

NFDC Ignoring Mass Opposition

When it comes to local planning, sometimes we seem to be making progress, sometimes we seem to be going nowhere.

The Pennington and Lymington Lanes Society (PALLS) was formed in July to protect the distinctive character of the lanes of Pennington and Lymington. We say that the proposed development of 100+ homes in NFDC's local plan for 2016-36 between Lower Pennington Lane and Ridgeway Lane (SS6) would have a seriously detrimental effect on our beautiful lanes, on Oakhaven Hospice and on our town as a whole. The development is situated in high performing green belt, abutting the National Park and on land which leads towards the beautiful yet vulnerable environment of the coastal plains and salt marshes.

We now have 715 members who support our aims. This is far more people than directly overlook the site. We understand the overwhelming majority of the 567 pages of representations received by NFDC on SS6 oppose the development. We especially welcome the objections of the Lymington Society who have questioned the deliverability of the proposal and asked for the removal of SS6 from the plan because the site is within high performing Green Belt.

Lymington and Pennington Town Council (LPTC) at their 1 August meeting also objected to SS6 on the grounds that the development is not fully deliverable because of the effect on the lanes of the extra traffic and the effect on the Oakhaven Hospice. But at Monday night's Council meeting (24 Sept) LPTC voted to start working with NFDC on the planning details without obtaining any guarantees on these two show-stoppers.

All credit to NFDC for producing a plan which responds to the need for market, affordable and social rented housing across the Council area over the period to 2036, providing over 10,000 units over the period: we believe that SS6 is not fundamental to the success of this plan, at 1% of the total housing units proposed. There are plenty of suggestions of brownfield sites immediately available in our area which could meet this need, and the search is not complete.

Here's the problem. Despite the scale of public outcry over SS6 and the fact that the District Council could go back to its members and make changes to the Plan they refuse to do so and are ploughing ahead. I understand the Plan and the representations will now go straight to the Government inspector for consideration. No reflection, no discussion, no explanation. Local residents are kept in the dark while detailed negotiations continue between the District Council and the developers and no-one else, least of all the affected communities. Is this best our planners can do?

George Trevelyan, PALLS Committee member, Leelands, Lower Pennington Lane