

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 16
QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Question from Mr. Michael Ainley:

I wish to put the following question forward in relation to site SO/HO/2. The question is in three parts as follows:

- (a) Why is it that after such strong opposition to "Springfield Bungalow Land original ref SO/HO/3" (now re-referred as SO/HO/2) by local residents and the Town Council of Southwell and given that Southwell Town Council found better/more preferable plots to meet its allocated new housing quota in line with what the people want, Newark & Sherwood District Council still detail this land to be approved, thus going against the wishes of the people and the Town Council of Southwell?
- (b) Why is it that land (SO/HO/2) believed to be partly owned by a Cabinet Member of Newark & Sherwood District Council and former member of the Newark & Sherwood District Council Planning Committee is still detailed as a preferred site to be adopted even when the result of the consultation was so clearly against it?
- (c) With reference to the consultation outcomes, interested parties responded to the land reference for SO/HO/3, why has the reference to that piece of land been changed to that of SO/HO/2, a previously used reference with consultation responses assigned to it, causing confusion in the reports as to what piece of land is actually being decided upon?

Reply from Councillor R.V. Blaney - Portfolio Holder for Strategy & Prosperity:

- (a) & (b) Following on from the Options Report consultation the District Council carried out a comprehensive review of the sites on the edge of Southwell (including this site) which had raised so much concern with local residents and the Town Council. A review was also undertaken of alternative proposals supported by the Town Council.

The review concluded that the original So/Ho/1 was not suitable for allocation in the context of the impact on its gateway location and amendments to the overall proposal where made. Residents concerns on So/Ho/2 (which was So/Ho/3) have been investigated and the concerns about the impact of development have been addressed through the policy for the site rather than non-allocation.

With regard to the Town Council's alternative proposals following investigation it was not possible to accommodate the level of development proposed because of on-site constraints and the presence of the Southwell Bypass saved line.

The inclusion of this site has been based on the planning merits alone, as have the inclusion of all sites considered as part of this process. This has been based on the professional advice of Council Officers.

- (c) The references to sites have been changed to accommodate the fact that the original So/Ho/1 had been dropped following a review of all gateway sites as

mentioned in (a) & (b) above. If this had not been done then site numbering would have started at 2 in Southwell.

In addition, Councillor R.V. Blaney referred to two questions that had been put by Mr Bob Spears (these had been submitted after the requisite deadline) in relation to sites So/Ho/2 and So/Ho/3. He stated that the Highways Authority had been fully consulted on these sites and they had affirmed their view that there would be sufficient highway access. In addition he was aware of the large number of representations put forward in relation to these sites but all the representations put forward during the consultation stage had been carefully considered and the two sites referred to were being put forward for approval.

Question from Mrs Elizabeth Wigham:

I wish to put the following question forward in relation to the Development Plan Document. The question is in two parts as follows:

- (a) Is it acceptable that land owned by a District Councillor and his/her family be included in the Development Plan when the Councillor and the method of gaining development of the land are still under investigation?
- (b) Is it democratic for the District Council to approve the Development Plan without any further discussion whatsoever being allowed? How does this comply with the Localism Act?

Reply from Councillor R.V. Blaney - Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Prosperity:

- (a) A complaint was lodged to the Standards Committee regarding Councillor Armstrong's involvement in the development plan process. This was the subject of a detailed investigation. That investigation has now been completed and the conclusion was that there had been no Code of Conduct breach. The finding was reported to a Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee on Monday, 21 May 2012 which accepted the finding of no breach. This concluded the investigation process.

The inclusion or exclusion of sites within the proposed Allocations & Development Management DPD has been undertaken solely on the planning merits of each site. This has been based on the professional advice of Council Officers.

- (b) The Council is not approving the Development Plan at Council tonight, it is being asked to approve a version which will be going out for a period of six week seeking representations from the public. After this period the Council will then consider these representations and whether it wishes to submit the document for public Examination by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector will consider representations made by the public and other organisations, judge whether the Plan is sound or not and make recommendations to the Council as to whether it should be adopted. It is only after this point that the Council would Adopt or approve any document. Any document submitted will go through a high level of independent scrutiny before any final decisions are made. All this is in line with the requirements of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and associated regulations.