

Written Representation from Cllr Mark Warters, received 27/08/25

Agenda Item 8.

Murton Neighbourhood Plan.

It seems entirely appropriate at this stage to highlight a decade of work undertaken by Murton Parish Council and other members of the village in producing their Neighbourhood Plan and the good help provided by various members of the Strategic Planning team in assisting the Parish Council in negotiating the various legislative hurdles.

Many of these Neighbourhood Plans have been produced and approved in York and I have never thought the unpaid time and work put in by those producing them has ever been properly recognised.

The final timelines of this Neighbourhood Plan highlighted in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report are interesting showing when the plan came into legal force following the referendum.

It is therefore disappointing to relate that only a week after the referendum and the Murton Neighbourhood Plan attaining legal status that a very important part of this plan and indeed the recently adopted York Local Plan was rendered defunct following a PINs appeal decision allowing a BESS scheme to take place between Osbaldwick and Murton.

That decision has now fully opened the floodgates for every agricultural, Green Belt field between Osbaldwick and Murton to be industrialised with BESS schemes.

The area of land in question featured very prominently within the Local Plan and was further supported within the text of the Murton Neighbourhood Plan as a Green Belt area important to keep open for its landscape quality and to maintain separation between the two villages, an importance increased by the Local Plan allowing ST 7 Housing site to proceed.

So soon after the Local Plan has been adopted to see such a fundamental compromising of a supposedly protected Green Belt area is appalling but of course not as bad as seeing the unpaid, hard work of volunteers who produced the Murton Neighbourhood Plan reduced to nothing by that PINs decision.

What value is there to Neighbourhood Plans if one week after approval at referendum a very important policy element is disregarded?

My very real fear with Neighbourhood Plans, like the Village Design

Statements that preceded them is that they will be disregarded at will when policies are considered 'inconvenient' and the supposed legal status of Neighbourhood Plans could be swept away by any government, especially the current one if such plans are considered an impediment to development.

So I hope Executive recognises the years of work that has gone into the production of the Murton Neighbourhood Plan by volunteers and CYC staff but at the same time offers an apology to those involved for the very quick compromising of the plan that has left many involved asking 'what was the point of it all'.

Councillor Mark Warters.

27th August 2025