

# **Arnside, Cumbria**

## **Local Economy, Outline Housing Needs, and Spatial Strategy**

### **Looking Forward Ten to Fifteen Years**

**(Draft)**

**Arnside Parish Plan Trust**  
**November, 2011**

## **Arnside; Local Economy, Outline Housing Needs, and Spatial Strategy**

### **Looking Forward Ten to Fifteen Years (Draft)**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. A new Village Plan is needed urgently to provide a better alternative to the Land Allocations proposed by SLDC, and to take the opportunities provided under the new Localism Act. It needs to address the economic sustainability of Arnside, the supply of affordable housing, and our duty to maintain the AONB.
2. The plan will be developed in stages; this first stage deals with the overall strategy which needs to be approved in principle before we work on its detailed execution.
3. No plan of this importance can be carried out unless a team is put in place to manage it. This team has to have the resources and the funds required, but it also has to have a very robust mandate from the community.
4. Arnside's population is skewed towards the retired community with about 45% of the adult population being retired.
5. Arnside's industrial base is very limited with only tourism, land management, and the local service (including care) sectors having a significant presence.
6. Arnside's income is dependent heavily on the remittances received from pensions, commuters' earnings, and tourism revenues.
7. All these income streams face threats; pensions from the lower returns expected from money purchase schemes; commuters' earnings from the higher cost of travelling to work; and tourism income from general economic pressures and travel costs.
8. If these income streams decline, there will be fewer opportunities for those depending on the tourism and the local service economy, and thus fewer jobs available.
9. Arnside has to counter these downside threats by building on its strengths as a place to live or to visit. This opportunity must be focused on to avoid the potential decline which has damaged other relatively remote seaside villages.
10. 27 affordable homes are needed to house those who live and work in the village. Most of these are for young people currently living at home with parents and needing accommodation to rent, rather than purchase. More research is needed to verify demand.
11. A landlord needs to be found to build and operate dwellings for social renting.
12. Additional market housing is not needed in Arnside.
13. SLDC's Land Allocation proposals major on the use of greenfield important open spaces. Development of these sites would make Arnside a less attractive place to live and to visit, with the consequences on the local economy described above.
14. SLDC's Land Allocation proposals largely ignore the special planning criteria and protections which apply to sites within an AONB.
15. APPT have identified alternative sites, especially brownfield sites, which could, over the time scale of this plan, be brought into play. These sites are sufficient to cover local affordable housing needs. They would also enhance the local environment by repairing derelict land.
16. This strategy will be refined further if APC agrees to the above outline proposals.

# **Arnside; Local Economy, Outline Housing Needs, and Spatial Strategy**

## **Looking Forward Over Twenty Years (Draft)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background**

A new Neighbourhood Plan is needed for Arnside.

It needs to be developed in the context and timescale of the new National Planning Policy Framework. This Framework, through SLDC's Core Strategy, the Local Development Framework, and the Land Allocations for Arnside, could have a profound long term impact on the way land in the Village is used for many years to come.

Land will be allocated for future development, and once this is done, our community will have little say about what is built on it. Future development could change dramatically the character of the Village so we need to ensure that we manage that development in the best interests of the whole community, including those in need of affordable housing.

The new Localism Act will empower communities like Arnside to take a more positive role in planning how it develops, but there is a long way to go before we understand fully what those powers will be and how they might be applied in practise. What is clear, however, is that if we do not have a plan, the default options may apply. That means local planners will have to operate under the presumption that they should say "yes" to the proposals of developers. We may not think that those proposals match the best interests of the Village, and we will have to show that we have a better plan that takes precedence.

We also have a duty to ensure that any development does not undermine the key features of the AONB. The AONB, the Landscape Trust and the National Trust have all had to file objections to the current draft proposals of SLDC planners. This is a further reason why we should move from a defensive position to a positive role where we set out what is best for this area.

This is a different approach to that adopted for previous Village Plans which produced a comprehensive list of the detailed actions requested by villagers, but did not set down an overarching strategic framework.

#### **1.2. Proposed structure of the Plan.**

The purpose of this paper is to encourage APPT, and all those involved in shaping the future of Arnside, to think about various longer term scenarios which could apply to the Village.

