

WOLDS ACTION GROUP
Hearing Statement Matter 1
Procedure and over arching matters

Concerns of local people regarding the DDDC consultation process (gathered at a recent public meeting)and briefly summarised as follows:

In general people have lost faith in the consultation process; it is not meaningful because none of the consistent objections to the site have been taken on board.

- People felt fobbed off re the concept of a new village. DDDC claimed there was no one willing to sell enough land to make it viable; they said they had insufficient resource to adequately investigate.
- the National park: when this issue was raised at public meetings, DDDC officers consistently tried to turn the argument, claiming that people wanted the Peak Park to build more houses to alleviate the pressure in other areas; this was never the case. people were arguing that the housing allocation should be reduced, taking into account the amount of land that the Peak Park takes up.
- In general, people were unhappy about the way council meetings were run. If questions weren't answered by officers or councillors, there was no opportunity for clarification. In formal meetings, the three minute rule applied but individuals had no opportunity to interact with officers if they felt they had been ignored or their points dismissed. On several occasions people felt they had experienced unprofessional behaviour and attitudes from councillors. E.g. Some councillors suggested looking again at previously rejected sites and agreed they would be prepared to put the time in to do so, but one Ashbourne member said he couldn't be bothered because he received too many emails and it would be too much work!
- When the LPAC voted to remove Wolds from the LP Cllr Rose said, "Do you know what you're voting for?" He said removal of the site would be "Like firing an Exocet missile into the side of the Local Plan" ; people felt that this was an undemocratic, unprofessional, biased and leading attitude to the site. At the next full council meeting, the site was rail- roaded back into the plan. Another site voted off the plan was not discussed. people thought there must be a party whip in control.
- People's three minute speeches were not minuted, whereas written emails etc by developers are recorded. There is no parity of esteem given to spoken objections. Matlock Wags' Statement was not published on the DDDC web site, nor was it passed on to key people on the planning Committee. In fact , DDDC refused to "give it any publicity" despite frequent requests.
- people were repeatedly told that inclusion of the wolds as a site for 430 houses was " a numbers game" and that inclusion on the LP " was not a planning application." This sort of comment seemed dubious to people.
- prior to the 8th December when the meeting to ratify the draft plan took place, Paul Wilson invoked clause (>>>>) to suspend public speaking about anything but modifications to the plan. After an outcry by some councillors and the story getting into the local paper, this was retracted but it was too late by then; representors were effectively "gagged"
- The on line survey caused people considerable difficulty; those who aren't IT smart or not on line had an impossible task. people were told they needed to quote specific policies and the format of the survey demanded consulting several documents at once. DDDC were charging £40 for a hard copy of the LP so those unable to switch from document to document on a PC or similar had little chance. Cllr Catt told everyone at a public meeting that rep's could be submitted in traditional letter form; however, those who did so were told by letter that they had to fill out the survey, (DDDC did provide paper copies for people) (Letter eg enc)
- people are very concerned about infrastructure, especially doctors, schools and roads. we have been told by officers " there won't be any more doctors" and indeed only recently, (12 th April) someone spotted this message on the door of lime grove medical centre: " we now have great difficulty providing enough doctor's appointments to meet ever increasing demand "

- flooding on the site is a well known fact but dismissed by officers despite incontrovertible evidence from people with first hand experience. There are unmapped springs all over the site - they are not confined to the northern slopes. Throughout the consultation process the Environment agency was the authority referred to when in fact it should have been the Local lead flood team. Obviously the Environment agency didn't raise concerns because they deal with river and coastal flooding.

The above are opinions generally held by local people who have no faith in the LP consultation process and fear they will be overwhelmed by large numbers of houses in an unsuitable location and unacceptable pressure on already overstretched public services.