



CLOUD : COUNCIL ADDRESS for 29th July

Version : 16 July

Word count = 614

I am addressing you on behalf of CLOUD. We are a residents' organisation, particularly but not only concerned about proposals to develop a 'Bailrigg Garden Village' in south Lancaster.

One of the positive features of the Bailrigg Garden Village scheme, as referred to in the Local Plan, was that it was going to be an integrated and comprehensive development, including schools, social facilities, public transport, and such other elements as are needed to create a community. However, in the post-coronavirus world, funding for such services is going to be much harder to obtain. Without them this would not be a garden village, just a vast housing estate.

This is a crucial point. Planning applications by house-builders for large housing estates in south Lancaster are already being submitted. These must be set aside until the Council has had time to prepare a Lancaster South Area Action Plan. This must embed in it detailed designs for the garden village. These must be put out to public consultation. Our understanding is that plans for Lancaster South and the garden village would also be reviewed by a second Planning Inspector.

The Council is already committed to a review of the Local Plan in the light of the Climate Emergency declaration of 30 January 2019. The Planning Inspector himself

recognised climate change as an issue in his report, see his references to flooding and air pollution.

South Lancaster has a history of serious flooding, most recently in December 2017. It caused devastation in Galgate, as well as in the city and Halton. The Environment Agency is aware of the problem, but we have been told it does not have the financial resources to deal adequately with the existing risk, let alone greater risks. Mitigation measures, such as SUDS are intended to offset the consequences of concreting over green fields, but they are unlikely to be able to cope adequately (even if regularly cleared of debris) in an area already subject to flooding.

Improving air quality is also an urgent issue. To address the Green agenda, the garden village, and south Lancaster more widely, require substantially improved public transport links in order to reduce car dependency. Our recent Freedom of Information request to Lancashire County Council revealed that the recent and successful Housing Infrastructure Fund bid only provides money for the road-building elements of the South Lancaster growth area. The bus rapid transit system and cycle superhighway, of which much is made in the Local Plan, are left to be funded by developer contributions or other unspecified public sources. That neither of these constitute a reliable funding should be obvious to us all and a real cause for concern. Additionally, the preference for home-working which is emerging from the Coronavirus pandemic should surely encourage us to develop local jobs rather than encouraging long distance commuting by building yet more roads?

You don't need CLOUD to tell you how much more difficult the Coronavirus pandemic makes it to conduct public business. We would ask you to ensure that consultation with local communities and residents is maintained. We would also appreciate any advice you can provide as to how you intend to achieve this.

This has been only a brief summary of CLOUD's concerns regarding the Local Plan and its implementation in south Lancaster. We appreciate the value of having an up-to-date Local Plan in place, but we trust that Councillors will bear in mind the points I have just outlined when reaching your decision on the motion before you. We are also willing, if any Councillors so desire, to discuss and amplify any of the points I have raised. We are keen to play a constructive role in the discussions relating to the Climate Emergency and South Lancaster developments.