

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT			
To	Action	Info	File
11 NOV 2015			

Mr Simon O'Neil
 30 Rawdon Road
 Horsforth
 Leeds
 LS18 5EW
 09/11/2015

PDH60780

Dear Sir,

Re: Leeds City Council Site Allocation Plans

I wish to register my objections to the council's proposals to build thousands 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. These 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.

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 "very special circumstances" or, indeed "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 it's 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 55,000 Brown Field 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 congestion is a problem currently. This is a particular problem in Horsforth as the A65 serves as the main route for traffic from Aireborough and beyond into Leeds. In Horsforth the A65 intersects with the Ring Road at Horsforth roundabout The Ring Road Road at this location is wholly inadequate to cope with the volume of traffic.

In the light of a recent housing development adjacent to the proposed site of HG2-41, some infrastructure alterations to the area have been carried, but these have not been effective in alleviating the congestion. 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?

Furthermore, in Horsforth there are other developments that will be the subject of planning and consultation processes in the near future, such as plans to build another road in Horsforth to service Leeds/Bradford airport, but the council do not have the foresight to integrate future, known plans into current planning strategies. Once the council get on to the next set of alterations the whole set of infrastructure issues, which are not resolved by the current plans (or lack of these as the council have not made these available) will recur.

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 it's natural beauty, stunning views and it's great diversity in terms of the wildlife that you see and the proliferation of trees and plants.

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 the children have grown my wife and I 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 done and continue to do.

There is also a significant biodiversity issue of concern; what would happen to all of the displaced animals and wildlife? They have nowhere else to go. Minimal consideration appears to have been 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. Also, 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 neither useful nor informative.

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 it's 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

WIL SHIMON O'NEIL