

Lake District Local Plan Review

Submission by the **Crosthwaite and Lyth Parish Council** relating to the Local Plan Review section 3 Housing

Local Occupancy Clauses.

As a Council we applaud the imposition of local occupancy clauses in all planning consents for new development in our Parish. It is right – and extremely difficult – to ensure as far as possible that houses are occupied by people with some local connection, and are not bought as second homes or holiday homes by people remote from the area. Houses which are unoccupied for much of the time damage the social cohesion of the community, and also, if they are available for purchase by 'offcomers', prices go up and local people are priced out of the market.

On the other hand one needs to ensure that the clauses are not so fiercely worded that they exclude the very people whom they are intended to benefit. The ultimate objective is to nurture a vibrant and compact community, lively and mutually supportive. One problem is the definition of 'local'. Our concern is that locals who would contribute to the well-being of the community are being excluded.

The practice of the Authority is to impose on developers a 'Planning Obligation by Agreement' which includes provisions relating to local occupancy. We will refer to such an agreement relating to a current development in our Parish dated 1st June 2017 and made between The Lake District National Park Authority (1) and Two Castles Housing Association Ltd (2) relating to land at Wood Yeat, Crosthwaite, Kendal, LA8 8HX (File Ref: LEG.2017.1220 (7/2016/5496)).

“Locality Defined”

We do not think it appropriate that the locality defined should be limited to the National Park. It seems to us wrong, for example, that the adjoining parish of Levens is excluded, when Kentmere and Longsleddale, which are much further away, are included. If we are looking for 'a Local Connection', then Levens is much more local than Kentmere. Similarly with Kendal: many people live in Crosthwaite and work in Kendal. But if they live and work in Kendal they are currently excluded from affordable housing in

Crosthwaite, even though young working people are precisely the people we want to recruit to our community.

If it is felt appropriate the included areas in the National Park could remain, but we would add to it some such provision as **'all areas within a radius of 10 miles from Crosthwaite Parish Church'**. That would include Levens and Milnthorpe. More significantly perhaps it would include Kendal, which is where many of the inhabitants of Crosthwaite and Lyth work.

That is our main proposal, and we attach great importance to it. There are other relatively minor points:

- The definition of “Housing Need” includes a provision relating to market value or market rent in the Locality Defined. We suggest that that should refer only to the Parish of Crosthwaite and Lyth. Certainly if Kendal is to be included in the Locality Defined, properties there are cheaper than in Crosthwaite so the clause becomes difficult to administer. It is Crosthwaite values that one is concerned with.
- The definition of “Person(s) with a Local Connection” is 'a person having a local connection and proven or identified need'. That is conclusively presumed if one of a series of criteria is satisfied. Of course a person can fall within the definition even if he/she falls outside the conclusive presumption criteria. However there seems to be no machinery to assess that. Certainly in our conversations with the Housing Association they consider themselves bound by the criteria, without any discretion. That needs clarification please.
- “Persons with a local connection' bullet point 7, requires people who have once lived in the Locality Defined to be returning within three years. We would delete '...within three years of the date of their departure'. We have no problem with people wanting to come back, even if they have been away 20 years – or more.

Robert Sykes

Chairman on behalf of the Crosthwaite and Lyth Parish Council