

PETITION – DEVELOPMENT IN LYMINGTON**1. INTRODUCTION**

A petition with 1,425 signatures was received from the Lymington Society and presented to the Council on Monday, 26 February 2007. It reads:-

“We, the undersigned, petition the New Forest District Council to change their implementation of current planning policies within the town of Lymington which:

- are causing irreversible damage to the character of the town;
- the destruction of many valuable family homes;
- their replacement by developments of flats completely out of character with their location in the town.

In addition, we demand that the NFDC urgently:

- carry out a review of “Areas of Special Character” with a view to protecting the many attractive areas in Lymington that are currently at risk of disappearing forever under inappropriate development;
- institute a far more open planning consultation policy allowing local residents and Amenity Societies greater access to the planning process to enable them to make full representations on proposed developments both before and after the submission of planning applications.”

2. PROCESS

- 2.1 In accordance with Standing Order 38, as the petition covers functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet and the Planning Development Control Committee, it was referred to that Committee in the first instance.
- 2.2 Standing Order 38 provides further that where a petition affects the Council's approved strategies, policies or budgets, the Council shall not make a final decision until the Cabinet has had the opportunity to consider and make recommendations on the issue to the Council.
- 2.3 The part of the petition dealing with the consultation policy was considered at a special joint meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee and the Economy and Planning Review Panel on 13 December 2006. It was resolved that:-
 - (a) That the Head of Planning arrange for Members to be able to access the current database held by the Council in order that they can ensure that no organisations or other consultees who should be consulted on this issue are omitted;
 - (b) That the Head of Planning initiate a consultation exercise on the current public participation scheme in the New Year; and

(c) A report be brought to a meeting of the Planning Development Control Committee following the elections in May 2007.

2.4 The database for a consultation exercise has been circulated to Councillors and it will be carried out during the Spring of this year. The results will be reported to this Committee in the Summer after the initial training of new members has been completed.

3. REVIEW OF AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

3.1 A special training session on the content of PPS3 and the new development plan systems was held on 17 January 2007. Unfortunately no representative from the Lymington Society was able to attend. It was explained to Councillors that they have greater discretion under PPS3 to consider densities of development in particular areas but only in the context that they can demonstrate a strategy to meet the overall housing numbers required in this District. This work is being progressed in the preparation of our 'Core Strategy' which is due to be considered by the Cabinet in July 2007 and be the subject of public consultation in the Autumn of 2007.

3.2 The work will evaluate options for accommodating the necessary levels of housing growth and indicate a preferred option for its achievement. It will consider the relative merits of increased densities in existing urban areas in comparison with green field site development. Depending on the outcome of this important principle the designation of new or extended 'Areas of Special Characters' could follow through the preparation of a 'Site Designations and Allocations Development Plan Document'.

3.3 In the meanwhile PPS3 has reaffirmed the principle that all new development must be appropriate to its context. This reinforces previous advice and a motion passed by the Council in November 2006. All planning officers will be guided by this principle in assessing all residential development schemes. In particular they will use new tools such as the requirement for "Design and Access Statements" to ensure that all such proposals are fully explained and evaluated before any decisions are taken.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The decisions to be taken in the 'Core Strategy', as set out in this report, clearly have significant environmental implications.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None arise directly from this report although ensuring good design is an important part of achieving safe and secure communities.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None arise directly from this report.

7. COMMENTS FROM PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Planning Development Control Committee advise the Cabinet as follows in respect of the Lymington Society petition.
- (a) That work on preparing the 'Core Strategy' for the District will inform longer term decisions about the disposition of housing provision in the area. The Lymington Society (and many other interest groups) will be able to contribute to the analysis of the options through a consultation exercise in the Autumn of 2007;
 - (b) In the interim the Council will have full regard to the guidance in PPS1 and PPS3 that all new development must have regard to and be appropriate in its context; and
 - (c) A consultation exercise will be carried out on procedures to be followed by the Planning Development Control Committee. This will be considered by the Committee as part of a thorough review in the Summer of 2007.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That the Council be recommended to note the work that is being undertaken.

For Further Information:

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Background Papers:

Published Documents Only