



House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Mr Viktor Grayson  
Kirklees Council  
Investment and Regeneration  
Civic Centre 3  
Huddersfield  
HD1 2JR

18 September 2020

Dear Mr Grayson,

**Re: Planning applications and 2020/60/92350/E at Chidswell**

I am writing to object both this planning applications and 2020/60/92350/E, the approval of either application would be a disaster.

I base my objection on the following grounds:

- Impact on current residents, infrastructure and agriculture;
- Concerning responses from key bodies including Highways England, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Coal Authority;
- Historical precedent;
- Alternative sites; and
- The timing of the consultation
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The addition of over 1500 new homes, in the event of both applications being approved, would place an enormous strain on existing residents. The level of noise and air pollution generated in the construction phase, and the routine pollution from additional vehicles post-construction, pose a worrying risk to public health, especially to those with respiratory diseases. This is in stark contrast to the area's present position as a 'green lung'.

The residents would not only be deprived of air quality but also of recreational space for sport and exercise, of the beauty of area's ancient woodlands and of the enjoyment of the working farm on the plot. This marks a serious reduction in the quality of life for current residents.

Current infrastructure is inadequate to support such a large development. Public service infrastructure such as General Practitioner's surgeries, dental surgeries and schools face being overwhelmed by an influx of new residents. The area's physical structure would not be able sustain thousands of extra cars on the roads, indeed, many residents feel that present provision is already lacking with regular congestion at peak hours. There has been insufficient allocation of highways infrastructure and transport provision from the Council. Highways England in their responses to both consultations (2020/60/92331/E and 2020/60/92350/E) have recommended that planning permissions not be granted at this time.

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) has also issued a thorough and damning report on both planning applications. The potential impact on Local Wildlife Sites and the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network were described as 'significant', alongside negative impacts on breeding farmland bird species. WYT criticises the application of metrics in the supporting documents to the application, and they query some of the methodology deployed in the preparation of the supporting surveys. The loss of habitats does not just deprive local residents of vibrant local wildlife but also represents a loss to district and

the nation. The application cannot be approved while glaring concerns remain over the protection of wildlife.

It is not just wildlife that is at risk from this proposed development, but also human life. The Coal Authority has assessed that there may be a high risk to the development from the area's coal mining legacy, including unrecorded workings, mine entries and opencast workings. It would be unsafe to allow development to proceed, potentially putting life and structures at risk.

The area was included around the turn of the millennium as part of proposals to use the area for open-cast mining. Following a successful appeal to the Secretary of State, the decision was overturned. This demonstrates clear historical precedent for protecting this area of beauty, and this ought to be followed when considering these applications.

The area should never have been released from the Green Belt for development consideration. Insufficient consideration was given to alternative areas for development in the Local Plan. This is particularly pertinent when one considers the range of other developments that have received (or are in the process of receiving) planning permission in the nearby area, including applications:

- 2016/93929
- 2018/94189
- 2019/92787
- 2019/91476
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The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust alluded to the cumulative impact of approving the applications I am objecting to, when considering the already approved developments nearby, stating:

“Careful consideration must be made by the LPA of cumulative impacts of this and other nearby developments upon sensitive habitats, species and ecological connectivity.”

The recent case of Aireborough Neighbourhood Development Forum v Leeds City Council [2020] EWHC 2183 (Admin), following the judge's findings in the substantive case [2020] EWHC 1461 (Admin), resulted in the remittance to the Secretary of State of all allocations of housing on released Green Belt in the local authority's plan. The failure to provide adequate reasoning for the release of Green Belt land, site selection decisions, and a lack of consideration for reasonable alternatives led to the judge's decision. It is my view that the proposed developments at Chidswell may be subject to a similar remittance given the similarity in circumstances.

Finally, these consultations come at time when the country, and particularly Kirklees, is under restrictions. It is inadequate to gauge the true opposition to the proposals while many may be unable to contribute to the consultations, especially the elderly. Such a large overall development would change the landscape and the face of the area irreparably and such considerations ought to be made only with full participation from those it affects. At the very least, the opposition of those unable to partake in this abnormal process ought to be taken into account.

Both planning applications share the same pitfalls. The threats to ecology, quality of life & health are daunting. The nature of the decision to release the area from the Green Belt is also wrought with concern. As a whole, the proposals amount to various breaches of the National Planning Policy Framework and ought to be rejected outright.

Yours sincerely,

**Mark Eastwood MP**  
Member of Parliament for Dewsbury