

I am writing in response to the MATTERDALE PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION.

Firstly I would like to emphasise that I originally responded fully to the first consultation (June 2014) and it is the case that the response from me remains substantively the same. This is because the original plan does not appear to have been amended at all in response to my genuine concerns.

Secondly I feel I must raise my strong objection to the language that has been used in the latest documentation to be produced in relation to this parish plan. In particular the following statements.

'It is a rule of thumb, generally acknowledged, that in planning matters it is often those who disagree with plans or decisions that are the most vocal. This has given rise to the term NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard). Whereas those who support are often the silent majority. Nevertheless to achieve the response level among the general public who support the NDP is considered a notable result and to do so with only two comments that are negative in a National Park setting is even more remarkable. Legislative Basis' and 'Consultation with Electors in the Parish

There were only seven written responses from electors in the parish to the pre-submission version of the plan. Of these 5 were supportive of the proposal citing the need to ensure that development in the parish should ensure the sustainability of the community'

It is simply untrue and unnecessary to suggest that to disagree with a parish plan that is inconsistent with the local strategic plan and is not agreed with makes this the case. In fact a more balanced position could have rightly have posed that those who have the most to gain from a particular planning approach are the most vocal.

Given that the 'dissenters' names and responses have been made easily available whilst the 'supporters' details have not, it could be viewed that this process is seeking to intimidate and embarrass those who wish to preserve and support the wider intention of the national park authority and its fundamental purposes which in this case include the protection of the open countryside.

Describing people who after careful consideration of the facts offer reasonable alternative positions as NIMBYs is unhelpful at best and bullying at worst. I am disappointed that this should be acceptable in such a public document.

Whilst I recognise that your role is to assess the compatibility of the Matterdale plan with the Lake District plan and as such my opening comments may have limited relevance to that consideration, I would be grateful if you consider those comments as an indication of my concern about how this process has been handled.

Thirdly - I am sorry for the length of this response (and its part repetition). I hope that what it lacks in brevity it makes up for in clarity - I am afraid that I am uncertain that this is the case however!

My response to remaining substance of the consultation document is as follows.

'17. Having a dispersed development pattern has put Matterdale unfairly at odds with recent models of spatial planning and has resulted in it falling to the lowest level of the settlement hierarchy as 'open countryside'. Matterdale (which is currently not considered a settlement at all - unless a Cluster Community is defined) falls in the lowest category within the strategic settlement hierarchy and new building is only considered acceptable in limited circumstances.'

It is manipulative to try to emphasise that by describing Matterdale as 'open countryside' that this puts Matterdale unfairly at odds etc'

It could reasonably be stated that this approach to planning has offered good protection to Matterdale in line with the aims of National Park and that there is sufficient opportunity within current planning constraints for development. In fact Matterdale has seen a number of new homes built over the past two years thus evidencing the effectiveness of current policy implementation.

21. The intention to use population size as the main indicator for classifying Matterdale as a 6th development when that population is not in a cluster community is not reasonable or logical. It also fundamentally conflicts with LDNPA intentions.

22. I am supportive of affordable housing. The Matterdale plan seems to suggest that it too is supportive but makes no specific recommendation in this regard. Given the level of specificity elsewhere this is inconsistent. It indicates that there is no genuine intentionality around supporting the development of affordable housing.

Dockray would be an appropriate location for affordable development.

26. List A. This list is not appropriate - I repeat the comments that I originally submitted in June. No, list A is not appropriate. Specifically -

1. Reinstatement of former dwelling including ruins.

Ruins are such that any development would require what is effectively a new build and this should be clearly stated bringing about as it should coat tailing obligations.

There should be no development of ruins. There is a huge risk of very settled isolated housing being disturbed by such developed. It is further a risk that any site that could once have been accommodation will be brought into the planning realm.

If this provision were to be accepted then the financial gain to be made from such developments should be mitigated by requiring that any 'planning gain' be reinvested in the local community as grant toward affordable housing development which is thus far inadequately addressed.

