



Society founded in 1964

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Thanet Local Plan and Thanet's Neighbourhood Plans

I know you have received a letter from David Morrish the Chair of the Thanet District Branch of the CPRE enclosing a letter he had written to Kit Malthouse MP. I have written to him as well and also the Secretary of State and copies of my letters are enclosed.

The Broadstairs Society tries not to get involved in political wrangles: it prefers to work with local government and others to ensure as far as possible that our heritage is not only preserved and protected but also developed sensitively for the good of all. For these reasons it has worked enthusiastically with the Town Council over four years to develop the Broadstairs and St. Peter's Neighbourhood Plan so that local people can have a say on how the town is developed. That a portion of the Community Infrastructure levy could be utilised by the Town Council for the benefit of the local area was also a powerful argument to work with the Town Council. The Town Council chairs the meetings and I sit as Vice Chair; such is the trust that has developed.

However, the threat of an intervention by the Secretary of State and the general state of affairs in the District Council could mean all the hard work undertaken by the Society and other community groups represented on the Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee could be as nought.

Leaving aside the housing numbers issue (which is more than adequately covered in David Morrish' letter of 4th March) there is the question of the absence of the District Council working with its community; listening to its community and answering questions put to it by the community.

The Broadstairs and St. Peter's Neighbourhood Plan is but one example where despite knowing something well in advance nothing is done until the last minute which means more expense for the District Council and having to hold a local referendum separate from the local elections in May resulting in democratic legitimacy of the results being weakened by lower polling results.

Another example that I have only recently learned about is the Minister's desire to have Business Plans for High Streets – an eminently sensible idea. Ramsgate has been chosen for this exercise – again an eminently sensible idea. However, when asked why that town as against Margate or Broadstairs had been chosen the District Council have resolutely refused to explain their rationale. So much for community engagement in Thanet.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Lorenzo
Planning Secretary