

29 November 2018

Dear Sirs,

Position statement in regard to Local Plan Policy SD77: Castelmer Fruit Farm, Kingston near Lewes, East Sussex

We are writing with our comments on the local plan in regard to Castelmer Fruit Farm housing allocation.

Having read the comments submitted by Kingston Parish Council (KPC) in their position statement, and in particular noting the failure of the SDNPA to engage adequately and effectively in consultation with the village in relation to the draft plan and in particular on the Castelmer Fruit Farm site, we are writing in support of their views expressed.

Having lived in the village for more than 40 years and seen our very small village grow and mature in line with the relative needs of the local community we find it hard to believe that SDNPA would consider giving permission for the building of 10-12 homes on this small site on the outskirts of Kingston village where there is almost no public transport, significant infrastructure or through road access to support such a large development.

Although we can see that the site itself might benefit from a small development of perhaps 2-3 houses, when we moved into Orchard House, (adjacent to Castelmer) in 1999, the local firm of builders, Philcox told us that Lewes District Planners made it clear to them that planning for the Castelmer site was only suitable for a maximum of one more dwelling. Planners raised their concerns about the 'unsuitable access' arrangements onto Ashcombe Lane for additional housing and the potential spoiling of the landscape by over-building in this area of the village. Indeed in the same year we had to submit a formal planning application just to erect a shed in our back garden! Furthermore Lewes District Planners, as far back as July 1981 rejected outlining planning for the erection of one additional detached dwelling on the Castelmer site.

It is interesting to note that SDNPA Local Plan 4.4 it states:

"Four alternative sites were identified in the SHLAA in Kingston. Three of these were unsuitable in landscape terms as they have high landscape sensitivity. A further site at Wellgreen Lane, while having medium landscape sensitivity, was discounted due to the response from feedback from the Parish Council... in 2016".

At that time the Wellgreen Lane site was dismissed and the Castelmer Site was not even considered. Until now the Kingston Parish Council and villagers have not had the opportunity to be consulted on either site in terms of their relative merits. Indeed Castelmer was only included in SDNPA's Local Plan at the last minute before the draft local plan was published, and did not

provide any opportunity for villagers to be consulted on their views about this planned housing development. When there are clearly other more viable sites such as Wellgreen Lane already identified in the village it seems to make little sense to press ahead with proposed planning which will have a significant impact not just on those who live adjacent to the proposed housing development site, but also will spoil the unique character of the site by the removal of beautiful, mature trees and increase the likelihood of a serious accident at the access lane to Castelemer by increasing the potential traffic flow significantly. Furthermore, at the entrance to the lane there is a large electric sub-station, refurbished in the last few years, which limits the width of the junction on to Ashcombe Lane. It is not possible for two cars to pass by each other at the entrance. It has always been a very hazardous part of the road. Motorists frequently exceed the speed limit driving down the hill on a blind bend. In my conversation with Lucy Howard from SDNPA in July 12th 2017 expressing my concerns about pressing ahead with planning permission for the Castelmer site when, at that time, neither a traffic, nor detailed site survey had been conducted her response was that "...there are no issues with the site that cannot be resolved at the planning stage..."

We feel that the views of Kingston residents have not been properly considered and that SDNPA have continued to press ahead with the proposed planning permission despite not having any viable reason for doing so.

Please can you ensure the comments below are submitted to the inspector assessing the plan.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew and Wendy Forbes