16 April 2019

Local Plan Team
Magdalen House
30 Trinity Road
Bootle L20 3NJ

Dear Sirs

Formby Neighbourhood Development Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the latest version of this Plan; the amount of effort put into it has clearly been considerable.

I understand the need for the detail and complexity, given that it will be a legal and political document when ‘made’. It does make it very difficult though for residents to grasp its implications. This is particularly noticeable in the interface between the wishes of the Parish Council, the developers and SMBC. The conflict between meeting targets, maintaining the nature of Formby, and profit will always exist.

Because it is a neighbourhood plan, a one page summary of what the Parish Council can and can’t do (in meeting its policies and objectives), may help.

A more important point from a resident’s point of view is the lack of an implementation plan. At the moment, it reads as a vision or wish list; plans have a management structure (e.g. which councillor leads on which objective), outline funding, timescales, identified partners etc.

The Parish Council on its own will not be able to deliver much substance. Towns which have been successful in re-inventing the high street have all first developed relationships with businesses, residents, local voluntary bodies, local and government agencies, external funding bodies. Joint ownership and joint resources are essential if Formby is to remain an attractive place for residents and visitors. The decline of the current high street is becoming more severe.
Perhaps the most useful contribution the Parish Council could make (with another one page addition to make the document into a ‘Plan’), is to concentrate on facilitating these relationships. The joint experience of partners is likely to give a more practical view of what could be done, and what types of business could be encouraged.

Continued close working relationships with the Parish Council will obviously be vital, for example of setting start-up business rates, negotiating with landlords, working with Sefton Council on e.g. car parking and funding.

I wish the NDP all success.

Yours faithfully