

Parish Council Liaison Group (PCLG)

KMR attended 2 meetings of the PCLG while RC was on holiday. Meetings are now taking place weekly in preparation for the Regulation 19 Consultation on the Local Plan. Below is summarised key information from both meetings.

The key message, strongly supported by some councillors that are retired Council Officers, is that effective response to the Local Plan Consultation will be on technical issues. There is a view that engagement and consultation with the public so far has been poor, we all remember how difficult it was to respond to the consultation on including St George's in the site plans in 2018. Additionally having taken the time to respond RCC largely ignored our objections and as we know inclusion of the St George's "Garden Village" will form part of the Local Plan that goes out to formal R19 consultation.

There will be an important role for a community response but we must make sure it properly ticks the process boxes otherwise RCC may choose to ignore it. It is possible that the Consultation will start 2nd week of March and continue for 8 weeks because of the Easter break but that is educated guesswork rather than specific knowledge. The public are asked to hold fire on responding to the consultation as soon as it comes out. Wait to get greater clarity on the process RCC will use and an understanding of what comments will have impact with the Local Plan Inspector. The focus is moving from influencing RCC to influencing the Inspector, it is questionable if RCC will take any notice of the consultation (actually having read the process it was not clear to anyone how they will review the consultation) so it may be that it is the Local Plan Inspector who will note the consultation responses.

The PCLG has devoted much time to considering how it can commission the expertise needed and how it can pay for the necessary advice. Advice has to be commissioned by an individual or a corporate body. Having researched all the possibilities and with the time scales involved and with legal and procedural restrictions on Parish Councils none of the usual options such as Limited Liability Company, Community Interest Company, Charity etc. are appropriate. It was agreed to have a lead Parish Council to lead the project with input and contributions from other participating Parishes, a Parish Council may do this. Edith Weston PC was asked to take the lead but it will have to be agreed at a PC meeting.

If Edith Weston takes the lead then specialists will be commissioned to provide guidance on how to respond to the Local Plan. This initial review and guidance is estimated to cost (commercially sensitive so not in public domain).

The CPRE Head of Land Use & Planning, Matt Thomson, gave a very informative presentation at the CPRE meeting on 25 February. He could be a very helpful person to advise us on the most effective responses to the Section 19 Local Plan consultation. These responses are technically difficult for a layman to compile. It would be helpful if individual members of CPRE Rutland write a letter to Ron Simpson, copy Malcolm Touchin (Chairman) asking if Matt Thompson's assistance can be secured. Also urge CPRE to act quickly to get it's own campaign underway as formal consultation on the Local Plan is imminent.

Action : Manton PC to agree a process for funding it's share of specialist advice to the group. Manton population is about 10% of the villages impacted heavily by SGB.

Note from the Parish Council Forum. The Parish Briefing Paper included a note from RCC that they will no longer be sending out hard copies of planning applications to Parish Councils unless they request a set at which point they will be charged an anticipated £50. We are asked to question at the next meeting how they can justify the charge and raise other concerns publicly about how difficult this will be for many parish councils to circulate information and comment on applications affecting their parishes.