

From:
To: [Site Allocations Plan](#)
Subject: PDE01861_Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43
Date: 13 November 2015 10:47:42

Dear Sirs,

Re: Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43

I set out below my comments as required to be submitted before 16 November 2015.

Please acknowledge safe receipt.

I look forward to your written response to the questions I have asked.

There was no adequate consultation by LCC with the local community before it decided to allow housing development of sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43. I understand that such consultation should have taken place in June or July this year.

I have lived in the Cragg Wood conservation area for many years. I do remember filling in a questionnaire about 2 or 3 years ago about the possibility of considering allowing development of land around Ghyll Beck and Knott Lane and in parts of Yeadon and Guiseley, but I heard nothing before or after that until I saw email from other local residents this autumn.

Although LCC's decisions have been taken without full consultation and are therefore void, the grounds of my objection to the construction of domestic dwellings on green belt land in Rawdon and Horsforth adjacent to the A65 trunk road are:

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A special landscape area will be forever lost

Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 are on just about the only green belt area affording country views across the Aire Valley countryside from the A65 and along the A65 corridor between Menston and Leeds City Centre.

To infill this beautiful countryside with housing will destroy the open valley views and the rural character of Rawdon and Horsforth not only to the detriment of the residents of these villages, but more particularly to the detriment of the many thousands of commuters who daily take in these views on their journeys to and from Leeds City centre.

No longer being able to watch the early morning mists and see the wild deer roam free is a serious and harmful visual impact of the proposed development.

LCC was right to designate these sites as Special Landscape Areas – and is wrong to now seek to change that.

I wish to know, and request disclosure of documents relating to, the process by which LCC decided to change and downgrade the designation of this land, because there has been no comprehensive greenbelt review as is required under Core Strategy and no proper consultation with those who live here.

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The Rawdon Cragg Wood conservation area will be lost because the setting and views over and from this conservation area would be seriously harmed by high density housing built close to

and in places right up to its boundaries on sites HG3-2, HG3-3 and HG2-12.

The 3 dimensional layout of the whole area is very significant.

It is not immediately apparent from a 2 dimensional plan or map that the Aire Valley at this point is steep sided, and that the Cragg Wood conservation area and its supporting and surrounding greenbelt is visible from many square miles to its east (Rodley), west (Apperley Bridge) and south (Calverley).

Woodlands Drive is a narrow (and in places single track) private road owned and maintained by the residents there. It is already suffering from "rat run" traffic, and by constructing the housing as proposed it is likely that this traffic will substantially increase because the most direct route from all of those sites to the new Apperley Bridge Railway Station, and a shortcut to Bradford, is along Woodlands Drive.

Given that it seems a decision has been taken not to construct a new railway station at Rodley I wish to know what considerations have been given to the effect of increased traffic through the centre of the Cragg Wood Conservation area, and how it is proposed to prevent that traffic harming the conservation area.

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The Strategic Green Infrastructure of the Aire Valley will be forever lost

The Leeds Country Way and a labyrinth of other footpaths and walks lattice their way across, around and alongside the sites HG2-12, HG3-2 and HG3-3. These ancient footpaths are key recreational routes for walkers, cyclists and horses as well as deer, foxes and other wild animals.

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It is of fundamental importance to the residents of neighbouring suburbs that they can take country air and exercise close to and within walking distance of their own homes and without having to drive into the moors and dales many miles to the west.

Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 are part of the vital greenbelt corridor separating Leeds from Bradford. The Leeds/Bradford boundary lies within half a mile or so to the west of the Cragg Wood conservation area.

Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 are within or adjacent to the green corridor and walking access routes to the canal and riverside walks stretching from Apperley Bridge to the centre of Leeds.

Walking beside a housing estate is not the same as walking beside greenbelt.

The Strategic Green Infrastructure of Aire Valley will be forever lost restricting enjoyment of these areas for walking, cycling, horse-riding and harming nature and ecology. The Leeds

Country Way runs through HG2-12 and alongside HG3-2 and HG3-3, a key regional recreational route. All sites are part of LCC's own designated Strategic Green Infrastructure Area.

