

STALBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

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Statement

Members of Stalbridge Town Council agree that the absence of a councillor to speak on the Council's behalf at the NDDC Planning Committee meeting on 27.02.18 is deeply regrettable. Though the agreed position of the Town Council had been submitted to the planning committee in writing, it was an omission that it was not also presented verbally at the above meeting.

The Minutes of the TC Meeting on March 7th, under item 1, Open Forum give the explanation for this.

The situation arose because of misunderstanding and lack of effective communication on our part, and not from any lack of interest, concern or acceptance of responsibility in relation to this important issue.

The job of the Town Council is to represent the interests of the whole community in Stalbridge (the number stands at 2,213 people based on the Electoral Roll.) In order to fulfil this role, on this occasion a 6 week consultation on the development sites took place. There was a 15.77% response of the electoral role number, and whilst the survey was open to all ages, there was a very small response from those aged under 18 years. How the remaining 84.23% regard development in Stalbridge was not clear, and this therefore puts the Council in a very difficult position. Through the consultation, at various Town Council meetings and in their free time, members have listened to views expressed by members of the public. Whilst at times this representation has been vociferous, the objections to any development have, by proportion, been from a minority in relation to the total electorate and are from, in most cases, those who live near the proposed development sites.

In conclusion the situation we find ourselves in today in relation to potential development of the Town is brought about by national planning policy, and land owners and land agents that are taking advantage of the shortfall in housing numbers.

Whilst this may be a regrettable situation it is not in the control of either the Town or the District Council ultimately, though both bodies have committed to working to the best solution within their remit.

Town Council Members will continue to serve the whole community to their best ability and have hope that in the future a more cohesive and positive approach may be achieved by the Council and the community working together.