

**From:** [Lowri Virk](#)  
**To:** [Site Allocations Plan](#)  
**Subject:** PDE03182\_Fwd: Site Allocations HG2 -41, HG2-42, HG2-43, HG2-12, HG3-2, HG3-3, HG3-4  
**Date:** 16 November 2015 07:20:03

---

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object in the strongest terms possible to the inclusion of the following greenbelt areas in LCC's Site Allocations Plan.

Site Allocations HG2 -41, HG2-42, HG2-43, HG2-12, HG3-2, HG3-3,  
HG3-4

There are number of reasons why this development cannot be justified:

The proposal to include these Green Belt sites in the Local Plan is NOT consistent with the national policy, which states that Green Belt land must only be used in 'exceptional circumstances'. These areas are within LCC's own designated Special Landscape area, which would be lost were this development to go ahead. The distinction between the villages of Rawdon and Horsforth would be disappear, changing it into one indistinct and unplanned urban sprawl, not to mention the encroachment into our open countryside and the blurring of the gap between Leeds and Bradford.

The Leeds Country Way runs through HG2-12 and alongside HG3-2 and HG3-3. This a key recreational route for the area used by thousands of residents for horse-riding, dog-walking, cycling and hiking. These areas are important to the health and well-being of residents, many of whom are effectively sandwiched between the A65 and the ring road. Having areas like this, allows local people to access quiet and safe areas with children and animals. My own family regularly use the paths and hidden lanes in this area, including the Rawdon Cragg Wood Conservation Area, all of which are characterised by long-ranging views over open countryside. These, and their ecology and wild animals would be massively impacted by these developments. HG2-12, HG3-3 and 3-4 are all BAP (UK Biodiversity Action Plan) Priority Habitats with resident deer, bats, fieldfare, lapwing, curlew, sparrow hawk and tawny owl. The fields next to Layton Lane contain Ghyll Beck, known locally as Red Beck, and all the sites contain mature, protected trees and woodland. Sandwiched between the housing development and the proposed airport link road, what would be left?

Another key concern is the effect of development on this scale on the A65. This road, notwithstanding the recent improvements at Horsforth roundabout, is extremely busy and suffers from frequent tailbacks. Putting 700+ houses and a school in HG1-41 would be catastrophic. The ring road will be gridlocked, compounded by poor access to the development at Knott Lane. All this farmland would be lost. Farming has characterised Rawdon for hundreds of years and many in the village are employed by the local farms.

Where is the evidence that alternatives have been considered? Has LCC liaised with Bradford Council to look at a joint plan for the bordering towns and villages? Where is the development of Brownfield Sites? LCC's own Core Strategy says that these sites must be developed first. Why has Leeds City Council not reduced its housing target to 45,000 following the revised projections by ONS? This reduction of 15,000 houses could mean that no greenbelt land needs to be developed.

Schools in Horsforth are already over-subscribed. The new development at 'Horsforth Vale' on the Clariant site is only worsening the problem. It is ironic that LCC shut the closest primary school in Rodley in 2006, so now all the children in the new development will have to drive up the ring road to go to Horsforth schools, adding to an already congested traffic problem. Where is the infrastructure to support these developments? Using the proposed new school on HG2-41 as an argument to build is deeply worrying; where are the plans for this school? Who will pay for it?

The proposed development is not effective because firstly, road access to HG2-12 is dependent on the development of two 'safeguarded' sites. But HG2-12 has been allocated for delivery earlier than these 'safeguarded' sites. Its inclusion as an 'allocated' site is incorrect and it cannot be delivered.

There is poor access by road, particularly around Knott Lane, which is also regularly used by crematorium traffic and would affect all three sites close by. There are also access and congestion issues onto the already inundated A65. There are also potential flooding issues in HG2-12.

The development is not legally compliant because there has been no consultation on HG2-41 prior to it being included in the Site Allocations plan. This brings me on to the original 'consultation' period in 2013, when I objected to some of the sites on the plan.

I have lived in Horsforth almost all my life and grew up on Victoria Mount. I know that planning meetings attach no importance to the emotional attachment residents may have for a particular site, and I

am also aware that accusations of 'NIMBYism' are frequently bandied about, but I do love Horsforth. In my lifetime, there has been huge development of an area which was semi-rural. Many of the green spaces I knew as a child have gone.

What bothers me even more, is the shambolic effort made by LCC during the 'consultation' period to disseminate information to the people of North West Leeds. Our consultation session was at Horsforth School –

- Expensive explanatory brochures? Check!
- Lots of LCC planning staff on hand to explain? Check!
- Glossy display panels illustrating the plans? Check!
- Large numbers of local residents accessing the information? Er, no.

No one knew about it. A group of us leafleted 500 homes in the Victoria estate, Horsforth in the days leading up to the consultation and on the day, everyone I spoke to at the event was there because of our leaflet.

The procedure for making a comment on your website is so laborious and difficult to use, a cynic might think it was designed expressly to deter people from doing so. Likewise for the current consultation period. The procedure and advice for making comments is a masterly exercise in obfuscation. It militates against the hundreds of householders who do not have access to the internet or do not speak 'Councilese'. I can only speak about my local area, but there is a real groundswell of anger and frustration about the way the council are dealing with this.

The development has therefore not been properly prepared because there has not been a proper consultation with local people and there has not been a comprehensive Greenbelt review, as required by the inspector who passed the Core Strategy as sound. The review which took place was selective and flawed, which can only mean that the Site Allocations Plan is unsound.

The NPPF contains chapters on Protecting Greenbelt, Conserving Natural Environment and Conserving Historic Environment but where are the 'exceptional circumstances' that exist to outweigh the harm that development will cause?

It is the view of my family and I that this plan, and the plan to develop the airport and build a link road, are all part of a plan to 'grow' Leeds and North West Leeds in particular. This is not about affordable homes for those in need, or for future generations of Horsforthians; this is an attempt to bolster the growth of Leeds as a northern retail

and economic 'hub' with white-collar housing in leafy areas at the expense of the people who already live here.

Please keep me informed of the public examinations, submission of the plans and potential outcome of the review as I would like to retain my right to attend and speak.

Yours faithfully  
Lowri Virk  
Durlstone, Newlay Wood Avenue  
Horsforth  
Leeds  
LS18 4LN