

LDF Publication Draft Consultation
Forward Planning & Implementation
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PDH01226

Dear Sirs

Re: HG2-12 Fields at Woodlands Drive, Rawdon
HG3 – 2; HG3 – 3; HG3 – 4; Fields off A65, Rawdon
HG2-41 Fields south of A65, Horsforth Roundabout to Rawdon Crematorium
HG2-43 Fields at Horsforth College Campus
HG2-10

I have considered the Council's Site Allocations Plan which includes the above Green Belt sites being developed for housing, and wish to object to the Plan.

I have lived in Rawdon since 1989, and in the last 26 years I have seen various housing developments along the A65 corridor, I have seen the green spaces shrink, and the A65 become more and more congested as it struggles to cope with the increase in traffic. I have regularly walked down through Cragg Wood and along Woodlands, round by the Clariant factory, up Knott Land and round by the fruit picking fields. I have seen wild deer, foxes, hedgehogs and many varieties of birds including jays, greenfinch, lapwings.

Rawdon has been gradually changing, becoming a much less pleasant place to live. The green spaces and rural pockets have dwindled. Layton Lane/Brownberrie Lane have now become an alternative route for traffic trying to avoid the A65, so the whole area is becoming choked with cars and car fumes. If the current plans are allowed to proceed then the character, remaining green spaces and wildlife will be gone for good. We will be left with an urban sprawl and gridlocked traffic from Leeds through Horsforth and all the way to Guiseley.

The plans fail to take into account the considerable developments just over the border in the Bradford area, which impact greatly on Rawdon. Large developments in Menston/Guiseley and Apperley Bridge have resulted in increased traffic on A65 and A658; there is regularly gridlocked traffic on all sides of the Rawdon traffic lights and JCT roundabout and queues all the way from Rawdon traffic lights to the Horsforth roundabout.

Dealing specifically with the points on which Leeds City Council has invited comments:

1. The plans are not consistent with national policy.

The NPPF requires Green Belt land to be protected. It stresses the importance of maintaining the Green Belt: - to curtail the expansion of built up areas, to prevent built up areas merging into one (as Horsforth and Rawdon, and Rawdon and Guiseley will do if these developments proceed) to promote and protect wildlife, flora and fauna and to preserve the character of historic towns and villages.

In addition, under the NPPF, an important purpose of Green Belt is to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. I believe that former industrial/brownfield sites are available in Leeds but have not been properly considered for development in priority to Green Belt.

The NPPF makes it clear that Green Belt should only be used in *exceptional* circumstances. The Council has failed to establish exceptional circumstances. It has failed to consider the

alternatives, failed to consider the harm that will be caused by the development and failed to take into account the fact that the target of 70,000 homes is obsolete.

The Council has not updated its plans and revisited the target of 70,000 homes in the light of the revised ONS projections, under which Leeds actually requires 45,000, not 70,000 homes. If the Council revises its plans to take into account the true number of homes required this will remove the need to consider building on Green Belt.

The NPPF states that plans should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework. Sustainable means ensuring better lives for future generations. The reality of these plans is that they are designed to fulfil government housing targets – but without taking into account that the targets are out of date, without taking into account the need to preserve Green Belt and the natural environment, of which there is precious little in this area, and without considering alternatives.

2. Have the plans been positively prepared?

No, because a comprehensive greenbelt review has not been undertaken by Leeds City Council.

Leeds CC within its Core Strategy document (which I believe has already been reviewed and approved by an independent inspector) identified the land between the A65 and the River Aire and land adjacent to Knott Lane and Layton Lane as “*strategic green infrastructure*”, enhancing its Green Belt status. The plans to allow building on this land are totally inconsistent with the value already placed on this Green Belt by the Council.

3. Are the choices of site justified?

No. The open views, and the rural character of this corridor through Rawdon village will be lost. Important wildlife habitats will be lost. Our wildlife is already under threat and numbers falling. As well as animal, bird, insect life, the sites contain fields, meadows, becks, trees, woodland, bluebell woods, wild flowers. Insufficient consideration has been given to this and the true consequences of losing this Green Belt. There has been insufficient consideration of alternative sites. The Council has not shown justification for its failure to prioritise the preservation of Green Belt as required by the NPPF.

The area around Site HG2-41 has already been seriously affected by the large Clariant housing development. That development has added to the traffic problems, but fortunately the small pockets of green are still there – they are precious and must be preserved.

4. Will the plans be effective?

No. Highway access from the proposed sites is extremely limited and inadequate. There is already gridlock along the A65 at times particularly at the Horsforth roundabout; the development would result in regular serious congestion and gridlock. The developments are not sustainable.

There is insufficient infrastructure to cope with the extra housing and population. There are insufficient schools, shops, etc. However, if additional infrastructure is provided this will only exacerbate the congestion and urban sprawl.

In response to points 3 and 4 I would also repeat what I said at the beginning – the plans fail to take into account the effect of large scale developments over the border in the Bradford area.

Yours faithfully

Ian Ormondroyd