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DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT			
To	Action	Info	File
- 3 NOV 2015			
File Number: _____			

Mrs Julie O'Neil
 30 Rawdon Road
 Horsforth
 Leeds
 LS18 5EW
 31/10/2015

Dear Sir,

Re:Leeds City Council Site Allocation Plans

I wish to register my objections to the council's proposals to build hundreds of houses in my local area on protected Green Belt sites.

The sites that I am particularly concerned about are:

- HG2-41 Fields South of A65, Horsforth Roundabout to the crematorium
- HG2-42 Fields at Broadway and Calverley Lane. Horsforth
- HG2-43 Fields at Horsforth College Campus
- HG2-12 Fields at Woodlands Drive, Rawdon
- HG3-2, HG3-3 & HG3-4 Fields off A65, Rawdon.

I believe that "the proposal" to include these development sites in the Local Plan is NOT consistent with the national policy.

The NPPF makes it clear through it's various policies that developments should be restricted. Such policies include land designated as Green Belt.

The NPPF makes it clear that established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances.

A lot of the NPPF is dedicated to stressing to local authorities and planners that they should not use Green Belt. The NPPF indicates that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that the aim of the Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl.

The Local Plan flies in the face of the NPPF in this respect.

Furthermore, the NPPF states that "Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances".

Also, to quote "As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

The Local Plan is inconsistent with the above as the need for the council to meet housing targets is not something that is classed as "exceptional". Green Belt should not be used to meet housing needs.

The huge number of houses planned for this area would also create urban sprawl- the very thing that the NPPF seeks to avoid.

Leeds City Council has been through a process whereby the land between the A65 and the River Aire has been identified as "Strategic Green Infrastructure", which enhances its Green Belt status.

In view of this why do the council believe it is acceptable to build on it at all?

In terms of building on Green Belts only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, the largest site selected for development is HG2-41 and this has been put into Phase 1 of the plans. How can this be classed as a last resort? Clearly, insufficient regard has been given to the NPPF principles.

What is the justification for taking such a large area from one place rather than "spreading it out"? There are other huge Green Belt areas in Leeds that have not been included in the allocation at all (eg. Roundhay).

Why is this?

There are a significant number of Brownfield sites identified and there are those that planners have already received planning permission to build on, but have not yet begun development.

Surely, it would be the right thing to do to develop these sites first to meet the allocation requirements, thereby complying with the NPPF policies of not using Green Belt.

In terms of the infrastructure, the A65 is a very busy main road and traffic currently creates problems of congestion particularly in Horsforth as traffic from Aireborough and beyond uses it as a route into Leeds and this is compounded by the time Horsforth is reached. This will be exacerbated and become more problematic and dangerous by the planned developments.

Developers only contribute a limited amount of funds towards any infrastructure that is required and the A65 is an absolute necessity- where are the Leeds plans, policies and costings to improve the A65 or the roads crossing the River Aire?

These areas are of great importance to myself, family, friends and colleagues. HG2-41 is the site closest to me and over the years I have appreciated its natural beauty, stunning views and its great diversity in terms of the wildlife that you see and the proliferation of trees and plants- they are a joy.

My family and I regularly use these areas for recreational purposes- when the children were growing it was ideal for family outings, picnics, rambling, cycling and generally enjoying being outdoors- ideal for health and exercise. It instils a feeling of wellbeing.

Even though my family have grown we still enjoy getting out and about in these areas with our dog and we see other families experiencing and enjoying the area as we have and continue to do.

There is also a significant biodiversity issue here as what would happen to all of the displaced animals and wildlife? No consideration appears to have given to this.

Site HG2-41 is a huge area and the plans are to decimate it entirely in order to build houses.

It is totally unacceptable and inconsistent with national policy to propose to eradicate such a huge area of Green Belt, indeed Strategic Green Belt, for this purpose, not forgetting that it has been put into Phase 1, which is clearly not an intention to use it as a last resort, contrary to the NPPF and the national policy. This is not sustainable on any level and is to the detriment of the community and future generations.

I also object on the basis that during the consultation period the community has not properly consulted. The consultation has not been broad enough or publicised enough. The process of contacting and informing the community has not been followed. Why is this?

Indeed, the plans were made available for public viewing at the Mechanic Institute in Horsforth recently, but the council officials sent to preside and answer pertinent questions from members of the public "did not have a clue" and were not able to answer many basic questions so the whole exercise was hardly a useful or informative event.

In conclusion, I object to the plans to build on these Green Belt areas, some of which have an enhanced status as Strategic Green Infrastructure. HG2-41 is a huge area, the largest area selected in this area of Leeds.

It is unreasonable and unacceptable to eradicate the entire area as is the proposal to build a similarly huge number of houses on the site. To remove this area of Green Belt would create a "corridor" effect as it is the only remaining Green Belt area between Rawdon and Leeds.

Urban Sprawl would certainly result, which is the very thing the NPPF seeks to avoid.

Horsforth is a pleasant place to live, but the proposed developments would totally change the character of the area and destroy its individual identity as it would just become merged with the surrounding areas.

Clearly, the whole proposal to build houses in the local area is to the detriment of the whole local community and the loss of areas of outstanding natural beauty would be a great detrimental effect to the community and for future generations.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Julie O'Neil

CC: Andrew Carter, M P