

Victor Grayson  
Kirklees Council  
14/11/2020  
BY EMAIL ONLY

Re: 2020/92331 – Land East of Leeds Road, Chidswell

Dear Mr Grayson,

objects to this application for the reason set out below.

Firstly, on an administrative matter, It would be helpful to people engaging with the planning process if the consultee documents were labelled clearly on Public Access. Whereas some consultee responses are identified in the list, some others, such as the response from the Ecology Officer and the Woodland Trust, are not clearly identified. This makes it more challenging to engage with the documentation and therefore less accessible.

We agree with the concerns identified by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Ecology Officer. No outline application should be approved where constraints on the site relating to issues of biodiversity and ecology have not been adequately addressed, as without them it is not possible to determine whether an acceptable scheme can be

Matters relating to impacts on protected species, protected habitat and net gains for biodiversity should be considered at outline planning stage, as they are intrinsically linked to the principle of sustainable development. An outline application of this scale needs to embed ecological and environmental considerations into the fundamentals of the design, and should not be left negotiation at reserved matters. As policy LP30 states, legal agreements are a last resort and agreement should be sought through avoidance of loss or harm. This can only be properly achieved at an early stage in planning.

The 'ecological summary note' submitted with the application states that 'As the proposals are only in outline at present, finer detail on habitat creation has not be produced' and that therefore the Biodiversity Metric Calculation is 'unlikely to be an accurate reflection', 'is purely indicative' and illustrative, a 'ball-park figure'. Leaving these details to reserved matters stage does not provide adequate assurances of an acceptable solution.

The fragmentation of our habitats for wildlife needs to be urgently, actively reversed, to enhance the biodiversity of our surroundings. This applies to built development as well as agricultural development, and is fundamental in tackling the climate emergency.

**Hedgerows:**

support the Climate Change Committee's call for a 40% increase in the extent of hedgerows by 2050 to help tackle the climate emergency. Hedgerows are a vital part of our ecological economy. They improve our environment, providing homes and corridors for wildlife. These and 'buffer zones' formed part of the Environmental Stewardship scheme.

The applicant's own Environmental Statement identifies three hedgerows defined as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, and further five that fall short of that status by a single criterion, but are still habitat of principle importance, and therefore should be maintained and enhanced; and accepts that 'retaining functional green corridors through the Site, either in the way of hedgerow, tree or woodland planting, should therefore be a material consideration during the design of the masterplan.' It is therefore reasonable to expect further detail on how this is intended to ensure biodiversity net gains at a suitable level.

**Local Wildlife Sites:**

Loss of habitat is a cumulative issue that plays out across planning authority boundaries. This is especially pertinent due to the scale of proposed development in the vicinity of this application, and as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust point out the cumulative loss of suitable farmland habitat in the local area has been substantial. Supporting the comments of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and Kirklees' Tree Officer and Ecology Officer, we consider there is a need for a detailed ecological strategy to be agreed and conditioned in any outline application, to encompass:

- An enhanced buffer to protect enhance the wildlife corridor, including the two Local Wildlife Sites, and a net gain approach to mitigate the potential damage to these sites through increased recreational use;
- Measures to avoid impact on trees and hedgerows and the neighbouring ancient woodlands;
- Prevent a net loss of grassland, scrub, and ditches and watercourse edgescapes through 'tidying', with a specific scheme to protect and enhance the breeding bird habitats;
- A commitment to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity post-development, rather than the 3% currently proposed.

Unless and until all these matters have been resolved, the application clearly conflict with policy LP30, and we ask that it be refused.

Yours sincerely,