

Presentation by Phil Harding (Saltford Environment Group) to the BaNES Council Development Control Committee meeting, Wednesday, 8th May 2013

Saltford Environment Group and the Saltford Green Belt Campaign have joined together to form a Rule 6 party for the Inquiry. Our application for Rule 6 status has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate and we are currently preparing our evidence for the Inquiry.

Our role at the Inquiry will be to prove that:

1. the development does not contribute to sustainable development, and that, despite the claims from the developer, there are no special circumstances to permit this development on undeveloped Green Belt agricultural land, and
2. there is a strong feeling in Saltford's community that it would be unjust for this parcel of land to be developed by a developer taking advantage of delays in the agreement of the Core Strategy.

To expand on that last point, we feel that it is for our elected representatives i.e. BaNES – you here today – in full consultation with the community through a place-making plan to determine which undeveloped land identified in the Core Strategy should be developed and how it should be developed. That role is for BaNES, not a developer trying to force through a planning application before the Core Strategy (that is only months away from agreement) is in place.

Sustainable development requires a long-term approach, not a short term “dash for cash” to get round planning procedures.

415 objections were submitted by 500 individuals and organisations to the planning application by Crest Nicholson. Nearly 1,000 local residents have signed a petition against development. 156 residents attended a public meeting in January and voted against the development. And, in 2009 before this development was known about, 93% of households in Saltford responding to the Parish Plan Questionnaire said they wanted Saltford's Green Belt protected, not built upon. It is all these people that we shall represent at the Inquiry.

Our evidence to the Inquiry will show that the proposed development:

1. is contrary to the expressed views and wishes of the local community;
2. is inconsistent with Government policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies supporting sustainable development; and
3. would damage the village character, rural setting and environment of Saltford whilst creating many local problems.

Saltford Environment Group and the Saltford Green Belt Campaign urge you to decide where housing should be built, not a developer, and reject this opportunistic planning application in accordance with the advice from your planning case officer. Thank you.