

From:
To: [Site Allocations Plan](#)
Cc: [Nagle, Cllr David](#); [Bruce, Cllr Karen](#)
Subject: PDE01540_Site HG2-173
Date: 14 November 2015 22:14:27

Dear Leeds City Council,

Ref: Site HG2-173

I do not support the proposed allocation of the Haighside site, reference HG2-173, and I believe that its inclusion in the Site Allocations Plan renders the plan unsound.

On a general note, I believe that the value of green belt areas should not be underestimated in terms of 'quality of life' rather than commercial value and that no green belt sites should be built on anywhere in the Leeds area while there are brown field sites that could be developed instead.

Specific to Rothwell and site HG2-173, the green belt is valued by residents of all of the surrounding housing estates - including the Castle Lodge estate, the Haigh Side estate and the Wood Lane estate, both in terms of a local amenity and also the ease of access to the wider footpath network. I also have real concerns about the environmental impact of housing so close to Haigh Side Wood (off Low Shops Lane) and the bats and other wildlife that live within it.

I rather fear that the building of a housing development on the site HG2-173 will become the first step towards closing the gap between Rothwell and Robin Hood, thereby linking Wakefield and Leeds with almost continuous buildings. My concern is based on historical observation because, in recent years, the green belt to the north of the area has been almost completely destroyed. First there was the construction of the A1-M1 link road (now the M1) and that was then followed by the Leeds Valley Park, leaving the proposed park & ride site near Stourton roundabout as the only remaining field between Rothwell and Leeds.

A significant part of the proposed site is crossed by electricity power lines with pylons. As well as this there are water courses running through the site which would provide ecological constraints to any development. Both of these issues will have a significant effect on the number of dwellings that may be delivered and very few people wish to live under, or in close proximity to, power lines due to the possibility of an increased risk of cancer and other health problems.

A development of 578 houses would mean hugely increased levels of traffic and yet the Wood Lane/ Wakefield Road junction (known locally as the 'Jawbones' junction) and the Stourton roundabout both present serious bottlenecks at "rush-hour" times especially during school terms. For example, the bus that currently leaves Haigh Side Drive at approximately 07.30 typically takes 10-15 minutes to travel the 0.6 miles to the Wood Lane/Wakefield Road junction and another 15-20 minutes for the next mile to Stourton Roundabout, with an overall journey time to Leeds City Centre of 40-50 minutes. However, the times are very variable and it is not unknown to experience journey times of more than 1.5 hours. The same bottlenecks apply on the way home too.

During the morning rush-hour in school term times, the majority of buses are full to standing by the time they reach the Castle Lodge estate and so there is unlikely to be any room for passengers from the proposed new estate unless the bus company (currently Arriva) provides extra services. That in itself will increase the traffic problems but the alternative - people

resorting to travelling in their cars at 1-2 people per vehicle when they would otherwise be willing to use public transport - would be much worse.

It has repeatedly been stated that the introduction of the proposed NGT trolleybus system (formerly the proposed Leeds Supertram) and its park & ride car park at Stourton will improve the situation but, whilst it might benefit people who travel into Leeds from Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield etc., the need for those people to access the park & ride car park instead of continuing to/from Leeds on the M621 will surely cause even longer delays for people travelling from/to Rothwell.

The alternative of cycling to/from Leeds is, unfortunately, out of the question for most people because there are no routes between Rothwell and Leeds that are sufficiently safe for inexperienced cyclists. All roads lead to either the A61 and Stourton Roundabout, or the A639 and the roundabouts of M1 junction 44, the only other alternative being a muddy bridleway that leads from Wakefield Road to a bridge over the M621 and joins a tarmac path to the Middleton Ring Road.

The local primary schools are already full and local people already have to wait to see a doctor. For a development of this size, a new primary school and a new doctor's surgery would have to be planned for, with part of the land being required to provide them.

Given sufficient expenditure, some of the infrastructure and facilities problems listed above could, no doubt, be solved but surely only at the loss of even more of the green belt land.

If it does become absolutely necessary to build on green belt land, Leeds City Council should allocate land where development will best deliver the housing and associated infrastructure we need in a way that has minimal environmental impact whilst delivering benefits for the existing community. I understand that the landowner of Hope Farm, Robin Hood, has submitted his land as an alternative to the Haighside site and I would urge the Council to consider this site as a more appropriate and suitable option to deliver growth in this part of Leeds. As well as being able to deliver an appropriate number of dwellings, the Hope Farm site would, I am told, also be able to deliver a school for the benefit of the whole local community.

In conclusion, I urge the Council to remove the Haighside site from the Sites Allocation Plan and to include the proposed Hope Farm site as a more viable alternative. However, even that site should not be used until there are no more brown field sites suitable for development anywhere in the Leeds area.

Yours faithfully,

Mr M I Plumb

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