**Gill/Norman**

The enclosed is interesting and quite current and I have highlighted some of the relevant items

From reading this and attending the meeting (with Terry) on Thursday evening at Brightwell cum Sotwell where all but 3 of the NP’s underway in the SODC area were represented the following were my observations

* The professional planner referred to LPA’s as being involved in a process where “Dark Arts” can be frequently seen
* Often a Planning Policy team and Development Management are not in tune
* John Cotton was present and addressed a level of polite criticism over the 5 year land supply issue – he claims it fairly and squarely in Didcot but could not answer my question as to why there has been no Authority Monitoring Report since 2012. It was pointed out to him that 4950 houses could be forced on SODC and he said that Wycomb are e also pressing for help with unmet need. A number of NP’s said they felt they were not getting consistent support quoting the loss of Gayle Wootton and Charlotte Colver – he said that SODC cannot pay as much as the likes of Savills. He said the officers were worried about special measures but he was not – this relating to the loss of appeals. He agreed to host a quarterly event forum for emerging NP’s
* The hosts started with 10 houses which has now risen to 60 spread across the NP area and including outlying settlements
* They had a village meeting where 147 people out 148 supported their proposals
* The planner kept saying that policies must not be too restrictive and ideally allow for reserve sites to keep pace with national change
* Benson asked for SODC support in fighting off impending applications/appeals and John Cotton made no commitment
* My impression is that many NP ‘s in small communities are quite smug and I feel that John Curtis is amongst them regarding Pyrton
* Sonning Common spoke of their success with they attribute to effective communication
* There was no positive outcome regarding the strength of NP’s in the absence of a Local Plan and March 2018 is the date quoted for the latter to be adopted – no indication of next steps was given by John Cotton
* John Cotton emphasised that SODC are reliant on the contribution of NP’s and their policies in the Development Plan with NP policies giving equivalent weight. We must be wary of being warned off using our required policies – we have to state them with regard to housing supply as the Local Plan is out of date. **SODC accept clearly says that the NP is about specific local policy and needs that fact but will still try and steer us into their traditional way of thinking whereas John Cotton**