The overall objectives of this Plan will be;

- a) To identify and to create an action plan for ensuring that Arnside is maintained as a sustainable community including action to improve its built environment and to fulfil its economic development needs.
- b) To show how Arnside's future affordable housing needs can be satisfied without damaging its special character, or unnecessarily consuming its Important Open Spaces and greenfield sites, by using available current, brownfield and infill sites
- c) To create a plan to fulfil the obligations of the Village to uphold the special requirements arising from being within an AONB

We cannot develop a comprehensive plan for all aspects of Arnside life in one bite and in the timescale available. We therefore propose to develop the plan in stages, starting with the bigger-picture strategic issues of the economic and employment prospects for the Village, the need for housing in the foreseeable future, and a broad plan for land use.

Once these core strategies are agreed, and once we have in place a team able to drive and arrange resources for the core strategy, we can then start thinking about the more detailed improvements Arnside will need.

### **1.3. Creating the necessary team.**

No matter how good our written plan is, nothing will happen in practise unless we have the right people in place to drive its implementation. Resources and funds will need to be organised.

Hopefully, this paper can act as a catalyst to stimulate in-depth discussion and to promote the engagement of the major agencies which need to come together to create a **cohesive long term plan.** *[The Arnside Neighbourhood Development Plan?]*

It is suggested that the (initial) relevant agencies are;

- Arnside Parish Plan Trust (APPT)
- Arnside Parish Council (APC)
- South Lakeland District Council (SLDC)
- Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB)
- The National Trust (NT)
- Arnside & Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust (LT)
- Cumbria County Council
- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Age Concern South Lakes
- *[we should discuss whether others such as the RSPB, the Barnes Trust, Arnside Educational Institute and housing associations should be involved]*

*[we also need to discuss whether a formal structure needs to be created].*

If this does not happen effectively, there is a great danger that the wrong short term decisions will be made and the Village could fall into decline for the reasons set out below.

### **1.4. Caveats about data sources.**

Our main sources have been the various data sets covered by SLDC's Core Strategy for South Lakeland, much of which is derived from the Neighbourhood Statistics of the ONS, together with the Housing Needs Survey produced by Cumbria Rural Housing Trust in 2009.

Much of this data was out of date having been derived originally, for example, from the 2001 census. And the whole economy and the local housing market have changed dramatically since the events of 2008. Some data also covers areas which are larger than that of Arnside Parish alone, so was subject to pro-rating and broad assumptions that the Village is the same as neighbouring areas.

We have therefore added data that we have collected for ourselves (for example an analysis of the current housing market in Arnside) to try to bring our understanding up to date. And we have applied local knowledge, some of which is intuitive, based on our experience of living here, and on the evidence we see and hear by being in the Village.

In some cases, we have also formed a different view of what some of the data means for the Village in practise, and which therefore leads us to propose different solutions to those proposed by SLDC.

This has given us the opportunity produce a very much more tailored picture of the Village **as we see it.**

This is, of course, open to challenge, so those reading this draft may like to challenge some of the findings, or they might like to indicate if it agrees with their local knowledge.

## **2. THE LONGER TERM THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING ARNSIDE.**

### **2.1. Current position**

Arnside is largely a retirement community; there are roughly two people aged 65 or over for every three of working age (16-64). The latter include students and those under 64 who are retired, so retired people probably account for around 45% of the adult population.

Arnside's working population has few immediately local employment opportunities and only about a quarter of workers are employed within the Parish boundaries. The other two-thirds commute substantial distances to work in Kendal, Lancaster and further afield.

[This is at odds with SLDC's assertion that there are 500 jobs in Arnside; the difference may be due to the area measured (eg the wider Arnside & Beetham Ward), or the type of work because some local people have a portfolio of part time work which could distort the number of jobs recorded].

The main sectors providing local employment appear to be;

- Tourism-based service industries (pubs/restaurants, retail, B&B, caravan parks),
- Land management (AONB, NT etc),
- Local service industries, including those servicing the care sector based on the high proportion of elderly and infirm residents.

There is not, however, any significant cluster of any other industrial sector within the immediate locality. Without significant major markets in the immediate region (other than for those sectors listed above) it is highly unlikely that a new major source of business activity, or employment, will spring up in the Village. This has profound implications on the employment prospects of those needing work nearby, including the younger working-age population.

