

About the application

Application number: 2018/92456	
What is the application for?:	Erection of 29 dwellings
Address of the site or building:	Land off White Lee Road, Batley
Postcode:	

User comments

Type of comment: An objection
1. Planning history of the site: The proposed site for development is partially on urban green space, unlike the existing development on White Lee Gardens which was a brownfield site. There is a plentiful supply of brownfield sites throughout Kirklees which should be prioritised for development. 2. Visual impact of the development: The developer has proposed a landscaped area covering approximately half of the proposed development. It is acknowledged this may mitigate adverse visual impact of the development but it is also submitted that this should be seen for what it is: a cynical ploy, since their proposal suggests it will also provide some sort of public amenity. In reality, the area will have to be tended and this will be funded through covenants in the sale contract to ensure residents pay a nominated third party contractor in perpetuity. Limitations on the amount such contractors charge are seldom placed in their contracts and residents are left at the financial mercy of unscrupulous operators. 3. Effect on public amenity: The developer has argued that the local authority has made a "false distinction" in its designation of the site as urban green space and that the merits attributed to the land can equally be covered by adjoining green belt. The developer further argues that the proposed development land can only be classed as "natural and semi-natural green space" under the Council's Technical Paper of April 2017, relying on council remarks relating to the "significant visual qualities ... semi-rural character ... in a densely developed area and suggesting that "informal recreation" is not relevant as the site adjoins fields to which there is no public access. This argument is not relevant. Urban green space can have a multitude of uses. It is submitted that the space could be better used as allotments for local people. With the advent of a hopeless Brexit and the distinct possibility of high food prices/food shortages it behoves our local authority to think boldly and provide ways for local people with little or no garden of their own to be able to access land on which they can grow their own food. Allotments retain the natural and visual amenity of the land and provide a genuine and useful public amenity whilst also encouraging abundant wildlife and ecosystems. A few paths with some trees as proposed by the developer may have some of these benefits but will undoubtedly also encourage extra footfall through White Lee Gardens and other areas together with a thoroughfare/getaway route for criminals on foot and scooters, provided via a s106 agreement! 4. Traffic: Passage of vehicular traffic through White Lee Gardens will necessari

increase. One has only to look at the existing development to see that most houses have two cars. Some have three or four. This means a likely minimum of at least 58 extra cars requiring access on a daily basis! Children regularly play in the street and will be put at risk. We have studied at length the transport information upon which the developer relies to support its application and we note the following points which undermine the arguments they put forward.

- a. The transport assessment mentions traffic calming measures at the junction of Sunny View with White Lee Road (2014/93425). No such measures are in place. Why should we believe that the developer will do anything to mitigate even more traffic?
- b. Reference is made to the 30mph limit on White Lee Road. Regardless of the data provided, every resident in this area knows that the limit is seldom adhered to by road users.
- c. Traffic signal phasing at either end of White Lee Road means that anyone trying to turn right at peak periods has to run the gauntlet and risk being hit by oncoming traffic as the gap between those heading north and south is so small it often takes several attempts to find a safe gap. In addition cars parked outside the rugby ground and local school provide additional hazards when traffic is heavy.
- d. We note the speed surveys were undertaken on 31.03.2016 and 08.02.2017. The former was during the Easter school holidays when traffic would have been significantly lighter. The second was for only two hours in the middle of the day (12:00-14:00). It is submitted that these surveys are neither sufficient nor appropriate to offer a realistic reflection of the volume of traffic in the area.
- e. Analysis of the accident data shows the developer's submission to be misleading particularly when taken in conjunction with the idea that local authority proposals to make cycling a more attractive option will result in less vehicular traffic on the roads. The majority of serious accidents were at junctions. 40% of casualties were pedestrians, cyclists, or PTW riders. The majority of accidents were on roads with a 30mph limit (like White Lee Road) and the biggest percentage were turning right. Clearly any cyclist trying to exit right from White Lee Gardens into White Lee Road is at significant risk and drivers of other vehicles are only slightly less so.
- f. The TRICS data lists selected regions, none of which include anywhere in West Yorkshire. The data range is from 2002 to 2010. It is submitted this data is too old and geographically remote to be of any relevance to the proposed development.
- g. Giving people bus passes will not encourage them to use buses which do not go directly to Bradford, Huddersfield or Cleckheaton and take well over an hour to get to Leeds. Most people do not work locally.

6. We see bats on a daily basis and, regardless of the biodiversity report conclusions are concerned that the colony will be put at risk.

We urge you to look beyond the developer's superficial arguments at the realities of the situation and to reject this application.