

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL – 21 January 2019

AGENDA ITEM 7

QUESTIONS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

1) Question to Cllr Jeff Summers, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Chris Darcel

“The West Lindsey District Council record on supporting neighbourhood plans in the community has to be commended, some residents and I have studied several plans. It seems to us successful plans have followed the formula laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework and Localism Act to the letter.

ie. Residents can:

- 1) choose where within their parish boundaries development can go,
- 2) specify the number of future houses to come to the community
- 3) choose where necessary future infrastructure should be located,
- 4) define the character of the new development and
- 5) must ensure the community is more “sustainable” after development than it was before.

Unfortunately, in The Fiskerton Draft Neighbourhood Plan, 2018, this formula has not been followed. The plan would seem to be more an outline planning application for a 10 ha development site, without its £21,000 application fee, that will, at the stated density of 24 h/p/ha, result in more than 250 new homes coming to the village. It is not a “Neighbourhood Plan” as residents have not been involved as the above criteria suggest, it is not a sustainable growth level as defined in the Local Plan ie 10 to 15% and the accompanying documentation for the 2018 Draft Plan does not represent events as they have happened in the village.

We ask you to ensure that proper consultation and dialogue is conducted with the village and that any documentation and statements made by the Neighbourhood Plan Group are factually correct.

Fiskerton is a small to medium-sized village with some 450 homes within the curtilage of the village and some 550 within the parish. At 10% growth that would be 46 to 55 five new homes in total and at 15% it would be between 69 and 80 new homes. There is no shop or sports facilities in the village and just one small play park. There are no pavements or cycle ways to either Cherry Willingham or Reepham.

There were reasons that the neighbourhood plan group (NPG) originally recommended that more homes than the minimum come to the village. The land owner

was about to lodge a planning application to build 35 new homes on The Paddock and many residents at the time wanted The Paddock kept as an open space available to all and requested an alternative option put forward.

Mr Paul Fishwick's original suggestion, summer 2014, of building to the west of the village was dismissed by the NPG; it was said to be "Ribbon Development", which was not allowed, this was not a correct statement of fact and building to the West would now seem to be the villagers' preferred option.

The NPG's first plan with housing stretching from the school to Hall Lane, north of Ferry Road, and on the south of Ferry Road from the end of the current building line to 5 Mile Lane, was overwhelmingly rejected at the October 2014 village hall meeting. An alternative smaller plan locating the new houses north of the village hall was supported by residents in December. In December the NPG Chairman produced a flyer thanking residents for their support. The plan was forwarded to WLDC for approval in mid December 2014.

The later 2016 plan redrawn by the NPG without consultation with the village and unwanted by many residents, was rejected by WLDC and withdrawn from the District Council website in 2018 for technical reasons.

Since January 2015 several members of the neighbourhood plan group have tried to impose a development of approximately 200 new homes on the village stretching from the school to Hall Lane, north of Ferry Road, which with other likely development in the village the total of new homes could easily reach 250 or more. Residents have rejected the idea in favour of building a smaller number of homes to the west of the village.

According to the latest Fiskerton Draft Plan Document residents were not asked the questions 1, 2 and 3 listed above but that several members of the NPG were advised by West Lindsey Officers in 2014, that a sustainable village should have a population of 2000. No evidence has been given to the village, and the consultation process carefully laid out in the Neighbourhood Plans documentation has not been followed. The Draft Plan is not the Fiskerton Neighbourhood Plan but West Lindsey's. Fiskerton residents were not consulted.

Worse, incorrect information has been repeatedly given to residents by the NPG to urge them to support the NPG's plans and much of the Draft Fiskerton Neighbourhood Plan Document 2018 is not a true reflection of events past or an unbiased analysis of residents' responses.

The situation is so bad that a large banner has been sited at the east of the village saying "No to 250 houses: vote no to the Neighbourhood plan."

In the 2018 Draft Plan, Page 68, Appendix D: Statement of Reasons it is stated

159 responses were received, 6 from professional statutory consultees and 153 from residents. When commenting on the preferred site 3 of the professional consultees favoured the site North of Ferry Road and 3 were neutral. The residents responses were all considered carefully and each comment was given a score: 1, 2, or 3 where 1 had a negative effect on the future village, 2 neutral and 3 a positive effect. The North of Ferry Road site received the highest score indicating that it is the preferred site according to the village residents' responses.

During the NPG meeting on 18th January 2017 the following points were made in favour of the North of Ferry Road site.

1. It "rounds off" the village. Not adding to the already East-West extended village....

Who was the judge? This is completely contrary to the Neighbourhood plan process. The village shop closed in 2016 and the village school is at capacity and numerous properties have changed hands. The nearest shops and school places are at Cherry Willingham to the west of the village which, suggests to us, new development would best be located to the west of the village.

A dozen properties have either been built or approved planning permission in the last few years, 22/24 are approved by the Parish Council and NPG for the Tanya site. With perhaps 10 at Shortferry and 12/15 on the old farm buildings site adjacent to The Paddock, other "infill" in the village and "approximately" 200 homes over Ferry Rd the total could substantially exceed the 250 homes already mentioned.

Many residents are now asking "Why are any more houses needed?"

Leader, can you please confirm that the District Council will insist the procedure laid out in National Planning Documents is followed through.

"That residents are properly consulted on how much new housing they wish to see come to the village, and that residents are free to choose its location and what and where they would like to see necessary new infrastructure go."

We also need an assurance from you that all documentation from the Neighbourhood Plan Group is checked with non NPG member residents for correctness before the District Council publishes the information on the council website or forwards it to the Inspector.

And most important of all residents need an assurance from you that all the responses from the November 2018 consultation are counted and analysed fairly and are neither weighted nor filtered out because they covered old ground.

At the Parish Council meeting on Monday 7th January we were told that only "new" comments would be considered. This cannot be right.

“Leader, can I ask you for assurance that the plan will conform to the criteria laid down in NP legislation and is a result of proper two way consultation and that the group listens to residents rather than continually tries to impose the groups will over the community.

Thank you”

2) *Question to Cllr Jeff Summers, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Ian Fleetwood*

“Litter and dog mess continue to be challenging issues across the District. Gainsborough is fortunate to have a mechanical sweeper to aid the removal of debris that some people can’t be bothered to dispose of correctly, but the rest of the District can only rely on the occasional kerb-side sweep by a larger machine that can’t combat the pathways and other areas. Litter is particularly bad on the Lincoln fringe area where takeaway containers and tins are ejected from vehicles as they leave the city, but also within villages such as Bardney and Cherry Willingham’ where some individuals have used the recent dark evenings to cloak their activity. Dog mess is bad enough, but it seems some owners insist on collecting the mess and then hanging the bags in the hedgerows or throwing it into nearby fields.

I have been made aware by a resident of a campaign in Australia called “Don’t be a Tosser” which aims to deter people from tossing their rubbish from their vehicles. It seems that a similar scheme could be adopted in the UK, and it would combat both litter and dog mess.

There is a real need to get the message across to all people within the District that the District Council will prosecute and fine if evidence is brought forward. Furthermore I would welcome an increase in resources from all organisations to combat these on-going activities, so that we can all make the area a more desirable place to be.

I would therefore ask the Leader if he agrees with my view on this matter?

Thank you”