Some residents work (partially) from home in a wide spread of different occupations based in other areas. This element may rise in future as some people retire early (or semi-retire), or are made redundant, and use their skills to supplement their income. In some cases, they may provide services for clients a considerable distance from Arnside. This type of activity should be clearly distinguished from indigenous businesses which can be nurtured in Arnside.

The income and wealth of the Village is therefore likely to continue to rely heavily on;

- the inward flow of income from the pensions of retirees (the remittance economy),
- the earnings of commuters,
- the income generated by tourism and the businesses which depend on it, and,
- the public funding of the AONB.

The fortunes of the land management and the service sectors will continue to rely heavily on the health of the above income streams.

All of these income streams rely, in turn, on the special character of the geographical setting of the Village. **The outstanding natural beauty of the area is its main asset.** It attracts retirees and tourists and makes it a desirable place from which to commute to work elsewhere.

Without these attractive features, Arnside could suffer the fate of many other seaside villages. Because of the remoteness caused by the "cul-de-sac" effect of its location and its distance from markets of significant scale, and **if it ceased to be an attractive "destination", decline could set in.** Many similar seaside locations around the UK have become, or have had to recover from being, areas of deprivation and decay.

This is a realistic prospect, unless firm coordinated action is taken, for the reasons set out under “Threats” below.

Arnside, therefore, must avoid this fate and it is fortunate that it has potential assets which can be used to develop a positive future. Those assets are described below under “Opportunities”.

## **2.2. Threats facing Arnside.**

There are two principal types of threat to a healthy future for Arnside.

The first is that its natural environment could be damaged; the second is that its sources of income could decline. Both are interrelated.

### **Natural environment**

If it becomes a less attractive natural environment, Arnside will suffer reductions in tourism income and it will be a less attractive place to live for those bringing in pension remittances or income from commuting to work.

### **Tourism income**

The main threats to Arnside’s attraction as a tourist destination are;

- Damage to the physical environment caused by inappropriate development, especially development on its important open spaces and green-field sites,
- Further damage to habitats caused by the indirect impacts of building development due to noise, light pollution, and the general presence of a larger population.
- The lack of adequate access and other facilities, especially car parking and toilets, that a well-managed visitor destination requires and which help to prevent environmental damage caused by tourist activity.
- The current existence of derelict or vacant brown-field sites which detract from the ambience and amenity of the Village, and could be the source of further decay.
- The increasing cost of travel which may reduce visitor traffic unless Arnside continues to enhance the benefits which make it worth the cost of a visit.

### **Income from commuters**

Apart from the threat of reduced attractiveness for commuting workers due to inappropriate development, this source of income is also threatened by the increasing cost of commuting. The Village has to stay sufficiently special to make it worthwhile bearing the increased costs of commuting.

### **Future pension incomes.**

The main threats to its income from pension remittances affect the UK at large but could have a greater impact in a small seaside village because of its remoteness from centres with more accessible facilities at lower cost.

Pension remittances will come under pressure because of the massive change taking place in future pension funding. The recently-retired population are probably the last generation which will benefit en masse from secure *defined benefit* (final salary) pensions and significant lump sums. This has enabled a retired population to move to Arnside which is (typically) able to afford a *relatively* high standard of living and lifestyle.

These retirees benefit the local community because they create demand for services which would not otherwise have a market (and thus employment opportunities) in such a remote location.

This source of income may be under threat as future generations struggle to accumulate pension income from *defined contribution* (money purchase) schemes which may not be able to support current standards of living. Fewer people may be able to move to Arnside, and the incomes of those already residing here may come under pressure (there is already some evidence of this).

This may have the benefit of reducing house prices in the longer run, but it would also have the downside of reducing the wealth available to support employment for the younger generations and those providing local services.

This is the kind of downward spiral which has taken many seaside and rural communities from relative wealth into decline and deprivation.

This situation needs to be avoided and action needs to be taken while we still have the relative strengths to do so.

***[It is, however, difficult to mobilise into action a population which is currently generally comfortable and has not yet felt fully the pressures which may emerge.]***

### **2.3. Opportunities for Arnside**

#### **Economic development priorities**

Arnside's principal strength, and its core asset, is the beauty of its geographical location and its status within an AONB, with associated NT and RSPB sites.

These assets have iconic brand status which could attract the investment needed to take the community forward with positive, imaginative, sustainable development of the economy of the Village. Sustainable development would provide employment and housing for future generations, and would ensure that problem brown-field sites are turned into assets for the community.

