Silkstone Parish Council – Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

Silkstone Parish Council has been keen to produce a neighbourhood plan ever since the legislation was passed by parliament. However, the production of a neighbourhood plan was always dependant on Barnsley MBC having an approved local plan. The initial local plan was rejected by the Planning Inspector but a revised version has now been accepted and this allows all the borough's outstanding neighbourhood plans to be moved on.

Nationally, there have been issues with approved local and neighbourhood plans being ridden over roughshod by developers who have teams of solicitors looking for any legal loophole to push through plans which contradict the wishes of the community. There are examples of this highlighted in the National Association of Local Councils publication "Where Next For Neighbourhood Planning?" The main issues have been pre-maturity, land banks and life-cycle.

Issues

Prematurity occurs when a developer submits and application while the neighbourhood plan is being developed even though the application is clearly in contradiction to what is in the developing plan. However, there are examples of Planning Inspectors rejecting an application due to the advanced nature of the neighbourhood plan. The government requires all principal authorities to identify a five year land supply for housing development. Where this is not available, developers have used this to undermine an emerging neighbourhood plan. A neighbourhood plan is supposed to be in line with, and conform to a local plan. If the local plan is out of date, then this presents a major issue. Local plans are usually in a constant state of review and this can impact on any neighbourhood plans.

Future

Barnsley MBC now have a five year land bank so this should not be an issue for Silkstone Parish Council developing a neighbourhood plan. BMBC Local plan has recently been approved so there should not be a life cycle issue. The Local Plan does not include an allocation of land for development within the parish so there is no immediate threat to the size or character of the parish. However, there has been some inappropriate "tandem developments", infills or "knock down one and build three" developments approved after appeals. It is therefore important that Silkstone Parish Council now progress a neighbourhood plan using the publications and guidelines provided by NALC, YLCA and CPRE.

Suggestion

Initially, three councillors to devise a time dependant plan from start to finish, using the support available. The links below will provide a starting point and there are links within these documents for further information.

References:

https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/2755-where-next-for-neighbourhood-planning-2018/file

https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/planning-and-buildings/local-planning-and-development/our-new-local-plan/

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview

https://planninghelp.cpre.org.uk/improve-where-you-live/shape-your-local-area/neighbourhood-plans/some-general-principles-for-neighbourhood-plans