mindful of the consequences of what we propose now and what might happen in the future.

I fear that the present proposals which could result post 2025 in either very little or no further growth for Grange while the villages grow into the type of urban villages which typically surround large towns and cities /and or the development of the coastal strip so that it resembles the continuous ribbon development seen on the south coast of England. Future growth for Grange would have to result in the green gap between it and Allithwaite going and then this spreading along towards Flookburgh.

I would urge planners to give careful consideration to what might happen post 2025.

**Imaginative solutions**

I fear that a one size fits all model is being imposed on our area – and that it is an urban model . I would urge a flexible approach and solutions driven by considerations about appropriate development for communities not the demands of developers.

I fully support the submissions made by Lower Allithwaite Parish Council ( including the Allithwaite steering group ) and Grange Town Council.

I urge the development team to work closely with these communities in the ways they have requested so that the final land allocation has common agreement and is sufficiently flexible to be responsive to any pending Neighbourhood plans.

Mary Wilson 14-04-11