***It makes sense for Arnside to secure its future by building on its existing strengths, rather than by trying to compete for new industry sectors which would carry a high risk of failure.***

The obvious sequence for building a secure economic future for Arnside is therefore;

- a) To build up its tourism and associated industries,
- b) To strengthen its attractiveness as a place for retirees and commuters to live, and
- c) To expand the markets for those servicing the above sectors as a source of employment opportunities.
- d) To provide the housing needed by those working in the above sectors, particularly those with lower earnings requiring "affordable housing".

#### **Tourism development.**

A comprehensive tourism development plan should be developed which would have the following benefits;

- It would create a well-synchronised [between agencies] plan to use the current brand assets(AONB, NT, RSPB etc) and the natural environment to the full to attract visitors to the area,
- ***It would protect and preserve the core features of the landscape (especially its important open spaces), prevent inappropriate development from damaging those assets, and it would enhance their amenity value.***
- It would manage properly visitor access and amenities such as parking, toilets, retail opportunities, and reasons to spend more and to stay for longer periods in expanded accommodation. Proper traffic management measures would also be essential.

- It would take advantage of potential developments such as the possible Foot and Cycle Bridge, and other schemes which are part of the Headlands to Headspace project.
- It would enhance visitor experience by improving presentation of the learning and cultural opportunities offered by the natural environment of the area. For example, a high quality Visitor Centre could provide an important attraction. The current successes of the Youth Hostel and the Children's' Holiday Centre at Far Arnside should be built on.
- Finally, it would define clearly the skills needed to support tourism development and help the local working population (especially future generations) understand the opportunities which could be available to them through servicing the needs of this market.

Such a plan would benefit all the participating agencies by providing opportunities to generate income which would help secure their future principal purposes, such as management of the natural environment.

#### **Developing income from retirees and commuters**

There would also be a spin off from tourism development in that Arnside would continue to be a premium location attracting the retirement market, which would provide a more sound basis for retaining the current remittance economy.

As stated above, these remittances are important in generating the wealth which circulates in the wider economy of Arnside. Arnside needs to use its assets to counter the downside impacts of reduced future pension incomes.

#### **Developing the service economy**

The next most obvious advantage is that such a plan could provide real employment opportunities grounded in sustainable tourism and educational activities which, in turn, would develop a wider market for the local service economy.

There would also be more opportunities for those providing retail and trade services and for those providing care services to the local community.

#### **Housing**

And, finally, a plan for providing housing (especially affordable housing) needs to be addressed (below).

### **3. HOUSING NEEDS**

#### **3.1. Market housing**

There is currently, and for the medium term future, an adequate supply of market housing within the Village, with over 70 dwellings available at all price levels.

The market is currently very slow for reasons other than availability (mainly funds to finance movement up the chain) but there is no need to develop further market housing sites. Prices remain high relative to other areas but it is expected that the market will, ultimately, be self-correcting and turnover will be restored. When the market "frees up" it is likely that movement will be restored throughout the chain, including the release of large properties currently occupied by elderly singles or couples. These larger properties could either accommodate families or be converted into flats.

In view of Arnside's status within the AONB (see below), and because it is therefore subject to the planning rules and protections applying to an AONB, large scale development should only be allowed "*in exceptional circumstances*". There are no relevant exceptional

circumstances applying here, so significant development of extra market housing should be regarded as ***inappropriate development***.

***Use of land for housing development should, with limited exceptions, be restricted to immediate needs for affordable housing and only where there is a demonstrable local need, which could be regarded as exceptional circumstances.***

#### **Demand for Affordable Housing**

The 2009 Arnside Housing Needs Survey (conducted by Cumbria Rural Housing Trust) has shown that there is a medium-term demand for 27 officially-rated affordable dwellings in the Village.

It also shows that that demand is mainly for rented accommodation for single adults currently living with parents (17 out of the 27 are in this category, and 10 of them were under 19 years of age).

There were only four families with young children identified by the CRHT study as in need of affordable housing. These figures have not been updated recently.

Incomes for this group are currently low and CRHT have reported that these people can only afford housing provided at social rents, rather than for purchase. Only one family of the 27 is likely to qualify for shared ownership.

