

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF KINVER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT THE KSCA, KINVER

PRESENT: Councillors JK Hall (Chairman), Mrs C Allen (Vice Chairman), K Slade, IG Sadler, G Sisley, H Williams, S Anderson, Ms E Lord, M Smith, E Simons.

Public present Mr and Mrs Smith, S Tudor, D Lowe, A Parkes, J Rhead, F Holloway, Mrs B Owen, C Coure, C Groucutt, P Farrier, D Bird, B Bidde, M Wiseman, P Johnson, E Parkes, S Johnson, C Johnson, D Lindel, J Peakman, K Bridges, G Tyler, P Stokes, D Marsh, B Wakelin, L Smith, H Quarry, N Quarry, J Snape.

210/21. Apologies for Absence.

Councillors Miss V Webb D Light, P Wooddisse, Mrs S Harris sent their apologies.

211/21. Declarations of Councillors' Interest.

Cllr S Anderson declared an interest as he is a member of CPRE.

Cllr M Smith as he is a member of the Save Kinver Greenbelt has a prejudicial interest and took no part in the debate or discussion / decision process.

213/21. Public Participation – 30 minutes for members of the Parish to raise matters with members of the Council relating to the Preferred options

Standing orders were raised to enable members of the public to speak.

Pearl Farrier

Why is Kinver in the same tier as Wombourne? At the online planning meeting on the 17th Planner agreed!

There is no justification for this, the 2 villages are not the same in terms of :- Employment; Size; Population; Infrastructure; Road Structure; Shops; Health Facilities; Schools and Sporting Facilities.

Apparently farming / agricultural land is mentions in the Plan, but how much protection has been given to White Hill as agricultural land? Which it was up to only a few years ago and used for cattle and now meadowland.

More need to be made of the fact that agricultural land could be used for development and therefore lost forever as an asset to Kinver.

There was a question in the meeting on the 17th and the planners stated that agricultural land needs to be protected in the plan.

Susan Smith

She has been a member of the Greenbelt Action Group, they have been fighting since 1998 to stop development in the Greenbelt, in the first SAD process White Hill was the preferred site and this should have been stopped then. When building starts on the site that has received planning permission, materials for the works on site from large lorries will be an issue, with pedestrians and vehicles at the Potters Cross junction.

Barbara Owen

I would like to ask if our District Councillors have had any input in the Local Plan. There seems to be very little mention of Kinver. We are getting nothing out of this apart from 164 houses.

As you already know my main concern is the lack of public transport. We have lost 7 pubs and two petrol stations in the village, all replaced with houses, but public transport has actually diminished.

On all three of these new approved sites it states under Key Infrastructure requirements :- "Sustainable Transport". It also states "health, sports and recreation". We have lost our Leisure Centre, squash courts, youth club and library, (both volunteers now), Police Station, Bank, Building Societies, Job Centre, Supermarket, buses to Wolverhampton and Bridgnorth and our bus to Stourbridge is now very, very limited.

All these facilities have disappeared yet the village is getting larger.

Codsall, Cheslyn Hay, Penkrigde and Wombourne all have wonderful Leisure Centres, and apart from Wombourne are virtually the same size as us.

The Local Plan Objective 10 states :- “Support the development of sustainable transport network, including ensuring where possible existing and new development is well served by various public transport modes, and active travel options such as walking and cycling.

The policy will: Promote joint working between the District, County Council and neighbouring highways authorities on sustainable transport measures, including active travel. Support strengthening bus/rail services and connections to these services in response to increased demand from new development.

Local Transport Plan: A five year integrated transport strategy, prepared by local authorities in partnership with the community, seeking funding to help provide local transport projects. The plan sets out the resources predicted for delivery of the targets identified in the strategy.

THIS SOUNDS VERY WONDERFUL AND UTOPIAN, BUT WHO IS GOING TO DO THIS FOR THE RESIDENTS IN KINVER? WHO WILL BE WATCHING OUR BACK?

Fiona Holloway

The consultation document contains 12 questions. We have addressed questions 4 (Greenbelt strategy), Question 5 (Spatial strategy) and question 8 (Proposed housing allocation sites).

Question 4-Green belt strategy

This question asks if consultees support the policy approach in DS1 (Green belt) and DS2 (Open countryside)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that one of the fundamental purposes of green belt is to protect against urban sprawl. This seems to have been totally overlooked in relation to building on green belt land in villages such as Kinver. The NPPF requires that green belt should only be released for development in exceptional circumstances, and states the following factors should be considered;

- A) making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- B) optimising the density of development especially in locations well served by public transport;
- C) discussions should be undertaken with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development.

SSDC has offered up 4,000 dwellings under the duty to cooperate without having undertaken a rigorous investigation of the availability of brownfield sites within the Black Country and West Midlands conurbation or whether the density of development in the Black Country has been optimised. This is clear evidence that policy DS1 is not being applied.

