

Consultation on L.D.F – Emerging Options within Lower Holker Parish

Following discussions with Lower Holker Parish Council, and also local residents I wish to make the following comments on the Emerging Options within the L.D F framework.

The comments and observations are both generic and specific; that is they address general concerns that I and constituents have and also there are specific comments on the issues confronting the Parish.

General Comments

Local Road Infrastructure

- There is widespread concern about the local road and communication infrastructure within the parish and also within the wider neighbourhood. As County Councillor I have recently been engaged with the Parish Council in carrying out an audit which identified road safety issues and difficulties which discouraged active travel within and beyond the three settlements of Flookburgh, Cark in Cartmel and Holker which make up the Parish
- Some small improvement work has already been completed with the support of Cumbria Highways. The Audit is ongoing and the agreed out comes and improvement strategy will be incorporated within the village plan. Traffic priority alignments have been changed in Flookburgh Square and efforts made to provide a clearly demarcated pedestrian footway from Cark to Flookburgh. Discussions are now underway to try to provide a safe way from Cark station to Holker Hall as part of a scheme which would see Holker Estates adopt the station.
- Increased population density within the Cartmel peninsula will impact significantly on the Parish. Increased housing in Grange West will result in an increase in traffic passing through the parish to travel to Ulverston and Barrow. Traffic leaving the village will find increasing difficulty in following the coast road to Grange. Similarly there will be pressures on the inadequate country road net work in the Cartmel valley and particularly Cartmel itself where the road also passes two schools.

A strategic overview needs to be developed which identifies road improvements which ensure safe movement of traffic and conserve if not improve the quality of life within the villages.

Discouragement to Active Travel and Safe Ways to School

- Increased development within the Parish will generate extra traffic. The rural roads leading from the Parish to Grange and Cartmel present safety issues for vehicular traffic but even more so for walkers , horse riders and cyclists. Increased use will magnify the dangers and problems.

- Although some improvements have been made as a result of the audit mentioned above children going to the local primary school face dangers on Station Road, in the Square along Main Street and on the corner of Winder Lane. The greatest danger is faced by children crossing the railway bridge on Allithwaite road.
- Children walking from Holker and Cark cannot do so on a continuous footpath. At the junction of the square and for 100m down Station Road the road narrows and there is no footpath.
- Children walking from the Allithwaite road area commonly known as Piggy Town have to cross the railway bridge which is extremely dangerous. The provision of a metalled bridleway to the school on the southern side of the village of Flookburgh shows what can be achieved.
- Older students attending Cartmel Priory School are unlikely to make their own way to school on foot or by cycle.

Active travel within the village is somewhat restricted. Active travel to neighbouring villages is difficult. Pedestrians and cyclists face difficulties within the Parish. The elderly and mobility chair user face particular constraints.

Specific issues

Railway Bridge – Allithwaite Road

- Potential developments on either side of the bridge can only exacerbate existing difficulties. Crossing the bridge puts pedestrians in some danger. They cannot be seen by drivers coming from Flookburgh until they are actually on the bridge. Residents have repeatedly asked for a footbridge. While developments on these two sites keep traffic away the Square and Main Street they should only be permitted if a footbridge is provided.
- Creating a footpath from the railway bridge alongside the embankment to the railway bridge which carries the road to The Green should be designed in as planning gain giving access to a net work of quieter roads and footpaths.

It is a prerequisite that before any development takes place in any part of the village that this issue is addressed.

Flookburgh Square

- The square is the nodal point for all traffic within Flookburgh village and for traffic travelling from and to Grange. It has also developed recently as a service and shopping centre for the parish. The square provides parking for a number of households who have no off road parking of their own.
- Any increase in traffic will impact significantly. The recent changes to traffic priorities have met with general approval within the village. However pedestrians still face difficulties in crossing the road.

- A privately commissioned report found that already 601 vehicles used the Station Road - Main Street junction in the square between 4.30 and 5.30 on a typical day. The report comments on the geometry of the junction and also comments on the additional problems caused by traffic entering and leaving Moor Lane.
- There is also a designated employment area off Moor Lane which already generates a lot of traffic. This will increase as traffic can only exit and leave the village via the Square.
- The development site designated off Moor lane was not supported by residents. Traffic originating from this development would only add to the problems in the village centre. There are some historic fish slabs which it is intended to restore and to create an open amenity space.

Further consideration will need to be given to traffic and pedestrian management within the central area of the village.

Main Street

- The report found this road was carrying between 248 and 276 vehicles at peak time in the morning and afternoon. Residents were unanimously against any developments in area of Main Street. The figures above support their case.
- This narrow road provides the access to the Ravenstown estate. Parking is difficult and traffic flows are often disrupted.
- The junction of Main Street with Winder lane is difficult and contributes to the generally unsatisfactory traffic management arrangements.

Any development in this area or significant development in Ravenstown will require that traffic management including parking arrangements be reviewed to ensure that life is made easier for the residents of Main Street as well as those who have to travel along it.

Possible Development west of Station Road

- A proposal has been put forwards to develop land to the west of Station Road. This has yet to be formally assessed by S.L.D.C but drawings prepared on behalf of the land owner suggest planning gain with a road from the junction of Winder Lane and Main Street to Station Road near the Railway station.
- This is a significant proposal with planned developments proposed rather than infill. Initial drawings demonstrate clear planning gain with a footpath, open space and parking for the Parish Rooms. The proposal may have the potential to reduce traffic flows on Main Street. Approximately fifty houses are proposed. The proposal should be formally assessed to ensure viability. If

development takes place in this area planners should ensure that developers deliver on planning gain.

- The development will impact on the Parish in terms of increased population and traffic flows. Careful assessment will be needed and the development must maintain the green gap between Cark and Flookburgh.
- The development will generate extra traffic which might put further pressure on the Square. There could also be an increase in traffic on the Cartmel road which is recognised as a dangerous country road

Conclusion

It is particularly important that a coherent and strategic approach to planning ensures that the difficulties are overcome by built in planning gain if the health and safety and well being of residents is to be assured.

Developments should be accompanied by improvements to infrastructure which ensure the safety, health and well being of residents. Improvements to infrastructure should not follow development

The District and County Councils must engage with local communities and the Parish Council to develop coherent and strategic overview which protects communities quality of life.

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