*It is also a moot point whether those reporting a need for rentable dwellings locally will actually take up an offer of a lease on a new house or flat. Recent experience here and in other areas is that take up of affordable houses has been poor, and some have been sold on at a premium into the holiday home market. It could also be that circumstances for those needing to rent are such that they will decide to stay with Mum & Dad for the time being. This may be cheaper for them and it would keep the money inside the family. Rather than move while still young and single, some may elect to wait until they form a longer term partnership and can jointly afford a better proposition.*

***We should insist that a more detailed study of local demand is conducted to ensure that we are confident that any new affordable housing built for rent in Arnside will actually be taken up in practise by local people in need. This needs to be done before we condemn green-field sites to the bulldozers.***

We therefore need to find sites for dwellings for social renting, which means they will have to be provided by a landlord able to offer subsidised rents.

#### **4. PROPOSED SPATIAL STRATEGY**

Clearly, in view of the above, affordable housing needs to be provided in sites close to the main amenities of the Village which do not encroach on the open spaces which are important to the maintenance of the natural environment which is the main asset on which the future prosperity of the Village is built.

**4.1. SLDC's Land Allocations** report has listed a number of sites which it proposes to allow for future development. The principal problems with their proposals are;

- SLDC have not taken sufficient account of Arnside's position within the AONB. Such a position offers protections identical to those applying in the LDNP from the presumption in favour of development proposed under the new NPPF. SLDC also have a duty to promote the interests of the AONB. There are therefore significant differences between the policies applying generally throughout South Lakes and those applying in the AONB. *They have not demonstrably been applied to the proposed Land Allocations, especially those which protect the AONB landscape and its important open spaces. Further details of the relevant planning rules are described below.*

- They are developer-driven and based largely on those sites which are attractive to developers who (might?) fund affordable housing as they build more market housing. (see below). **This means that market housing will have to be sold at a price premium to subsidise the affordable homes.** *There are already c70 homes available on the open market; will extra new homes realistically sell at a price premium to pay for affordable homes?*
- They do not address the fact that these dwellings need to be for rented accommodation for which a landlord is needed. *If a landlord can be found, why should new market housing be built too?*
- The sites which are most attractive to developers are those in green-field locations which have lower site preparation costs. **These locations are, of course, those which are most valued by local residents as representing the character of the Village. The AONB and NT have also been forced to object to development on these sites. Development of these sites would make the Village less attractive to both residents and tourists.**
- there are a number of brown-field sites in the village, and there are also smaller infill sites which could be brought into use. **It is probable that these sites could - over the medium term - satisfy the major part of local demand for affordable homes** but more work is need to bring these sites into play. A letter from the DCLG confirming that “brownfield land, should be used as a priority” is attached as Appendix 3.

**Development of affordable housing, therefore, should, wherever possible, be located on the Village’s brown-field sites, not on virgin green-field sites. This approach would have the double benefit of improving the amenity and ambience of the Village by rectifying sites of decay and dereliction.**

**There is no justifiable need for extra market housing in Arnside, and therefore no need to sacrifice valuable open space in the Village for this purpose.**

#### **4.2. APPT proposed alternative approach.**

APPT propose a development sequence which is designed to supply the local demand for Affordable Housing in a way which is consistent with meeting our proposed economic development objectives.

**This proposed development sequence also respects and protects the landscape responsibilities of the AONB, and the wishes of local residents to maintain, so far as practicable, the open aspect and character of important parts of the Village.**

APPT proposes that new building should be dispersed throughout the village in small blocs to merge with existing developments. This is more sensitive to the nature of the village than the larger “estates” proposed by SLDC.

***APPT have suggested four new sites; we agree with six of SLDC’s Land Allocation sites; but we have very strong objections to the two sites which would have the largest impact on the character of the Village.***

**Our proposals should, over the period of the plan (10-15 years), bring into play sufficient sites to meet the needs of the local population for affordable housing.**

Further work needs to be done on some of these sites to confirm their suitability and to persuade land owners to bring them into play. However, *in view of the importance of balancing demand for housing with the need to protect the AONB landscape, it is suggested that the time required should be allowed before development is permitted on the more sensitive greenfield sites and important open spaces in the Village.*

The Development Options are listed in priority order in Appendix 1 attached and are intended for discussion between APPT and APC.

