

Lymington Society Press Release 07.08.2018

Lymington Society Joins Town Council In Opposing NFDC Local Plan For Use Of Site Off Lower Pennington Lane For Major Housing Estate

The Lymington Society is urging its members and local residents to oppose the proposal, revealed in the latest draft of the NFDC Local Plan Review, to allocate a site to the east of Lower Pennington Lane for a major housing estate for a minimum of 100 homes.

This follows the decision of the Town Council on the 1st of August to also oppose the use of this site and to instead suggest the use of the old Didgegere Nursery on Ramely Road.

The Society has carefully considered the new NFDC Plans for two strategic sites (sites for over 100 homes) for a total of 285 homes which are planned for Milford Road and off Lower Pennington Lane.

This follows the complete withdrawal of previous NFDC plans for almost 1,200 homes on Green Belt land to the north of Pennington, which we strongly opposed as environmentally damaging and completely out of keeping for the town.

The Society is of course concerned, as many people and organisations are, about the lack of house building over many years that has resulted in an acute housing shortage nationally. However, major new house building sites cannot be at the expense of the character of the town and on totally unsuitable sites.

Whilst the Milford Road site, which sits either side of the road, near the Amenity Tip, is broadly acceptable, (subject to suitable height and screening), the Society considers the site off Lower Pennington Lane as totally unsuitable for a variety of reasons.

This site, which is described in the Draft Local Plan Review as capable of having a minimum of 100 houses, but which some fear is capable of being developed with up to 200 homes, is in one of the most sensitive areas of the town, described in the NFDC's own Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Guidance as the "Rural Lanes".

The two roads of Lower Pennington Lane and Ridgeway Lane are delightful, semi-rural reminders of the rural past of Lymington and as such need the very strong protection afforded by the Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Guidance.

A development of the size proposed, will inevitably lead to much increased traffic - especially in these days of online purchasing and "white van man" deliveries, not to mention the traffic from the many car movements from the new houses.

It would appear that no road capacity study of likely traffic movements has been carried out and the Society feels strongly that the road access to this site is not capable of safely carrying the level of traffic involved, without inevitably being suburbanised with kerbs and widening, leading to a total loss of the distinct character that is supposed to be protected in the Local Distinctiveness Planning Guidance.

Speaking after the decision of the Town Council to oppose the plans for Lower Pennington Lane, Don Mackenzie, Spokesman for the Society said:

We are very pleased that the Town Council has decided to oppose plans for a major housing estate in this beautiful and important part of the town. The leafy lanes leading to this area and beyond to the marshes and the Solent are totally unsuitable to safely carry the traffic that this new major development would generate and we are surprised that the NFDC has backed this proposal.

The Society fought long and hard to have the Lymington Local Distinctiveness Planning Guidance brought into force and if this site was developed, against the NFDC's own guidelines for this area, it would mean "open season" on those area that need protection from unsuitable developments.

Any weakening of this Planning Guidance, would inevitably be seen as a legal precedent and undermine the protection for the distinctiveness of the town that the Society took so long to achieve, and to which we contributed so much.

In order to fulfil the house building target for the town that the NFDC wishes to achieve to meet Government targets, the Society agrees that the Didgemere Nursery site should be considered instead. It is a derelict site which needs some new use.

However the Society suggests that as this site is detached from the main community in Pennington, it would make more sense to consider land near the Catholic School and Northover Road which is much nearer to the facilities in Pennington and would not be so damaging to the Green Belt and not lead to pressure to build up to the Sway Road in the future.

Members of the Society and local residents who wish to register their views on this site can find the link on the Society Website. The closing date for the consultation period is the 12th of August.

Ends

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