

**From:**  
**To:** [Site Allocations Plan](#)  
**Subject:** PDE02150\_Objection against the LCC SAP (sites HG2-12, HG2-41, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG3-4)  
**Date:** 10 November 2015 20:55:58

---

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to strongly protest against the plans to allocate for housing several sites in the greenbelt of Rawdon and Horsforth as part of the Leeds City Council (LCC) Site Allocation Plan (SAP).

Specifically, I object to the removal from the greenbelt and the proposed developments of these sites:

HG2-12 Woodlands Drive  
HG2-41 Rawdon Crematorium - Horsforth Roundabout  
HG3-2 Knott Lane West  
HG3-3 Knott Lane East  
HG3-4 Layton Lane

As stated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), greenbelt land is to be protected from housing in all but 'exceptional circumstances'. The loss of these green spaces at such a proposed scale would forever change the landscape, character and rural setting of Rawdon and Horsforth and go against the guiding principles of why we have greenbelt land in the first place:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Leeds and Bradford are separate cities and maintain their own identity, in part, due to the green spaces along the A65 corridor. If we build on greenbelt land on sites such as HG2-41 and HG2-12 then we blur the lines between settlements and contribute to urban sprawl.

One of the reasons that I moved to the Rawdon area was precisely because of this green corridor and the green and pleasant valley that separates Leeds from its smaller neighbour.

2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.

Horsforth and Rawdon are distinct settlements precisely because of areas of greenbelt land between them. Building on sites such as HG2-41 and HG2-12 will start to 'join up' these distinct areas and remove the identity of both locations

Rawdon maintains a village like feel because of the green fields that surround it and this is a key factor in why I moved here and continue to live and raise my family here.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The farmed fields, woodland areas and riverside pathways are all part of the local countryside that surrounds Rawdon and Horsforth. The proposed plans are the very epitome of encroachment and in no way safeguard this precious local resource. Must we have to go into the Yorkshire Dales to experience the countryside? Rather, we should do everything we can to ensure we have local countryside to balance the urban environment.

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

As already mentioned, Rawdon has very much a village like feel that is due in large part to the setting it has within open fields, farming land and local features such as the Billing and Rawdon Cragg Wood Conversation Area. Once these green areas are built upon, this character will be lost forever and will be to the detriment of the local community and future generations.

5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Have other sites truly been reviewed thoroughly and other proposals been given due consideration? Brownfield sites are available elsewhere in Leeds and the LCC Core Strategy says that these must be

developed before greenbelt land.

I understand that Leeds City Council considers the growth in housing requirement to be the 'exceptional circumstances' required to include greenbelt in the SAP. However, the figures that they have used to plan for growth are contentious to say the least. The Office of National Statistics has estimated the city needs 45,000 new homes, not the 70,000 that the LCC initially projected. Even having revised their own figures, LCC are still projecting 25% more than the ONS. With flawed projections at the heart of these plans, the plans for building on greenbelt land are clearly not justified.

On a personal level, I regularly enjoy the benefits that being surrounded by countryside brings. My partner and I run regularly through the local woodland, along the Leeds Country Way and other footpaths and beside the open fields that border or form the sites HG2-12, HG3-4 and HG2-41. My whole family enjoy being able to step from our back door and walk in open countryside, and appreciate the natural world in all its glory. Building on these sites would mean this is lost forever. Both the opportunity for local people - and others from further afield - to enjoy the countryside as well as the natural habitats of local wildlife.

HG2-12, HG3-3 and HG3-4 are UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, and as we walk, run and cycle through these areas, we regularly see wild deer, along with bats, fieldfare, sparrow hawk, starlings, tree sparrows and hear the occasional screech of a tawny owl. All of these birds are on the Birds of Conservation Concern at red or amber level. We simply cannot afford to lose these wildlife habitats.

All sites contain mature trees and woodland - losing these would dramatically change the visual impact of the area. Much of this impact has not been properly assessed. Why was there not a comprehensive greenbelt review as part of these proposals as required under the LCC Core Strategy? Surely this means the plans are not positively prepared?

Each site is classified as Grade 3 Agricultural land. My family and I enjoy watching farming practices take place on our doorstep and are even able to join in by picking our asparagus in the Spring and strawberries in the Summer. These are tidy, well-maintained fields, and lend Rawdon and Horsforth their character as well as providing jobs for local people and help to maintain our local economy.

All of these points clearly indicate that the planned development and the removal of vast swathes of greenbelt is simply not justified and the plan is not positively prepared.

I also have to question whether plans have effectively considered the impact on the local roads. The A65, which we can see from our windows, is already an extremely busy road. All the sites proposed, but especially HG2-41 and HG2-12, will add hugely to the existing traffic on the A65; adding to the congestion, the strain on side roads and parking, and restricting timely access for emergency vehicles.

HG2-12, HG3-2 and HG3-3 would collectively require realignment of Knott Lane but how is this effective when this would just cause more access issues onto the A65 and further exacerbate congestion?

In short, the A65 and Horsforth roundabout clearly cannot handle the traffic we already have - how on earth does LCC expect it to cope with so much more?

And, besides the strain on the local road network, what about the strain on other local resources? The local schools are already full. Is there enough capacity in the local doctor's surgeries? Are the local emergency services likely to be overwhelmed with the massive increase in population these proposals suggest?

There are also concerns over the legal compliancy of site HG2-12. There was no consultation on the site prior to it being allocated to housing in the SAP - it was not included in the Issues and Options consultation in June. This is clearly not compliant with the council's Statement of Community Involvement. Along with the sustainability appraisal for HG2-12 that marked it as -7 and the lack of effective access to the site, this is clearly not a suitable site for development.

On a more personal note, in an increasing technological age, it is crucial that we maintain our link to the natural world and that our children can grow up to appreciate all the benefits that having accessible, unspoilt, local countryside brings. I have been able to adapt my working life so that I can work from home, enjoying the views over the valley below and regularly escaping the office desk to enjoy all that nature and the countryside provides. To lose that to shortsighted and flawed planning would be a complete tragedy for us all.

I don't know anybody in Horsforth or Rawdon who supports these building proposals. In a democracy, our thoughts must count. There is a real strength of feeling in the community that this MUST NOT go ahead. These plans are simply not justified, not positively prepared, not compliant with the NPPF, not effective and not even legally compliant!

LCC should look again at the figures for housing. And LCC should ensure that greenbelt - a most precious resource - is not lost for this and future generations.

Yours faithfully,

Andy Shipman

4 New York Cottages  
Rawdon  
Leeds  
LS196JH