The proposed sequence, in principle, is;

I. **Brownfield sites.**

These should be used first because they have previously been developed and would do least damage to greenfield sites and important open spaces. Sensitive development of these sites would also improve the amenities of the Village by correcting current dilapidated sites. The proprietors will need to be persuaded to make them available for development, but it is difficult to see why they should want to keep their commercial assets in such an unsatisfactory state. They have the potential to accommodate most of the local demand for affordable houses.

II. **Infill sites.**

These are small sites which can be used to accommodate small numbers of dwellings in areas which are already built up.

III. **Greenfield sites in less sensitive locations.**

Most of these are newer sites identified by APPT as having potential and which would avoid as much impact as the larger sites proposed by SLDC. There are some overlaps with SLDC's proposals.

***APPT recommend that development of the two other sites on SLDC's Land Allocation (Hollins Lane and the Common) be held over until the above options have been fully explored and time is allowed to bring them into play.***

## **5. AONB PLANNING STATUS**

In view of the importance of the Village's position within an AONB, and the special protections that provides against inappropriate development, the planning criteria are summarised below and reproduced in more detail in Appendix 2.

*"Planning Policy Statement 7*

### Development in rural areas

The government sets out most of its planning 'rules' in what are called planning policy statements, usually known as PPS. **PPS7** is the most important one for the countryside and AONB's in particular. Called "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" it sets out a range of regulations for rural planning issues, but in particular sets the top level planning rules for AONB's:

- AONB's have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty
- the conservation of natural beauty is given great weight in planning policies
- major developments should not take place in AONB's, except in exceptional circumstances."

We understand that these rules will be re-confirmed when the revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework is published. **The attached Appendix 3 confirms this approach.**

## **6. FURTHER WORK ON THIS PLAN**

There is a lot more work to be done to complete this Plan, especially on;

- Bringing the brownfield sites into play

- Finding a landlord for rented affordable housing
- Developing the local tourism market and the services sector
- Completing the detail of the spatial strategy (including car parking, traffic management etc) and detailed Village design
- Developing employment opportunities for the tourism and service sectors.
- Ensuring that the requirements of the partner agencies are coordinated properly within this plan.

It is proposed to start work on this once the outline strategy above has been agreed in principle by APC.

We will then have to agree how the other important agencies are to be brought into partnership, and how to ensure that the Village community is able to show their support for the plan. **Creating an effective team to manage the plan is essential.**

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## Development Options

(The numbers refer to the attached sites map)

### **I Brownfield Sites**

1. Station Yard This brownfield site is MN 20 in the SLDC Land Allocations Development Plan Document. The site is rather unsightly and development would much improve the appearance of the area around the station.. The site is depicted in the Arnside Fact File as well suited for small business units and possible use for car parking, but is deemed "inappropriate for residential development". While small business units would be highly desirable their emergence seems unlikely and the site is likely to remain undeveloped if it is restricted in that way. Some affordable housing, plus a car park for station users would appear to be a more realistic possibility.

Most of the site (CU 778804, CU251417 and CU41881) is owned by Mr Harry Howard who lives in Station House. There are restrictive covenants on this land requiring consultation with the British Railways Board. According to SLDC there is no sewer network and the site is in a flood risk area. Mitigating steps would have to be taken to deal with this

If the owner of the Trafalgar Garage site (see below) owns some of station yard as has been suggested, it can only be a small part. The ownership of Stream Cottage, the wooden bungalow and the land beside it, is uncertain, for it is not listed by the Land Registry.. Greenroyd House and the land alongside it on the western side of this area,(CU206029) is owned and occupied by Mr and Mrs Gott.

In theory at least there would seem to be a lot of scope for development in large areas of Station Yard. However the lack of a sewer system and the flood risk problem might make it unattractive to builders.

### 2. Trafalgar Garage

This is another brown field site that is not listed by the Land Registry, although that does not necessarily mean that it is not registered. However we are reliably informed that it is owned by Gordon Pearson who lives in the bungalow next door.. This is a sizeable site of some depth which at present is an eyesore. We can be sure that those who live nearby would be delighted to see it replaced with a small block of flats, or a group of dwellings a la Nelson Court. Mysterious that SDLC did not initially include this obvious possibility which is now designated RN269. It is surely reasonable to assume the owner would welcome the opportunity to develop this site.