SSDC should be able to clearly demonstrate that it has fully examined all other reasonable options for meeting its need for development before releasing green belt. This has not been done and the DC have not complied with the NPPF.

Question 5; Spatial strategy. This question deals with the policy approach in policy DS3, the spatial strategy to 2038

Policy DS3 states that during the plan period to 2038 SSDC will deliver a minimum of 4,881 dwellings plus a contribution of 4,000 dwellings towards meeting the greater Birmingham and Black Country housing market area shortfall. The Black Country plan has not yet been tested. Consequently the 4000 home ‘duty to cooperate’ allocation should be deferred pending the outcome of the BC plan.

We have had sight of a detailed report which analyses the approach to housing need used in the BC calculations and this has highlighted that the BC housing needs assessment is fundamentally flawed. Some of the issues raised are as follows.

The government requires that local authorities use the outdated 2014 assumptions in local plan preparation. This is purely to meet an arbitrary housing target of 300,000 homes per annum. The government now require a 35% uplift to housing numbers for the 20 largest cities, including Wolverhampton. This further increases the overall Black Country housing need assessment and creates a shortfall of 38,000.

Based on current household projections the need is considerably lower. Therefore the 2014 based housing projection artificially increases the housing requirement figures. The shortfall would disappear if the most recent projections are used.

The report also suggests that around 15,000 homes could be added to the Black Country housing supply based on 2016 ONS projections. The supply deficit will be reduced further if the 35% uplift for Wolverhampton is excluded from the housing requirement.

Reducing overall numbers could ensure that housing need is met where it occurs; that is within the Black Country and Birmingham conurbation. Given the potential impacts of overestimating the housing requirement for the Black Country on the green belt the Association of Black Country Authorities should explore options to adopt a lower housing total.

The economic realities of town centres that are emerging post-COVID are likely to significantly increase housing supply beyond the levels identified by the Black Country plan. The justification for the 35% uplift in Wolverhampton and other cities given by the government was that much of it will be on brownfield sites within the conurbation and not exported onto neighbouring authorities' green belt sites.

Also excluded from the overall contribution to housing is 'windfall development'. SSDC have only allowed for a total of 435 homes within the allocation, however Kinver has already contributed some 60 homes since 2018 which indicates that the windfall allowance within the Local Plan is seriously understated.

In the October 2019 local plan review, SSDC state that if there is evidence that the extent of the housing shortfall across the housing market area has significantly reduced prior to the local plan review submission, the council will reduce its contribution to the unmet needs of other authorities proportionately. It is abundantly clear that no such reconsideration has occurred.

In summary South Staffordshire has volunteered an allocation of 4000 dwellings from the Black Country based on flawed housing need assessments.

Question 8 proposed housing allocations.

Infrastructure

Proposed development is disproportionate to the type and level of infrastructure in place. The current issues with medical provision are well rehearsed and we no longer have a police station, a main post office or a bank. Primary health care is already difficult to access. The population is growing whilst services are shrinking.

Traffic and transport

Increased traffic congestion – this will be a particular issue at Potters Cross junction where problems already exist.

Poor public transport.

Increased commuting by car. Those without cars already have difficulty in accessing the services they require.

Sustainability and climate change

Additional commuting by car will lead to increased exhaust emissions and congestion on roads leading back into the conurbation.

Ecology and habitat loss

The proposed development will cause irreparable damage to the biodiversity and catastrophic habitat loss.

Housing land

It is our view that these sites are not required to meet any genuine housing need.

Green belt policy

Any further development will impact on the continuity of the green belt where it is close to the conurbation.

The Hyde Lane and Dunsley sites lack a defensible development boundary means that development is likely to spread further beyond the initial minimum allocations of 22 houses.

Flood risk and drainage

Flooding from additional run-off is a potential threat to existing housing. Already flooding issue on Hyde Lane and the existing houses on Dunsley Drive lie below road level.

Encroachment on heritage assets

The proposed development on White Hill will spoil the setting of Kinver Edge for future generations.

Dave Marsh –

He is a member Kinver Greenbelt Action Group, he is working with Kinver and also with Penn Parish Council. Penn have agreed to help fund a planning consultant to fight the proposed infringement on the Greenbelt, they would welcome Kinver join them, they hope to get the Parishes working together.

Norman Quarry

He has noticed a considerable increase in traffic on Hyde Lane, particularly large 44 tonne lorries up and down the road each day, as they can't navigate the High Street. School Coaches use this road twice daily also, the 2 type of vehicles cannot pass on the narrower part of the road. What road improvements can be made to improve the situation? This needs addressing before more vehicles are pushed along this already busy road.

Kate Bridges

She is concerned with the safety on Hyde Lane, there is already a new development, if a further site was allowed there would be more traffic using the road and pedestrians.

Lou Smith

We have heard that Dunsley was under consideration as a favoured location as the access is out of a different exit / entrance into the village. The traffic at the Stewpony comes from A458 (via Hyde Lane) and people use the Dunsley Road to get around this problem and get onto the A449 quicker, so adding further developments and thus vehicles to this area is not going to be a better solution.