2. Reinstatement of former dwellings.

This is broadly the same provision as above. A former dwelling may, of course, be used as an agricultural or commercial or business space but it is also true that former dwelling could be used to include a ruin. This needs to be specifically excluded in order that new build in the open countryside is specifically excluded.

Given that Matterdale is a distinct and small area it would be helpful to designate in this document

those sites that would be viewed as 'former dwellings' that could be considered as development sites. It should also be the case that reinstatement of former dwellings should not happen unless they are within the area of Watermillock or possibly Dockray but not in the open countryside or hamlets. Reinstatement should be considered as new build.

### 3. Conversion of traditional agricultural buildings.

Our concern is that where traditional building may be converted into dwellings there will follow a need for more agricultural buildings which will therefore no longer be in the traditional style. We have already seen the erection of a number of large modern barns in Matterdale and whilst this is consistent with supporting the local community to thrive it is unhelpful to create a demand for more of these structures given that over time they will damage the spectacular landscape of the lake district.

Reuse of redundant traditional agricultural buildings - This should not happen unless they are within the area of Watermillock or possibly Dockray but not in the open countryside or hamlets.

#### List B

Should be amended to add

- Not in open countryside or
- And (if the proposals for Matterdale as a settlement is accepted) not within 500m of another occupied property. This will then protect the rural nature of existing properties.
- It offers no interference or detriment to existing business

MNP7 'In addition to the support given in CS02, development proposals in the open countryside, including new build...will be supported'

This contravenes the LDNPA policy and is unacceptable.

39 This emphasis on the weight of the parish council opinion over the LDNPA view is unhelpful. It places a significant burden on those within Matterdale to review and where necessary raise objection to planning permission request. The current system is fairer.

I would be grateful if you could also take into account, as relevant, any comments from the consultation submission June 2014, detailed below.

#### Need for a neighbourhood plan

There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan. This is not made clear in the document.

The national park plan is already an effective mechanism for protecting this national resource. The LDNPA planning policies – which are comprehensive – are able to deliver to the interest of this proposed neighbourhood area.

The production of a neighbourhood plan will inevitably promote and is in fact designed to promote local issues over the more strategic national issues. This is problematic.

In such a small community the particular risk is that the voices of the assertive few – who are likely to benefit most financially from planning changes – will outweigh the voices of the many – who are unlikely to engage in the planning processes.

#### Specific concerns

- The document states - Parish councils principle concern that the LDNPA policies which do not

allow for housing in the parish to increase.

This is not the case. The LDNPA strategic plan clearly identified the assessed need for growth in housing. There is no reason to think that the new strategic plan will not revise its assessment of development needs for Matterdale in its new plan – due 2025. As such there is no clear need for this neighbourhood plan to be developed.

- You have asked us for our views but it is not clear how these views will be taken into account. There needs to be clarity on how any adoption of a neighbourhood plan might be agreed and implemented.

It is also unclear how this neighbourhood plan has been prepared. Please could you let us know who was involved in preparing the document.

There should be clarity about who is on the working party and how they were selected – this needs to be clear – and any conflict of interest needs to be public with exclusion of those who have a clear personal interest in development – i.e. for their own gain – by influencing this plan to amend existing planning application refusals.

- Parish council would hope to permit development which will help halt decline and build a vibrant community. (Page 5 para 1.1)<sup>1</sup>

This relates to para 1.10 - the Parish councils principle concern that the LDNPA policies which do not allow for housing in the parish to increase.

It is the case however that housing for local need (agricultural specifically) has increased. The other housing need is for affordable housing.

In order for this plan to be appropriate it needs to more clearly state intentionality around affordability. There is no established and evidenced need for housing development for over 60s nor home workers.

The houses that do come onto the market – a steady supply is evidenced – but these do not sell quickly.

