Comment on Planning application

2022/62/92406/W – EcoHolmes Community Land Trust

Erection of 10 affordable dwellings, with access from Chapelgate and associated works including resident play zone.

Comment in support of the application by:

1 Larks House Barn, Sheffield Road, Jackson Bridge, Holmfirth, HD9 7HS

- **conservation of buildings and conservation of the natural environment**
  There are no existing buildings on site as it was used to store road chippings for the Council about 20 years ago. Since then it has been abandoned and has gradually become overgrown with nettles, rose bay willow herb, and some trees. The existing environment is described in the environmental reports included in the planning application.
- **effect on trees and the landscape**
  T*he majority of the existing trees will be removed during development stage – their value has been analysed by the Tree Survey to ensure the highest value trees are retained where possible. The planting plan for new trees show that 28 new large (4.5m high) trees will be planted, and will be high value native species including oak, cherry, lime, Rowan and Maple. Because of the ecological enhancement included in the plans, after a few years the diversity and quality of landscape and trees will be better than the existing overgrown site.*
- **design, appearance and layout**
  The houses will be highly energy efficient, and will be exemplars for other new buildings in the area; exceeding the Future Homes Standard. It is intended that they are used to show other local builders what can be achieved for building performance, while maintaining cost control. The homes will be retained in community ownership via the Community Land Trust and be available at an affordable rent. Cost control is important to ensure that the low cost affordable rents will cover the financing cost of the project – including grant support from Homes England. The homes are designed to give a flexible layout for either starter homes with 'working from home' space, or for older residents. Both of these groups are struggling to find affordable housing in the area, as evidenced by the Housing Needs Survey.
- **effect on the character of an area**
  The homes will use local materials for walls and roofs to blend with the character of the area. The community gardens will be used either by the residents or other locals to bond the new development to the area. The management of the community areas will probably be based on the local Community Garden at New Mill, where some of the design team volunteer.
- **noise, disturbance and odour**
  A noise survey has been included in the planning pack, and noise considerations included in the plans. The noise survey showed this to be a quiet rural area, and because the new homes are cradled in the hollow of the old quarry there is a disconnection to other homes nearby. The bins are planned with a covered roof and are vertically and horizontally separated from other homes.
- **impact on highway safety and traffic**
  The highway impact has been studied in the traffic surveys and highways assessment. This showed that while traffic levels are generally low, the existing bend is dangerous because of lack of a footpath on the inside bend. The plans therefore include a new 2m wide footpath that will improve the safety of local pedestrians – especially those walking to the nearby school or nursery. The development includes a play area for the residents that is overlooked by the homes and by a community seating area. This encourages play away from the road,

and because cars are also kept away from outside the houses then sight lines of the play area are improved. The plans also include dedicated cycle storage for each home to encourage and enable cycling rather than car use. The proximity to local bus services also enables residents get around without a car. This is important both because the residents may well not afford a car (they are affordable homes and so incomes may be limited) and because low fossil fuel use will become increasingly important.

- **previous planning applications**
  Most of the recent planning approvals for multiple houses in the area have been for expensive homes with the minimum possible affordable housing. This development is for 100% of the homes to be affordable.
- **Development Plan policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and other planning policies**
  While building on the green belt should be minimised, it is specifically justified in planning policy where it is supplying affordable housing where the need is positively identified.
- **government guidance and legislation**
  The government has agreed to abide by the Paris Agreement to halve fossil fuel by 2030 and have zero by 2050, however there are inadequate policies in place to meet this legislation. Providing affordable housing that use no gas for heating meets the Paris Agreement, and again provides an example to others for what should be being built if we want a liveable planet for ourselves and our children.
- **effect on living conditions - for example the effect on sunlight and daylight, privacy of neighbours and being overlooked**
  The impact on light and privacy on neighbours is minimal because the new development is planned for the base of the old quarry, which is 4.5m below the level of the neighbouring property and behind a hedge on the top of the quarry wall.
- **effect on neighbouring properties**
  There will be disruption to neighbouring properties during construction, in particular the local dog walkers will have to use local footpaths rather than the informal route that has been taken through this derelict land. On completion of the project a path will be available again to link the local copse to the new safe pavement. The locals will also have to either make compost heaps or use the local recycling centres for their garden waste rather than using the quarry.
- **what the building or development will look like.**
  The development has been designed to blend with the local vernacular, including building the homes in stone, and incorporating dry stone walls. They will however have more green elements that are not as common in the area including electric car charging, PV panels and heat pumps. Because of the amount of green landscaping and trees included, the far views will gradually mature and blend the homes to the neighbouring fields and copse.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the application

Emailed to dc.admin@kirklees.gov.uk. 15/9/22