



11th December 2016

Carmel Edwards
Programme Officer NWL Local Plan
c/o North West Leicestershire District Council Offices
Whitwick Road
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 3FJ

Dear Carmel

Further to your invitation on behalf of the inspector and at the request of NWLDC we would like to confirm that a representative of the Whitwick Action Group will participate in the hearing scheduled for Monday 16th January, in support of Areas of Separation, under matter 8 Countryside and Open Space.

Since its formation, The Whitwick Action Group has engaged in the Local Plan process and supports the Policy S4 Countryside and Policy En5 Areas of Separation which were covered by Policy E20 Green Wedge.

The Whitwick Action Group comprises of a steering group of 15 people, and hundreds of ordinary members who support our submissions and activities and was formed in response to the threat of development on the Green Wedge in the proposed Core Strategy Consultation 2008. The group's first public meeting was held the Methodist Church Hall in Whitwick on 10th June 2009.

The group's agenda has not wavered since its formation, it has demonstrated on many occasions that it is the strong wish of the community to protect the individual identities of the ancient villages of Whitwick, Thringstone and Swannington from Coalville. This separation allows the villages to keep their identity, dynamics, cohesion and sense of community.

In March 2010 the Whitwick Action Group handed a petition containing over 2000 signatures which asked North West Leicestershire District Council to protect the Green Wedge areas in their entirety in their present natural state for future generations to enjoy.

Since its formation the group has engaged in the consultation process, initially handing over 1500 responses to the Core Strategy Consultation asking for the Green Wedge to be saved in its entirety. Members of the Steering Group have met with representatives of NWLDC, been in attendance at Council, Cabinet and Local Plan Advisory Committee meetings to put forward the community's desire to protect the Green Wedge.

Development of the Green Wedge would have an adverse effect on its strategic role as an area of separation. The Green Wedge is not a contrived green environment and it provides an irreplaceable green infrastructure and amenity that Local residents are able to enjoy and appreciate. Children currently have the opportunity to grow up understanding nature and appreciating the beauty and tranquillity of their countryside.

Leicestershire County Council's Green Space Study Report from December 2011 clearly indicated that this area is highly valued for its informal recreational facility. The community have easy walking access to the countryside from the villages and Coalville.

The Whitwick Action Group in March 2011 handed to NWLDC over 1300 objections to the Stephenson Green planning application. In February 2012 the Whitwick Action Group attended the public Inquiry as a Rule 6 party. The Whitwick Action Group's evidence was delivered by a planning consultant funded entirely by the local community who raised nearly £10K. The Inquiry lasted nearly four weeks and many WAG supporters attended every day in support of the community's objection. The group have since objected to further planning applications on the green wedge and there continues to be very strong opposition to plans to build on the Green Wedge from the local community.

The Whitwick Action Group greatly values these strategic and open areas, which comprise the Green Wedge, and believes that it should be saved and protected in its entirety by robust policies within the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely

The Members of the Whitwick Action Group
c/o 24 Silver Street, Whitwick, Leicestershire LE67 5ET