- Definition of local connection

The intentionality around local connection was always that a local connection was supposed to make it affordable for local people. The local connection definition is so easy to get around that the intention to make housing affordable for local people is not able to be achieved. It is easy to establish a local connection just by renting a house in the area. Anyone with an interest in planning gain (purchasing agricultural land and converting to residential) can do this. The lack of a significant difference between a property with a local occupancy restriction and one without is clear evidence that the restriction does not make housing affordable for local people.

To develop a thriving community the community needs some more diversity in housing and housing type and costs. There is an oversupply of expensive housing. Owner occupied housing is expensive in Matterdale. There is a clearly no shortage. There are a number of houses that have been for sale for some time. New build housing that is not affordable is highly likely to be bought by people whose intention is to run them as holiday homes or those wishing to retire to the area. This does not help develop a thriving community.

Therefore the affordable housing element needs to be strengthened so that developments have to evidence their affordability – either through their rent levels or through their design. All new housing in Matterdale should be affordable. Ideally it would be developed by a registered social landlord for

rent or shared ownership.

- Any building that does take place should take place in Watermillock – where there is a bus service. Dockray does not have public transport.

No building should take place in the open countryside. Or away from the current settlements (Dockray and Watermillock). The proposal to define the whole of Matterdale as a settlement is very odd and without rationale.

To build in the open countryside will irrevocably and permanently change the rural landscape and inevitably lead to the re classification of the open countryside as settlements.

- This neighbourhood plan should be seeking to address affordable housing.

Housing should only be developed as local needs housing. However it is a concern that the definition of local needs – the intention of which was to meet the needs and affordability concerns of local people has failed to secure this.

It is our view that the local connection needs to more strongly reflect the original intentions of local needs. It is specifically the case in Matterdale that - as the LDNPA – plan does not adequately address affordable housing development that it is incumbent on the local community to press for this in any local neighbourhood plan.

As such the local needs criteria should be amended to ensure that any development is for the purpose of delivering affordable housing.

- It is a particular concern that the only delivery of housing being promoted through this plan is for those who will be able to afford to develop housing and who are most likely to be relative newcomers to the area. This further excludes those with a family connection and will turn Matterdale into a wealthy ghetto.

In response to the specific questions outlined in the consultation document.

Question 1

The plan should be consistent with LDNPA plan ending in 2025.

Question 2

Policy CS22 is sufficient.

Housing to support enterprises – this is not consistent or compatible with the local plan and as such should not be included in this neighbourhood plan.

It clearly prioritises the development of housing for social enterprise rather than allowing the use or amendment of existing housing for the delivery of business.

As such this is a proposal to develop new housing not a proposal to support local business development and should not be included.

Question 3

The development of affordable housing. If this plan is serious about re invigorating the local area then this is essential.

Question 4

Cluster community

We emphatically do not think that all of Matterdale parish should be considered a cluster community. This is not simply a matter of opinion but of fact.

Watermillock, with its good and secure bus service, could be considered a cluster although Ulcat Row and the open countryside areas are emphatically not a cluster area. Given the lack of accessibility to rural service centres. This is an inherent part of the nature of the areas.

In fact much of the housing in the in the dale are isolated houses in the open countryside.

## Section six - Housing

### Comments

The narrative in this section is deliberately biased.

It is also clearly at odds with the intentions in the local plan with which it should be compatible.

Section 6.3 states

Re settlement areas

'it would be reasonable to suggest that Matterdale is a possible 6th (albeit a cluster not a centre).

Why would it be reasonable to suggest that the whole of Matterdale is a possible 6th 'cluster not a centre' given that it is clearly not even a cluster?

It might be possible to identify Watermillock as a cluster. It is not correct to identify the whole parish as a cluster as much of it is clearly open countryside.

It is difficult to further respond to the specific queries without clarity on:-

The evidence for the latent demand for housing – please provide this.

However in the absence of this evidence of latent demand our initial view is that the amount of housing proposed is too high. The assessment of housing need is already contained in the LDNPA plan and housing development has been permitted within the existing planning policies and rules.

### Question 5

In the light of the above the amount of housing proposed is too high – as it presupposes the existing of a cluster area rather than open countryside.

