

**Meeting with Cllr Ainsley Arnold and Sean Hannaby, Head of Planning
Room S1 – S2 Westfields, Sandbach on 7th January 2016 at 1pm
Present from APC: Pam Seddon, Geoff Seddon, Heather Jones**

Neighbourhood Plan

- Why did it take CEC (until MJ's letter) supposedly over a month to reply to the initial enquiry and why didn't Audlem Parish Council at least receive an earlier acknowledgement of the initial enquiry? *This was impossible for them to answer. The original letter had been sent by email but the response was apparently sent by mail initially, with an email only following after KD followed this up. AA & SH were asked to review their internal processes to ensure that acknowledgements – even if automated – were sent to correspondents with an anticipated response date.*
- What action has been taken with the individual responsible for not taking into consideration the emerging NP when making the decision to allow the Paddock Lane application regarding planning (15/1548), especially when the application had been unanimously rejected by Audlem Parish Council, quoting the NP?
SH: NPs are a new animal and our letter highlighted Case Officers needed to be aware. Procedures were now in place. No action has been taken against the Case Officer concerned. APC was thanked for raising the fact that the NP hadn't been taken into account.
- As Cllr Jones now admits that Cheshire East Council was at fault over the non-inclusion of the emerging Audlem NP in the Paddock Lane development, are you in a position to review the granting of this application? If not, why not? I'm sure if the boot was on the other foot things could be different.
It is not possible to change the approval. The only right of appeal is from the applicants side
- What are your personal views on NPs?
very much in favour of NPs as is CEC, which has put significant resource in place to support them. However, they are not a 'silver bullet' especially as the government is determined to press ahead with increasing housebuilding. The weight of NP is lessened/being mitigated against because of national policies and the lack of 5 year housing land supply. Inspectors can say that because NPs are part of the Local Plan they should be given more weight but this is still very limited. CEC are trying to influence this at national level and are currently helping produce more NPs than any other unitary authority.
- What procedures and processes are now in place to ensure that NPs are taken into account when determining planning applications? Where did the Paddock Lane one go wrong?
See above
- When will the incorporation of local emerging NPs be incorporated within the GIS system? How does this operate?
This is an internal system which highlights relevant policies related to specific areas eg conservation areas when an application is added into the system. The GIS has a number of layers which contain conservation areas, sites of special scientific interest, NPs, etc. At some point in the future the GIS mapping may become available to the public on the CEC website.

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- If CEC supports the NP, how are you going to prove this? What practical measures will you take to show developers, the Inspectorate, etc that you value community's views and that their wishes are respected and honoured re growth and future development? Will CEC be fighting the Green Lane Appeal (15/1964)?
policies have significant impact on what CEC can do as if applications go to appeal and contradict national policies CEC will lose. They are trying to rely on material considerations such as flood areas, ecology, the effect on the countryside – especially the latter – and determining if a site has a particular character which would give more chance of success. It is important to focus on these matters when opposing an application (such as Moorsfield/Tollgate), which they agreed may warrant 'particular character' status.

CEC has no choice but to work on ancillary issues with the developers prior to an application being put in. It is entirely the developers choice whether to apply for Planning Permission even if they are given a clear indication from CEC that the application is unlikely to succeed

SH will come back to us on whether CEC will fight the Green Lane Appeal

Housing Land Supply

- How robust are the housing numbers in the CELP now that the Inspector has accepted that they are reasonable? One developer has expressed the opinion that CE have changed all the housing targets which will make the Audlem Neighbourhood Plan invalid. Is this the case or not? If it is the case what are the new housing targets for Audlem.
CEC are quietly encouraged by the Inspectors latest review of the CELP and think it will remain as now. The Inspector also seemed receptive to CEC's buffer proposal (a cross between the Liverpool and Sedgfield formulae – this is to do with how the backlog is dealt with). However, it was stressed that the adoption of the Local Plan is not the end of it. Even if the 5 yr HLS is confirmed, actual delivery is key to the HLS and the developers themselves control this by choosing to build/not build. .

Other

- Is there any information on Reserved Matters for Gladman yet?
SH will investigate (HJ has subsequently had confirmation from Ben Haywood that nothing has yet been received re this). Issue of no consultation with Parish Councils at reserved matters stage. SH & AA were shocked by this as they believed this always took place. 25 Stafford St used as an example. SH to look into this and get back to us.
- Initial 'consultation' takes place about large planning applications, eg Moorsfield Avenue/Tollgate Drive. With the NP at its current position, do you think that we should reply on the NP and wait until the application comes in or engage in dialogue?
SH and AA suggested that we should 'throw everything at it' as it makes it harder for the developers since they have to work to mitigate against the matters raised by objectors. Should set out all the issues we can as they will have to respond to them.

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[APC did not make it clear to SH & AA that APC had not been included in the consultation process so have emailed to get advice on how to proceed in these circumstances – response awaited]

- What can the Head of Planning tell us about the principles of the Enabling Scheme proposed at Bird's Nest (15/3257) which appears to be a back door around NPs'/LPs' controls on planning?

SH explained that an Enabling project is not a 'back door' but is just another material consideration and is used to help maintained listed buildings which CEC clearly wish to see properly maintained. The work is costed and assessed against the value of the building when the work is completed = the cost is usually significantly more than the value of the additional work. The enabling project is used to fund the gap between available funding and cost of works. It has been demonstrated at a) it is a good scheme b) the value and costings are valid c) the funding gap is sound d) the project is proportionate.

Additional items:

CEC has been urging other authorities to stand with them and consider charging either Council Tax or Property Tax on land which has been granted planning permission and apparently the Local Government Association has given some support to this in its latest newsletter

CEC is producing a Design Guide which is currently in production but only in draft form. There will be a dialogue with Town and Parish Councils before this is adopted. The guide will apply across the authority and will recognise the specific local character of different parts of CEC by indicating appropriate designs for housing to merge with existing dwellings. NB It appears from the comment made in the Design and Access Statement December 2015 in the latest Hockenhull application that Audlem will be considered to be in a character area

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