3. The Telephone Exchange (CU173479 this brownfield and infill site is part of R393 and the map of the site shows that it would provide space for a number of affordable homes. It is owned by BT. . The location next to existing affordable housing makes it a prime site for further development in this way. This of course depends on getting BT's cooperation which it has been suggested may not be forthcoming. [Note: According to the Fact File this site and site 5 below are rolled together whereas they are separate sites according to the Land Registry]

### **II Infill Site**

4.Land on the south side of Red Hills Road title number CU149475-opposite Heathcliffe. An infill site owned by a trio of ladies, one in Wales and two in Cheshire. Conceivably they are the heirs of Norman Rathbone who reportedly used to own it. It is also rumoured that planning permission has been sought in the past and refused, for reasons unknown. Surely a clear possibility for a block of affordable homes. Another mystery as to why SDLC did not include it in their original proposals. It is now designated as RN267.

### **III Greenfield Sites in less sensitive areas**

5. Land associated with Hill House title number CU 117609, part of R393M and an emerging option for SLDC. This is the small greenfield site beside the bridleway and behind the telephone exchange and the affordable housing on Briery Bank.. Owned by Mr and Mrs Thomas of Hill House. Ostensibly very promising. although there is sometimes a small pond at one end of a sloping site. Having checked with the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Indicator they report that "The land registered under the above title does not fall within a floodplain....Generally this means that the chance of flooding each years from rivers or the sea is 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000)or less". It is part of Important Open Space but as the local authority says "this part of the "open space already has several buildings on it and thus development would not compromise the integrity of the open space as a whole". Local knowledge suggests that the present owners might not favour development, but who knows what the response might be at some future date.

6. Land on the north side of Briery Bank title number CU127480. The proprietor according to the Land Registry land is Freda Mary Walker of Low Black Dyke. This greenfield site is land at the bottom of Briery Bank numbered R395M by SLDC and identified as an emerging option with potentially 13 dwellings. Development here would technically intrude on Important Open Space but as is noted in the Arnside Fact File "this (area) represents only a small part of the open space that feels almost separate to the main part and thus development would not compromise the integrity of the open space as a whole". It is also noted that there is "Some local support expressed for development on site."

The availability of this site may however be affected by the following covenant "The Purchaser with the intent and so as to bind (so far as practicable) the property into whosoever hands it comes ..... that she and her successors in title shall not construct or allow to be constructed on the land any building or structure whatsoever". How far such restrictive covenants are enforceable is open to question.

#### 7. Land next to Ashleigh Court and alongside Station Road

At the North end of R88., on a corner of important open space. Land owned by Burrows the Silverdale butcher who appears to have an arrangement with the builder Russell Armer. Earmarked by SLDC as an emerging option for 13 retirement flats.

#### 8. Land between Black Dyke Road and the railway line

Owned by Mr Harold Walker of Lower Black Dyke farm. Identified as an emerging option R693M by SLDC with a potential for 30 dwellings. According to information in the Fact File, this site is in a flood risk zone and as a result only part of the area could be built upon. In addition, they record "local support for development".

9. Land on the north side of Briery Bank title number CU156272 This greenfield site is owned by Crowther Homes Ltd who are residential property developers. Development would involve encroachment on a corner of the Important Open Space in the centre of the village, but would not be excessively damaging. The views from that field are limited and it would make possible the continuation of the affordable housing immediately next to this site on Briery Bank. Given the ownership no doubt its availability for development is not in question although the owners might not wish to see such development restricted to affordable housing.

10. Land lying to the west of Black Dyke Road title number CU253521. A greenfield site this is part of the large field bordered by the bridleway and the sports field and behind Saltcotes farm house. Presently inhabited by belted Galloway cattle, this land is owned by an American family based in Columbus, Indiana. Acquired no doubt as an investment, although it is part of a large swathe of Important Open Space in the centre of the village and substantial development would not be acceptable. On the other hand, some limited development, on the NNE corner of this field at the end of Ashleigh Road, would not significantly obstruct views or compromise the integrity of this Important Open Space.



**AONB PLANNING POLICIES (as supplied by Lucy Barron)****Statutory duty of local authorities**

AONBs and National Parks are recognised under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to be of equal landscape quality and are both afforded the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty as nationally designated landscapes.

In AONBs the local authorities, in our case Lancaster City Council, South Lakeland District Council and both County Councils, remain as the local planning authorities. They make policy and take decisions about planning matters across their areas and have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the AONB designation in their decision making. The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to *conserve and enhance* the natural beauty of the area.