It is also much higher than that provided for in the LDNPA plan which expresses developments as a percentage and indicates a much lower number of developments being necessary.

### Question 6

An annual and total development figure is preferable. This should also prioritise

- affordable housing
- conversion of existing property to provide for the ageing needs of existing occupiers

Type of Housing – you do not ask a specific query about this however:-

This neighbourhood plan should propose that a site in Matterdale is identified for the development of affordable housing. Without this it is the case that Matterdale will fail to be a diverse community into the future.

6.6 – we agree that it should be simpler for older people to adapt housing to meet their care needs.

Delivery of Housing

### Question 7

No list A is not appropriate.

Specifically

1. Reinstatement of former dwelling including ruins.

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If this provision is accepted then the financial gain to be made from such developments should be mitigated by requiring that any 'planning gain' be reinvested in the local community as grant toward affordable housing development which is thus far inadequately addressed.

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Given that Matterdale is a distinct and small area it would be helpful to designate in this document those sites that would be viewed as 'former dwellings' that could be considered as development sites. It should also be the case that reinstatement of former dwellings should not happen unless they are within the area of Watermillock or possibly Dockray but not in the open countryside or hamlets.

Reinstatement should be considered as new build.

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Reuse of redundant traditional agricultural buildings - This should not happen unless they are within the area of Watermillock or possibly Dockray but not in the open countryside or hamlets.

### Question 8

#### List B

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### Question 9

Yes local needs housing may be permitted where it meets any of the criteria in list A and All of the criteria in list B

#### List A

Reinstatement of former dwellings

Reuse of traditional redundant agricultural building

List B – see above

### Question 10

We are not aware of a particular site but expect that one could be found in Watermillock. All the housing should be affordable and for rent. There would be no difficulty in finding a Housing Association willing to develop and manage the housing (Eden HA or Two Castles HA)

### Question 11

Coat tailing is appropriate and the affordable element should be delivered locally.

### Question 12

The question is unclear.

Question 13

There should be no exception – and as stated earlier it should also be clear that any rebuild or reinstatement that is effectively a new build should be included in this obligation.

Question 14 - 16

Yes

Question 17 – question 19

The existing LDNPA policies are sufficient and MNP5 is not required.

Question 20 – 21

No response

Question 22

New housing developments should not be favoured because they contain live work elements. However existing homes should be given favourable consideration if they need to be developed to provide for micro business and live work accommodation.

Question 23

It should be essential that new businesses that will attract traffic are concentrated in settlements although that could be within the parish but in Dockray or Watermillock .

Question 24 - 27

No response

Question 28

Section 9

No response

Question 29

No – the existing planning authorities are sufficient for pre application discussions.

Question 30

Applicants should feel welcome but not compelled to attend. Attendance should have no bearing on recommendations. It is clearly the case that many properties are not occupied by owners and this would place an unnecessary burden on applicants.

Question 31

No. The LDNPA should not give significant additional weight to parish council opinion as the necessary objectivity of planning decisions will be undermined. This would risk a few individuals who stand to gain financially from developments having an inappropriate level of influence on decisions in such a small community.

(End of original submission)

Finally - I never received any response to the queries raised in the consultation response above. I note with disappointment too that the detail about the settlement pattern of Matterdale is closely aligned to that described in a planning application that was made and lost on final appeal by an individual who owns a field with a ruin on it and who is not either a member of the parish council nor of the planning committee but is a developer by trade. As such it appears that there is undue influence in this parish plan. Clearly that is for me to raise with the parish council, awkward though that may be.

I honestly believe that this consultation process has been a sham, more concerned with evidencing compliance with process than drawing together and representing disparate views into a plan that is both aligned to the LDNPA plan and policies but promotes the unique nature, needs and aspirations

of Matterdale.

As such I think it proper that the process of taking views and responding to genuine queries is reviewed, up to and including the possibility of initiating a refreshed consultation process.

Thank you for taking the time to review this submission.