

Kirklees Local Plan Examination

Stage 4 Hearings

Matter 30: Huddersfield Housing Allocations: Green Belt releases

H31, H2684a, H2730a

How do sites H31, H2730a, H2684a relate to each other?

Should they be combined and a joint Masterplan required?

The total number of dwellings proposed for these Fenay Bridge sites is 666.

Together with sites H684, Oak Tree Road, and H638, Tinker Lane, in Lepton the total number of dwellings is over 800. Literally across the other side of Station Road, Lepton, but in Almondbury is H1679 where 274 dwellings are proposed. In total there are over 1000 units proposed for the Fenay Bridge /Lepton area

1. Infrastructure Sustainability allocations for all sites were looked at individually by Kirklees Council. Surely to comply with national standards infrastructure analysis together with possible solutions for roads and schools etc the sites should have been collectively examined. Yes, a joint masterplan is required.

1.1 The local schools could not cope with the increased numbers of children. I would anticipate that the most serious problem would be with capacity at King James, secondary school.

In the last couple of years there have been large housing estates built off Lindley Moor Road, Lindley. The two nearest J&I schools were full and parents have had to take their children to schools further away. This is a disaster for the parents of children who live there. This shouldn't be allowed to happen with any large housing development.

In order to comply with national planning requirements for large housing sites, the Local Plan for Lepton/ Fenay Bridge should not be approved until Kirklees Council have carried out a detailed review of schools infrastructure for the area and published their conclusions.

1.2 Public Transport: Apparently the public transport arrangements through Lepton are fine. There is actually one bus an hour in each direction up/down/ Rowley Lane from Penistone Road, weekdays, even less on a weekend.

1.3 Roads: How does the proposed new roundabout at Penistone Road fit in with the indicative masterplan (December 2016) for Rowley lane?

There are nearly always queues back to Highburton traffic lights from Rowley Lane at the weekday morning peak. The problem is caused by traffic, particularly King James school traffic, Including a number of school buses,

turning into Woodsome Road. With proposals for a further 1000 houses plus locally and proposed developments in other nearby villages as far out as Scissett, more traffic queues and delays are likely to result. The position of the proposed roundabout on Penistone Road, for access to H2684a, is unlikely to affect an improvement to that situation. However the position of the proposed roundabout will give good access to Penistone Road from H2684a

The December 2016 Rowley Lane Masterplan for H2730a, still shows Hermitage Park as the main entrance to the site. This was the conclusion made by Optimer, Redrows consultants. This is clearly unrealistic. A report from Farnley Estates consultants Sandersons concludes that Hermitage Park would cope with only 45 more dwellings. Kirklees Highways had a meeting with Optima, Redrow's consultants to discuss their report as they had similar reservations. The Kirklees Accepted Sites Technical appraisal document Transport section states that:

"The Council are sceptical that the proposed circa 300 dwellings and associated transport movements could be confidently met safely and efficiently from Hermitage Park and the immediate local highway network".

The June 2016 Johnson Mowatt plan of the site showed an "emergency link" from Rowley lane into the site. It is presumed that its purpose is if Hermitage Park were obstructed by an HGV access for emergency vehicles could use this link. Surely that is nonsense. This link still appears in the updated plan, but is untitled

It is proposed that the main entrance for site H2684a is by a new roundabout on Penistone Road. However, importantly what I haven't seen a mention of, anywhere, is that residents of H2684a wanting to travel towards Wakefield would also use Hermitage Park which of course is totally unsuitable for traffic from two large estates. Added to which are residents of H2684a parking as close as possible to Rowley Lane J&I school when taking their children to school. Hermitage Park is already congested by parked cars at school times. At such times movements by HGV's are not possible.

Clearly the access requirements to the combined sites of H2730a and H2684a plus the future traffic flow situation on Penistone road, requires assessing by an independent consultant.

Is there sufficient provision to ensure that the developments on sites H2730a and H2684a does not cause unacceptable impacts on diversity and local habitats?

Kirklees own Sustainability appraisal for both sites shows “significant negative effects.” For the two sites combined the effect is magnified. The only measure proposed by the developers is to include an open strip running along the entire edge of Lepton Great Wood between the wood and the houses. This of course will become a rubbish dumping strip. The only way to prevent unacceptable impacts on biodiversity and local habitats is not to build there.

What would the proposed boundary changes and allocations have on the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it?

Kirklees Council want people to enjoy their recreation activities in both woods and countryside. The desecration caused by building houses alongside a wood, though on a smaller scale can be seen at Lower Fellgreave wood, Brackenhall. When you walk through that wood you no longer feel to be in the countryside, it is hemmed in by houses. It is also used for fly tipping.

In 2001 the then Government Inspector concluded that the proposed development site in Fenay Bridge (part of H2730a) “has a close and positive relationship with Lepton Great Wood----it is desirable to keep permanently open.”

Building on sites H2730a &H2684a will destroy the countryside setting of the wood and detract the enjoyment of going there for ever. The magnificent views from the wood across to Woodsome Hall and to Castle Hill will be destroyed. Views across the valley to Fenay Bridge and Highburton when viewed from Castle Hill will also be compromised.

During the development of the plan, when the sites were smaller and their numbering different the Council made the comment for each site that **there are no exceptional circumstances to remove the sites from the green Belt**. What has changed? What justifiable and overriding reasons are there to build all the way alongside a wood?

The fields in front of Lepton Great Wood, to quote “The National Planning policy Framework”:- Purposes of the Green Belt, 9.80 “Assist in saving the countryside from encroachment”.

In my view the exceptional circumstances for altering the green belt edge at this location have not been demonstrated

How would the gap between Lepton and Highburton be affected?

Measured in a straight line the distance between property in Fenay Bridge and Highburton would decrease by 500m approx., more than 50%. The huge housing estate of 666 houses abutting Lepton Great Wood would be the focal point from

footpaths traversing the edge of Highburton, and the path descending towards Fenay Bridge.

Building on these sites together with the development of H1679 breaks out into the countryside from Waterloo through Lepton and Fenay Bridge towards Highburton/Kirkburton and is a clear breach of “The National Planning policy Framework”:- Purposes of the Green Belt, 9.80 9.80 Protecting Green Belt –to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

Gerald R Newsome