**National Planning Policy**

National planning policy in relation to AONBs and National Parks appears principally in Planning Policy Statement 7 as set out below.

Extract from PPS7:

**Nationally designated areas**

21. Nationally designated areas comprising National Parks, the Broads, the New Forest Heritage Area and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas. The conservation of wildlife and the cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas. They are a specific purpose for National Parks, where they should also be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions. As well as reflecting these priorities, planning policies in LDDs and where appropriate, RSS, should also support suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of these designated areas and their communities, including the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs

22. Major developments should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances. This policy includes major development proposals that raise issues of national significance. Because of the serious impact that major developments may have on these areas of natural beauty, and taking account of the recreational opportunities that they provide, applications for all such developments should be subject to the most rigorous examination. Major development proposals should be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed. Consideration of such applications should therefore include an assessment of:

- (i) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- (ii) the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- (iii) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

23. Planning authorities should ensure that any planning permission granted for major developments in these designated areas should be carried out to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary.

**SLDC Core Strategy**

Policies CS5 and CS8.2 in particular of the SLDC adopted Core Strategy afford a high level of protection to the AONB landscape and its setting including landscape, biodiversity,

geodiversity and historic character, with the aim of safeguarding the AONB from inappropriate development.

The AONB Management Plan is acknowledged as an important consideration in the Core Strategy.

### **The AONB Management Plan**

The local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare a joint management plan containing management objectives relevant to the AONB purpose. In the 2009 - 2014 AONB management plan, which South Lakeland District Council has prepared jointly with Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council and Cumbria County Council, and subsequently adopted, the vision for the built environment (residential and other development) within the AONB is as follows:

The villages, hamlets and farmsteads of the AONB are rural in scale and retain their distinctive characteristics and historic patterns. Infrastructure impacts, from necessary signs, street-lighting and overhead wires, are minimised. Affordable housing meets local needs; modern development and conversions of redundant buildings meet high design standards, are carbon-neutral and respect the local context, character and distinctiveness of the AONB.

Relevant management objectives relating to the built environment include:

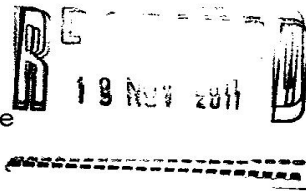
**BE1.1** Ensure local planning policies and decisions maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the area. Encourage the provision of appropriate advice about the character of settlements within the AONB.

**BE1.3** Promote the positive conservation, enhancement and provision of open spaces and “green infrastructure” between and within the settlements that maintain historic settlement patterns, provide links to the surrounding countryside and reduce the scale and intensity of development.

**BE2.1** Support infill and village edge development that avoid sites that if developed would have a detrimental impact on either the historic form or character of a village; its setting, visual amenity, tranquillity, wildlife interest and landscape character. Encourage the assessment of the impacts of development on the site, village and surroundings.



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 15 NOV 2011

Thank you for your letter of 12 October to the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP regarding the development of brownfield sites as alternatives to greenfield locations. I have been asked to reply and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to write. I can reassure you that the draft National Planning Policy Framework ensures appropriate protections for our countryside. We do need homes for young people and for growing families, and we need jobs in expanding businesses. But this must not, and will not, be at the expense of our natural and historic environment. The draft Framework makes clear, for example, that sites of the lowest environmental value, including so-called brownfield land, should be used as a priority.

During the weeks ahead we will consider all the suggestions that have been made as part of the consultation on the draft Framework. We will ensure that the policy the Government adopts will continue to protect our much loved countryside while also enabling local people to plan for the sensible and well-designed development that provides the homes and jobs on which the future prosperity of their community depends.

In relation to the proposal that compulsory purchase powers be strengthened in regard to brownfield sites, we consider that local authorities have sufficiently strong powers to acquire land for their purposes, whether it is brownfield or not.

More generally, the Government is carrying out other measures to encourage the remediation of brownfield land. This includes the simplification of the contaminated land regime. This is intended to simplify confusing, overly long statutory guidance which has caused substantial regulatory uncertainty since it was introduced in 2000. The aim is to reduce unnecessary burdens on developers and improve value for taxpayers' money spent on contaminated land. Further details on this will be announced by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs.

**BOB NEILL MP**