

The long awaited decision has been made public by the planning inspector which grants permission albeit with many conditions.

It is a well documented and reasoned approach, however the decision plays down the harm to the residents. The delay in publishing the report has also given additional weight to the governments tilted balance as we do not have the protection of a neighbourhood plan.

Over the past two weeks there have been further investigations carried out on Abbey View by Gleasons which were obvious in order to respond to conditions set by the inspector in the document.

There has not been any positive feedback back from the Barrister to support any further legal challenge so we must accept the decision of the inspector.

There must be a measured approach on any Abbey View action plan, so the AVRA Committee will now need to be aware of the planning documents as they are produced to make comment, as necessary.

It's difficult to reconcile some of the reasoning in the document which is based on the inspector's judgment with much being controlled by conditions which we know from experience on Abbey View are not signed off by the relevant planning department and have in the past been waved through with self-certification by the developer.

We have an example of this where the landscaping on Abbey View was only recently completed with the addition of over 100 trees and areas of landscaping still not completed.

Many residents will feel let down by a planning process which relies on words and less on compliance and delivery with a lack of quality site control. The government talks of preserving the countryside but uses high-cost agricultural land for low-cost housing in order to give a social mix but not for local or essential workers.

There is sympathy for those residents who rose to the challenge and represented Abbey View at the inquiry and for the support from local people. We have lost out to a planning system which is unfit for purpose and used for political and financial gain by developers and planning authorities. The inspector had the authority to adjust the balance but failed to understand the faults in the system and has come down in the developers favour supporting the government policy to build regardless of ground classification which is justified only by its location rather than its amenity value. Many references to temporary intrusions are made sidelining the immediate impact to residents with the comment "it will all be right in the long term" with less importance given to the immediate impact and the effects of three years of construction traffic.

The long term effects of this development will require the residents of Abbey View to endure increased traffic, additional noise and pollution, the loss of an attractive outlook, together with an increased risk of flooding.

Farnham will be the big losers with the loss of 8 hectares of green space designated as an area of Strategic visual importance (ASVI) and the open countryside that supports plants, wildlife and pollinators.

Which whilst resulting in a reduction in the local natural green space will be compensated by a SANG allocation at Church Crookham in the adjoining county of Hampshire some 4 miles away (apparently producing a 10 % nett gain in bio diversity).

This is the same for the Abbey View residents who presently pay for the upkeep of the SANG allocation but do not get any benefits unless they travel to that site.

A meeting with the Planning Authority is coming up shortly and we hope to learn the long term local plan for Farnham as to date it has been unclear if there is a vision of Farnham's long term future with a coordinated county plan to deliver the infrastructure.

We all need to monitor the next phase carefully.