

PDH00123

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT			
To	From	Date	File

43 Canada Drive  
Rawdon  
Leeds  
LS19 6LU

22/10/2015

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to express my concerns about the new housing Site Allocation Plans that Leeds City Council have proposed in Rawdon, Horsforth and Guiseley.

I have only been made aware of the detail of the current proposals by Rawdon Parish Council and the Rawdon Greenbelt Action Group. I am very disappointed about the lack of any proper consultation by Leeds City Council. I believe that some of the proposed allocations such as HG2-12 were not included in any previous consultation at all. This feels underhanded and devious and may not even be legal.

In particular I am deeply concerned about the sites at HG2-12 (Woodlands Drive), HG2-41 (fields south of A65 between Horsforth roundabout and the crematorium), and the "safeguarded" plots – HG3-2, HG3-3 & HG 3-4 on Knott Lane and Layton Lane.

It is my understanding that these proposed developments impinge on designated Greenbelt land which should not be altered except in exceptional circumstances. I do not believe that any such exceptional circumstances apply here. Consequently I do not believe that the proposed developments are consistent with national policy, and especially the National Planning Policy Framework. Growth for its own sake is not an exceptional circumstance. PLEASE do not build on designated greenbelt land in this area!

I believe that the existing road infrastructure around these sites are in poor repair and subject to excessive traffic congestion, especially during rush hour. With the prospect of an airport link road in the same general area, the demand on the road network will only increase, and the current road network cannot withstand this. The massive Clariant housing development on the old Sandoz chemical plant will already have a massive impact on the local road network.

I believe that development on the HG2-12 is not justified as it would spoil the lovely open views across the Aire Valley, which are part of the rural character of Rawdon and the surround district. This site has designation as a Special Landscape Area, which would be damaged by development on this site.

This section of the Aire valley is an important flyway for many species of birds and other wildlife. There are nearby nature reserves at Rodley, and further up the valley. It is important to maintain green corridors to allow wildlife to move freely, and green fields for protected birds of prey, such as Bats, Kestrels, Tawny Owls and Barn Owls to hunt. Furthermore these areas contain areas of woodland with mature trees, bluebell woods and habitats associated with Ghyll Beck.

Green spaces are equally important for people, and I have enjoyed walking in this area and picking fruit and vegetables in the "strawberry fields".

If the sites listed above along with others in the proposed allocation go ahead it would blur the gaps between Rawdon and Horsforth as well as the gaps between Leeds and Bradford. I have lived in Rawdon for the past 25 years and have a strong attachment to it. Rawdon has a long and proud history as a village in its own right and I would be very sad to see it become just another dormitory area for Leeds.

I also wish to complain about the proposed housing allocation HG2-10 on the A65 Gill Lane between Yeadon and Guiseley. There is already only a small amount of green space between Yeadon and Guiseley and any encroachment of this would blur the distinction between these settlements, and destroy yet more designated Greenbelt land. Traffic congestion would also be exacerbated by this development.

Another area of concern that I have with the proposed additional housing allocations is that there is insufficient capacity within our schools, GPs and other social infrastructure. It is not acceptable to say that development is needed before improvements to infrastructure can be put in place. There is already high demand for these facilities in this area. Even if would-be developers include space and money for new schools and social amenities, I am concerned that there are inadequate safeguards to ensure that these are in line with the specific requirements of the local community or even that developers would keep to their word.

I do not believe that the proposed allocations have given sufficient consideration of alternative sites on brownfield land and I am disappointed that there seems to have been little in the way of cooperation between Leeds and Bradford councils in planning their respective housing allocation plans.

It has been reported that Leeds City Council aims to build 70,000 new houses in Leeds by 2028. However I have been told that figure is likely to be vastly more than is actually needed. Why not delay making housing allocation decisions until a more accurate revised figure can be calculated in 2018?

I hope that my comments along with those of other concerned residents will make you stop and think again before signing off on developments that will destroy so much of what makes Rawdon special.

Yours Faithfully

Andrew Thompson