The amenity value of walks along the river and canal banks between Rodley and Apperley Bridge is very high indeed. I am so convinced of this that I feel that anyone making these planning decisions is duty bound to take these walks him or herself in all 4 seasons so that the impact of their planning decisions can be judged in the context of the environment they will affect.

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Wildlife habitats will be lost

I am told, but not by LCC, that [HG2-12](#), [HG3-3](#) and [HG3-4](#) are UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, hosting wild deer, bats, fieldfare, lapwing, curlew, sparrow hawk, tawny owl. Ancient Ghyll Beck runs next to [HG3-4](#) Layton Lane fields and through [HG3-3](#) and [HG2-41](#). All sites contain protected mature trees and woodland. [HG3-3](#) has a native bluebell wood. [HG3-2](#) is adjacent to UK BAP Priority Habitat pond with palmate newts, also found in [HG2-12](#).

I know from my own observations over many years that there are many deer and other animals that roam freely over all the sites now proposed for development. I do not know whether they and other wild life will be able to survive during and after heavily concentrated construction work. I am not an expert, but it seems to me that these animals need an environment exactly as it is now, that is, a combination of woodland and open ground.

I wish to see documents showing what consultations LCC has made with expert wildlife bodies and individuals before and during making its decisions on Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43, and with what results.

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The transport infrastructure cannot cope

The development of the Clariol site at Rodley was, I believe, allowed on appeal despite objections from LCC that the transport infrastructure could not cope with the extra demands placed upon it.

LCC were right in saying that the transport infrastructure could not cope.

The roundabouts on the ring road at Horsforth and Rodley have undergone substantial work this summer and autumn in an attempt to alleviate the massive blockages that occur at these locations.

Nothing has changed. In fact in my experience it takes longer than ever to drive along the A65 from Rawdon to Kirkstall.

What research has LCC carried out to find out what the effect of development of sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 will have on traffic flow, and with what result?

I know that the developer of the site at Rodley has paid for a bus service from outside that site and close to the redundant Rodley Railway Station to Horsforth Railway Station.

What research has LCC carried out to establish the extent to which that service is actually used, and whether it does alleviate the logjam at the Rodley and Horsforth roundabouts?

This would inform whether the same service should apply at sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 and/or whether the railway station at Rodley should be re-opened.

My own observations are that I have never seen any passengers at any of the bus stops, or on the buses as they drive by.

There are only 3 places at which traffic going to and from the Leeds and Bradford conurbations can cross the River Aire to the west of Kirkstall.

These are at Kirkstall Lights where the road layout does seem to keep traffic flowing reasonably well, at Rodley where the traffic jams are phenomenal at both the Horsforth and Rodley roundabouts, and at Apperley Bridge where the housing developments currently taking place there will superimpose their own impact.

Of these three the Rodley river crossing is the most problematic.

LCC must conduct and provide research on this before any development of Sites EG1-5, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG2-12, HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 is permitted.

From my observations it seems to me that the confluence of the A65, the Leeds Ring Road and traffic heading from the north west of Leeds to south west Leeds and to Bradford (and vice versa) with traffic flowing to and from Leeds on the A65 is such that the recent improvements are already proving inadequate, and that future improvement would be impossible if sites HG2-41, HG2-42 and HG2-43 are developed because they are on land that would be needed to build slip roads or whatever other infrastructure is needed.

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Environmental impact

I am very concerned about flooding that might be caused by these developments. Woodlands Drive is often deep under water in places in times of high rainfall, and local footpaths become completely bogged down.

These houses will cover a very large area of steeply sloping grassland. When this is turned to tarmac and setts, what will be the impact on the local roads and pathways, and on the river levels in the River Aire and the fish in it?

I would like to see the result of LCC consultations with the appropriate experts on these points, please.

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Afterthought

I appreciate that the revenue to central government of stamp duty of £10,000 per £400,000 house when 1600+ plus houses are to be built is substantial, as is the year on year collection of Council Tax from these houses by LCC.

But this city needs affordable housing where it is sustainable, not premium priced executive housing on precious greenbelt.

There are rushed decisions going here without proper consultation, at potentially great cost to our heritage and quality of life in our city in general and our villages of Rodley, Rawdon and Horsforth in particular.

Sam Hotchin

Cragg Wood resident

13 November 2015