

## **Tarleton Parish Council Masterplan Statement**

Following the issue of The Tarleton Masterplan this Council has had a number of requests and questions posed to it through different forums. We thought it maybe useful to spell out the background to our involvement in the process to date.

West Lancashire Borough Council are undertaking a review of their Local Plan (adopted in 2013) in order to establish the housing and employment needs for West Lancashire Borough, including the Northern Parishes, which could span over the next 30 years.

The process is that of the Borough Council and they alone make the decisions. The Parish Council can like individuals offer a view. We have no legal powers over planning decisions in the Parish. This has been a source of frustration in recent years, more of which later.

With regards to our involvement with The Lilford Estate Masterplan, with whom we are now collectively working with, we are happy here to provide some background to that involvement.

In recent years this Council has consistently objected to large housing planning applications in the Parish area e.g. The Alty development off Hesketh Lane and the Barratt development, Plox Brow. The basis of these objections were the infrastructure issues around the Village, principally highways but all other matters from drainage to heath and schooling.

Back to our frustrations so despite our assessments, the Parish Councils views were ignored and both developments were approved by the Borough Council.

Aside from the infrastructure issues another source of frustration was the development of sites that excluded the West Lancashire Borough targets for affordable housing (35%) and specialist housing e.g. elderly (20%). Being the local representatives, we are acutely aware of the local need. These targets were not delivered. We pressed at a meeting with Barratts prior to planning approval for more affordable housing in Plox Brow. This was not delivered and the Parish Council was again proved toothless and frustrated by the process.

In February 2018 the Council were approached by Acland Bracewell Surveyors Limited on behalf of The Lilford Estate who were producing a Masterplan as part of the West Lancashire Borough Council Local Plan process. No other land owners / developers have approached the Council, but like we have demonstrated in the past, we would have and would still be prepared to meet any should they wish to do so.

We assume these other land owner / developers are undertaking their plans privately, which of course is their right to do so.

At this meeting with Acland Bracewell the first version of the Masterplan was presented to the Council. At that and numerous subsequent meetings the Council was able to influence some of the content of the plan. We pushed the need for the infrastructure changes and discussed how funding arising from these potential developments could be sourced. We also championed the community benefits that could arise from proper master-planning. These have been significantly enhanced from discussion and we have been pleased at the response not just reflected in the revised masterplan but from discussions with local sports clubs and schools.

The Masterplan is a long-term vision. West Lancashire Borough Council as we say is the Planning Authority for the area. They work within National Planning Guidelines. We repeat we can only lobby a view and have NO powers over planning issues. The housing demands of a growing population are obvious. It is unrealistic to object to any / all further housing in the Village and surrounding areas. National quotas are set and delivered by the Borough through Local Plans. The Masterplan is a lobbying document for the Borough to consider when formulating their revised Local Plan later in the year. We are getting involved because we believe the current piecemeal building without regard to infrastructure, approved by the Borough Council has FAILED. We continue our discussions with The Lilford Estate who are aware that we would prefer any initial development to be away from the Village centre. We have had NO detailed discussions on individual sites. We are supporting the principle of master planning, sharing ideas and thoughts in an open forum, which is now what is taking place.

In May 2018 the principle that the Council should work on the Masterplan with The Lilford Estate was formally agreed. It was felt far better to work and try and influence than stay on the outside of any plans.

We welcomed the opportunity to be involved in this process and to comprehensively plan for the local area for the next plan period, being 30 years. The involvement of the Parish Council embraces localism and neighbourhood planning for the benefit of both current and future residents of Tarleton.

As Tarleton and the Northern Parishes has seen over many years, the smaller piecemeal developments from individual landowners/developers that have been built have not provided any local infrastructure improvements, or wider community benefits. By continuing to allocate such sites, without proper master-planning, will only exacerbate the existing needs of the local community, without any benefit being derived.

The agricultural sector within West Lancashire, and in particular the northern parishes, is of great importance (10% of all jobs in West Lancashire, compared to fewer than 2% nationally). To support the growth of the agricultural sector and other key employment sectors within West Lancashire, we agree that the Masterplan is

fundamental to identifying potential sites in the northern parts of the Borough, where such growth can be supported by the necessary homes and employment land.