David Lowe

He asked what the next stage would be from this meeting, the Charman reported that the Parish Council would now prepare a priority list of the areas of concern and put this into a draft document to be finalised at the next Parish Council meeting to be sent then to SSDC, the minutes from tonight's meeting and also the December meeting will be in the public domain.

Standing orders were reinstated.

214/21. To discuss a response to the Preferred Options document for Kinver Parish.

Members of the public were informed that Kinver Parish Council is currently undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, and a lot of topics that are of concern from the public are included in this plan. The plan is currently being prepared and it is hoped to be published next year. This should strengthen the position of the Parish as it is a legal Document.

There have been 2 webinars, held recently on the Local Plan / Preferred Option Sites; one held by SSDC on the Local Plan and one by the CPRE / SPCA for local authorities run by a consultant helping parishes to prepare a response to SSDC, with included valid points for consideration.

From that webinar we took away some points and the consultant is helping the Parish Council to prepare a response.

There is a list of topics.

- Numbers of housing – What do we want to say - If took out Black country numbers and windfall no need to use greenbelt. There has to be a necessity test, and we have not reached this point and we have not reached this point, SSDC taking on 4000 homes, and they have not proved a need from the Black Country. Their plan is only 2 weeks ahead of the SSDC plan so they have not had their plan approved to show the need.

If you cant prove a need you cant pass a necessity test. The report produced by Lower Penn supports this.

- A minimum number of houses is spoken of but no maximum per site.
- Very little in the plan for the infrastructure that would be required for the proposed developments.
- It was noted that the plan is flawed as the survey shows in accurate facilities.

Facilities – GP Surgery

Transport

Traffic in particular is an issue, there is very little traffic data. There are many sites on the A449 proposed / being built and this may cause an issue for a circular road to take the traffic. Traffic management data is required to protect the village.

The above needs to be a joined-up process with County / SSDC.

- Potters Cross Junction – at the present time at the bottom is in effect a single-track road due to park cars. The developer that spoke to the Parish re White Hill, they thought the first phase would be ok with the traffic, but they also said that a second phase would be an issue.
- The plan conflicts with the NPPF, and the poor methodology needs to be stressed.
- Flash flooding – Hyde Lane needs addressing and also other areas if allowed to be developed will create flooding issues, i.e the existing houses at Dunsley lie lower than the proposed development site..
- Carbon emissions need to be reduced, but by the very sitting of countryside homes, the increase in emissions is going to out way how the houses are built, due to the lack of public transport from rural areas. The houses should be in cities where there is a good public transport system already in existence. List lost services re transport.
- Kinver Tier 2 village – this hard to make a case, the definition of the Tiers is not clear, it appears if you have a senior school within the Parish then you are a minimum Tier 2. If this cannot be challenged then it needs to be clear we are in the lower end of the tier.
- The work Lower Penn have undertaken on Housing data, could be used to bolster the case that this level of development is not required, as they have all the statistics that needs to be referenced / included.
- Any other issues we can get an opinion from the Neighbourhood Plan consultant, and data from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

There is a definition of Kinver that it is a lung for the Black Country, its where people come to enjoy the Greenbelt, fresh air walks etc.

The sites being brought forward will be harmed by the types of proposed settlements which affect the view from Kinver Edge. This needs to be addressed. Kinver is set in a valley and any development will be detrimental. As a result, if any further development was allowed it would need to be heavily screened.

The safeguarded land on White Hill is a well-used site as an amenity area, with the Staffordshire Way running through the middle of it, we would like to see this land returned to Greenbelt status but it may not be possible to reverse this decision. It was requested that the full paper trail for the decision process to take this land out of the Greenbelt and put it into the “Safe Guarded status” is requested off SSDC.

It was noted that this is the first consultation period on these documents, and the bullet points agreed should be submitted and further details can be added in the next round of consultation.

If we are going to have building, then we need to have an input into the S106 agreements, the District Council do not use the CIL process to raise funds at this time. The Parish Council need to be included in the decision process and a mechanism should be in place for this.

The CIL is more flexible than a Section 106, and this needs to be looked into by SSDC.

It was agreed to produce a draft document for the next Parish Council meeting in December, for members to agree and then submit it to SSDC before the consultation close date.

It was felt that a general principal should be agreed that the residents and Parish Council should work together to fight any further development of the Parish’s Greenbelt in all areas of the Parish, not focus on one area or another.

It was agreed for an agenda item to be added to the Finance Committee for emergency funding relating to the Local Plan preferred Option Sites.

215/21. Dates of Next Meetings –

Planning and Development Committee	24 th November 2021
Finance and General Purposes Committee	24 th November 2021
Parish Council meeting	1 st December 2021
Leisure and amenities Committee	12 th January 2022

Meeting closed 8.15