

UPDATE ON CURRENT PLANNING ISSUES

During the Quernmore Parish Council meeting of 11 May 26 residents expressed their frustration regarding several local planning issues and these were discussed at length. These concerns were focussed on the failed Enforcement Notice that had been served on Hampsey resulting from the significant expansion of the Long Lane site, but also on individual planning applications that residents believed had not been fairly adjudicated by the City Council.

The Parish Council committed to represent those views, and the strength of feeling, to the City Council. As a result, two councillors, Jan Alexander and Steve Morris, attended a meeting on 10 Jun 26 with Mark Cassidy (Chief Officer – Planning) and Mark Potts (Service Manager – Development).

Using the rejection of the solar panel application at Ty Nant as an example, the councillors expressed the strength of feeling among residents that local views were not being properly considered. The officers explained that decisions of this kind are made in line with national regulations and guidance, while accepting that judgements about the “harm” a development causes inevitably involve a degree of subjective assessment. They also acknowledged that the relevant national guidelines would benefit from review. While this is of limited comfort in the individual case the councillors raised, the officers indicated they are continuing to work to reach a compliant outcome.

Given this background of resident’s frustration, the discussion moved to the development of the Hampsey site and the failure of recent city council actions against the development. The officers shared the following details:

1. The Enforcement Notice (EN) that required Hampsey to remove the concrete hardstanding was quashed on appeal because the outline of the area to be removed included, incorrectly, the original hardstanding. The Inspector felt unable to amend the EN and therefore upheld the appeal.
2. A revised EN will be issued to Hampsey in the next few weeks. In addition to the concrete hardstanding, the EN will include the new fencing and the apparent change of use of the site.
3. Prior to the EN a Section 330 RFI (a formal request for information regarding ownership) was served on Hampsey but a response has not been received. This is an offence and the Council intend to prosecute.
4. At no time has Hampsey applied for a Lawful Development Certificate.

The Parish Council will continue to monitor the process, which is likely to be prolonged.