

DEPUTATION TWO – NEW FARNLEY VISION GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. I would like you to make your speech to Council, which should be not longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

MS M THOMPSON: Good afternoon. My name is Maggie Thompson and I am the Project Co-ordinator for the New Farnley Vision Group. This is Jenny Jamieson, who is the Treasurer of the Group; Christine Edmonds, who is the Secretary; and Steve Fletcher, who is the Chairperson.

The New Farnley Vision Group was set up in 2006 with the aim of encouraging an improvement in the environment of our village, and a number of initiatives have been achieved since then. The Village Design Statement is one of those and though it has been a long and difficult road at times involving changes in planning policy along the way, the resulting document was a big step forward, making New Farnley an even better place to live.

This is a community document which has been adopted by Leeds City Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. Its purpose is to make people more aware of what is important about the character of the village – its heritage, its buildings and its landscape – and how development can be sensitive to those qualities. It is all about having pride in the place where we live, so whether you are a developer or a resident, a planner or a traffic engineer, there is something in the Village Design Statement document for you. Our community cares about what happens in New Farnley and this document marks an important community achievement.

During mid June 2013 a number of residents living in New Farnley contacted various members from the New Farnley Vision Group, stating they had heard rumours of various proposed planning sites within the area, and some residents had also received letters from ward Councillors about the proposed sites quite near to where they lived.

Numerous residents asked various group members that in view of the recent adoption of the Village Design Statement, was the Vision Group aware of the proposed planning sites and had we any additional information?

The core group members from the Vision Group did not know anything about the proposals despite the recent adoption of the Village Design Statement, which is part of the Leeds Local Development Framework and is a statutory development plan for the area which will be used as material in considering planning applications in the area it covers.

As a result of the numerous concerns raised by residents regarding specifications and speculations and rumours around the village, the core group had an urgent meeting and it was agreed that a visit was needed down to Leonardo Buildings to gather as much information literature as possible. The group also received numerous comments from local residents as to why the Vision Group appeared to know nothing about the consultation process, especially as the Village

Design Statement had recently been approved and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Policy.

Maggie Thompson, the Project Co-ordinator, and a local resident, Ruth Robson, subsequently visited Leonardo Buildings and obtained as much information and literature and documents, including the slips of any residents wishing to make comments. All these documents photocopied and distributed around New Farnley in key areas - New Farnley Community Centre, St James's Church, GP surgeries, Lancasterian School Room etc - and we also had an information stall Lancasterian Village Fete for residents to be aware of what was happening.

The Vision Group also arranged for an urgent newsletter to be sent out with an article written by Peter Baker, the architect involved in the Village Design Statement, with information about the proposed site allocations, informing residents of the deadline. The newsletter was distributed to every single household in New Farnley.

The Vision Group were notified that residents who had received letters about the proposed sites had submitted a petition which was handed in to Leonardo Buildings.

Numerous residents attended Councillor David Blackburn's surgery held at the New Farnley Community Centre when further information was given to concerned residents. Councillor John Hardy had met with various residents to discuss these proposals. He also answered questions raised by residents who attended a Vision Group meeting.

The committee of the New Farnley Vision Group have worked really hard during the last seven years with local residents, various organisations around the village and local services within Leeds City Council to enable the successful completion of the Village Design Statement.

As a group we feel extremely disappointed in the manner in which the consultation process has been undertaken regarding the proposed site allocations. We understand that as part of the consultation process, 16 drop-in events were held across Leeds. Three of these...

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Maggie, you have had your five minutes; are you about to finish?

MS M THOMPSON: I think just to summarise, we are concerned as a group that during the six drop-ins, three held here, at no time was the group consulted or received any invitations about the proposed site allocations.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. I will to ask Councillor Harper to comment.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I will second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) I think that is unanimously.

Can I thank you for attending and for getting your message across, what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon. (*Applause*)