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DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT			
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As a resident of Horsforth for over 50 years, I would like to take issue with your proposed Leeds Site Allocation Plans for future developments.

To begin with there is doubt as to the exact number of new houses needed. You originally set a target of 70,000 new homes by 2028 consisting of 66,000 planned sites with a further 4,000 unplanned ones. It now transpires that based on the 2011 census it is expected that the population is only likely to grow by 64,000 people over the same period. If you take into consideration the governments statement that the building of 1million new houses by 2020 would be a success, it is claimed that Leeds' share of that would be 2974 new homes per year. Accurate data is essential before any further discussions can take place. Surely one of the main objectives of the National Census is to help plan for the future. Otherwise the proposals are inconsistent with The Core Strategy. In fact the National Planning Policy Framework states that any plans can be reviewed in order to respond to changing circumstances.

Whatever the correct figure is, it seems to me that to simply state that we need x number of houses is crude in the extreme. What consideration is given to; who are the people who need housing? Where do they work? Where are the new industrial developments taking place which will ultimately provide job opportunities? What are the socioeconomic class of those requiring new homes? If you don't have this information how do you determine the type of houses to be built? And without this information how do you determine what is an affordable property?

Leeds City Council admits that it has a large waiting list for council houses and this is one of their main problems. Councillor Peter Gruen is reported as saying "Having affordable places for people to live in, in Leeds is vital." Yet planning permission was given for the construction of over 400 homes on the site of the old Clariant Works. A quick look at Redrow's website shows these houses are available from £314,950. How does this satisfy supply and demand? This is only one site, I suspect it is the same story throughout the city. Where is the logic? Are we seeking to build houses on Green Belt for the benefit of the city's needy or as I suspect to make future developments more attractive to the developers who can ask eye watering prices for their homes?

The National Planning Policy Framework attaches great importance to Green Belts. It is stated that the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl, something which your current proposals for Horsforth seems to ignore. The policy also states that Green Belts are to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. But if your proposals go ahead this is exactly what would happen with Horsforth and Rawdon and Horsforth and Rodley. In a further statement it

states that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”

Brandon Lewis, the Housing Minister, as recently as February of this year stated “Unmet housing needs should not exceed maintaining the greenbelt, and this is put forward in the National Planning Policy Framework.” It is therefore, my opinion that these proposals are in contravention of this policy.

In a previous letter to me David Feeney, Leeds City Council’s Head of Planning and Economic Policy told me that one of the Council’s ambitions was to “Protecting and enhancing green and open spaces, improving their quality, connectivity and accessibility.” Clearly this is not the case so far as the proposals for Horsforth are concerned, especially when it is proposed to build 777 homes on Site HG2-41 from Horsforth Roundabout to Rawdon Crematorium, locally referred to as “The Strawberry Fields.” This area incidentally was identified by Leeds City Council in a previous document as a ‘Special Landscape’ and is identified in the present Core Strategy as ‘Strategic Green Infrastructure.’ Congestion on this roundabout and its feeder roads has been a long standing problem, and further development is only going to exacerbate the problem. One of the problems with the existing system of inviting comments to any proposed developments is that they are limited to people living in the area. For thousands of people who use this route, many on a daily basis, who will suffer miserable delays and hold ups, are unable to raise any objections to this, and all the other developments that have, or are being planned for this corridor. Much publicity has been given recently to the air quality in Leeds, with the World Health Organisation claiming that the City is one of only nine areas in the UK failing to meet guidelines on air quality. It is understandable therefore that we are all concerned about developments which will result in even more health problems. It is astonishing that with the construction of over 400 Redrow houses already, in the Clariant area, together with these proposals, there is no commitment to reopening the old Calverley & Rodley train station.

Another proposal is for this area, on the opposite side of the roundabout is the creation of a further 206 houses on the site of the former Park Lane College Campus. Another, predominantly, Green Belt area part of which, is listed as a nature reserve.

In summary, looking at your proposed sites for development in Horsforth:-

HG2-37 Green Belt

HG2-12 Green Belt

HG2-41 Green Belt

HG2-42 Green Belt

HG2-43 Predominately Green Belt

HG2-44 Brownfield

HG2-45 50% Greenfield

HG2-46 Green Belt

HG3- 2 Green Belt

HG3- 3 Green Belt

HG3- 4 Green Belt

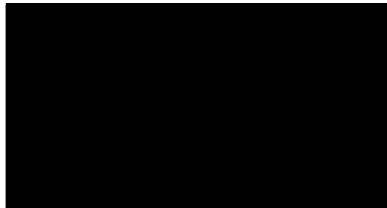
The National Planning Policy Framework states, the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services, and minimising impacts on biodiversity.

Leeds Core Strategy defines Green Belt as "A designation of areas of open land around certain cities and large built-up areas where strict planning controls apply to keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped."

It is my belief that all of your proposals are inconsistent with both national and local policy.

For these reasons I wish to register my objection to your proposals for HG2-37, HG2 -12, HG2-41, HG2-42, HG2-43, HG2-45, HG2-46, HG3-2, HG3-3 and HG3-4

Yours faithfully,



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