We noted that an independent highways consultant has been appointed to review the highways impact of each site by The Lilford Estate. In addition, it is proposed that through the delivery of these sites, specific funds would be allocated towards the delivery of identified local infrastructure projects that would in turn, generate highway improvements. The Masterplan is an example of localism whereby developments cannot be built in isolation and the “bigger picture” is always maintained. Retention of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning monies to the area is key to this. It is seen as essential that these funds are directed into the local area. As an example, the delivery of The Green Lane Link taking traffic away from Tarleton Village could be delivered as part of these plans. Previously this has failed to happen through lack of funding.

Critically, the Council welcomes the wider community benefits that could be generated as a result of the sites being brought forward. The Parish Council fully understand that such benefits are only realistic by the involvement of a significant land owner controlling the sites that are released for development. We are sure that the Masterplan is the way to deliver some REAL community benefits:

- Improvements to the Football, Cricket and Rugby Club facilities on Carr Lane, securing land for sport and recreation for many years to come;
- Provision of tennis courts with prospective Lawn Tennis Association funding;
- The opportunity that facilities can be provided for many other sports;
- Development of Carr Heys Plantation as an amenity for the Parish;
- Development of the Linear Park along the River Douglas (from the both extremes of the West Lancashire Borough) – specifically that within the Tarleton Parish boundaries.

All the above have significant health and well-being benefits. Within the West Lancashire Sports Partnership there is the Tarleton Active Schools Alliance incorporating 11 schools. This group sees real benefits in the enhanced facilities above.

We concluded that we are prepared to explore this partnership with The Lilford Estate, alternatively we are currently outside of the process with NO influence. As the Lilford Estate are a long-term landowner and still retains significant land holdings in the area, we are comfortable that they can deliver, as long-term custodians of the area, policies and plans to deliver infrastructure projects such as the much-needed Green Lane link and other such causes through funds delivered from the development of the sites contained within the Masterplan, plans that include the delivery a mix of housing needs and excellent community benefits.

## Community Views:

All parties agreed that community views are an essential part of this process and both the Lilford Estate, through its appointed Agent's, Acland Bracewell Surveyors Limited and the Council would start to seek the views of the local community on the proposals. A structured approach saw 4000 leaflets issued around the Parish and this was followed by holding a public exhibition on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at the Pavilion, Carr Lane. At that exhibition response leaflets were issued. A dedicated website [www.consult-tarleton-materplan@absurveyors.co.uk](http://www.consult-tarleton-materplan@absurveyors.co.uk) has been set up to inform people of the plans. A link is available on the front page of the Parish Council website [www.tarleton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.tarleton-pc.gov.uk). There are links to respond with comments on the Masterplan from the dedicated website. All costs for this consultation have been met by The Lilford Estate.

All the master-planning information is available in detail on the website and a structured process to gather information is underway. This is not a formal process in law. That process will follow when West Lancashire Borough Council (the Planning Authority decision maker) publishes its Preferred Options Paper. A formal process of consultation will then follow. There were requests for a Public Meeting at the Council Meeting this month. We do not believe on reflection that this is the right time to do so as there is already a process open to all to have their say, something that can be restricted at public meetings. Perhaps a meeting could be considered after the Borough Council has made public its Preferred Options paper depending on what processes they put in place to gather views?

The local plan is proposed for a 30-year period. This is a unique and existing opportunity, in which the needs of the local community, being housing and employment can be delivered, and with the collaboration of The Lilford Estate and the Council. Tarleton can be sustainably master-planned, and importantly, benefits can be derived, which may not be achieved otherwise.

It is clear to the Council that the opportunity to engage in discussions regarding The Masterplan should take place. Not to do so would be a dereliction of responsibility. Equally the views of the wider community needed to be sought after the issues behind this planning process were explained. We are now in that process.

Planning law now is such that it is likely that significant development will happen in the Village in the next 30 years. The Council agreed that it would be much better to try and influence crucial decisions from the start rather than remain on the outside objecting in vain to every new proposal. The Council is open to listen to the community views and that is underway. Please have your say and we hope you now better understand the position and frustrations that this Council has with the current planning process.

**Jim Kay, Chairman on behalf of Tarleton Parish Council**