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Mr Dan Hudson
Development Strategy Manager
Development Management Group
Community Investment and Development
South Lakeland House
Lowther Street
Kendal
LA9 4DL

Copy to Mr Alastair McNeill and Mr Iain Withington

21 April 2011

Dear Mr Hudson,

Kirkby-Ireleth Housing Action Group's response
to SLDC's Land Allocations Consultation

I have pleasure in enclosing the considered response of Kirkby-Ireleth Housing Action Group to SLDC's Land Allocations Consultation.

I am aware that the original deadline for submissions of 15 April has passed, but as it now says on your website that submissions will be accepted up to 30 April, I would ask that you give this submission serious consideration, as it represents the views of a sizeable number of residents of this parish.

The Action Group arose spontaneously out of dissatisfaction with the initial response of Kirkby-Ireleth Parish Council to the consultation process, and the group has now held two well attended public meetings. Part of this dissatisfaction is due to the fact that the only housing need data we have in this Parish dates from 2005/6, when the last Parish Plan was developed, and we have therefore conducted an unofficial but extensive survey to discover residents' current views about the Land Allocations Proposals.

We delivered 450 questionnaires to residents (one per household) and 148 forms were returned in only a few days – a return rate of 34.4%; I would ask you to note the large number of responses we obtained and the detailed comments written by many people, as this shows the extent of feeling about SLDC's Development Strategy in Kirkby-in-Furness.

The results of that survey form the bulk of our submission (enclosed as appendix 1), although I would ask you to take into account also significant issues raised at the public meetings, which were not necessarily covered in the survey. (These points are to be found in Appendix 2 of our submission document.)

For your convenience we have included an executive summary of the survey findings. However we draw your attention to the full list of comments made by residents in Appendix 3. Residents were asked to comment on their perception of the need for development, as well as the suitability of individual sites.

These comments show there is widespread concern about changing the rural nature of the village and urbanising it through putting too much land for housing development into the Local Development Framework. Residents question the evidence of need for so much new housing in their village. There is more support for scattered small development across the village, and many people think sites should be sought where local builders can construct one or two houses over a period of time.

Around 25 homes currently remain for sale in Kirkby-in-Furness. Many residents support starter homes for local young people only, but they do not have confidence that a local occupancy clause can be enforced, and see the price of a few affordable homes being provided, in return for large scale development, as too high.

There is also widespread concern about the loss of farming land when green field sites are built over, and as Kirkby is traditionally a community based on farming and quarrying, any loss of farming land resulting in families losing the viability of their occupation, would be regretted.

We understand that the North West Development Agency's request to SLDC to find land for 7,200 dwellings now has no force. We therefore join Kirkby-Ireleth Parish Council in urging you to reassess the data behind this target, and to postpone the whole outcome of the Land Allocations process until an up to date study of likely housing need over the next fifteen years has been carried out.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Arnold
Chairman, Kirkby-Ireleth Housing Action Group

Enclosed: Results of the survey carried out by the above group in April 2011.

The Response of Kirkby-Ireleth Housing Action Group to SLDC's Land Allocations Consultation 21 April 2011

Contents

Executive summary of findings of the survey carried out in Kirkby-Ireleth in April 2011

Appendix 1 Additional points made at public meetings in Kirkby

Appendix 2 Findings of the survey

Sites map

Executive Summary of Survey

- Response rate of 34.4% - excellent
- Majority want small scale development
- Many people commented on the current number of unsold houses in the village across a wide price range
- 10 – 25 new homes came out as the most popular option, with many respondents seeing a need for fewer than 5, and only 2 respondents seeing a need for more than 40
- A wide variety of views were expressed (see Appendix 2).

Feedback on sites

- R 29 – Agree 79 Disagree – 53
- R189 – Agree 36 Disagree - 97
- RN11 (Just the part behind the school)
 Agree 34 Disagree 79
- RN 170 (Field between Highfield & the Villas)
 Agree 31 Disagree 102
- Part of R211 between Moorland Garage & Burlington Close
 Agree 29 Disagree 99
- R189 M (All of R29/R189 and part of RN170)
 Agree 17 Disagree 110
- RN11 Agree 16 Disagree 96
- R211 Agree 11 Disagree 115

Sample of comments, each expressed by a number of respondents:

- Already empty houses in different price ranges
- There are no jobs in Kirkby
- Need affordable houses for locals to stay in the village
- Small scale development only
- Do not want to see the village become a town
- Avoid using farmland for housing

- Roads in and out of Kirkby need improving before many more houses are built.

APPENDIX 1

Additional significant issues raised at public meetings of the Kirkby -Ireleth Housing Action Group

Relating to sites R29 and R 189

- A Public Enquiry was held in 1991 relating to a Planning Application to build housing on the above sites. The enquiry found that the sites should remain as green fields and this finding was upheld by the Dept. of the Environment when taken to appeal.
- On site R189 there is a United Utilities high pressure sewerage pipe with junction areas for three of the sewerage systems in Kirkby in Furness. Therefore this restricts the area of land suitable for housing development. (United Utilities have said they would not agree to building over this pipe.)
- On R189 the Highways Agency has previously refused an access road onto the A595.