

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to make comments and objections to planning application 2023/93667.

As a homeowner on Storthes Hall Lane, I don't appear to have received the consultation leaflet that the planning consultant said was dropped to approximately 100 properties in close proximity to site, on 8th December.

I have only been made aware of this proposal through posts on social media.

I have taken time to read documentation attached to the application and would like to raise the following points:

The planning case report suggests that circa 40% of the site is currently unoccupied by students which by my calculations means that circa 60% is occupied. With recent news in the local media that some of the buildings in the town centre have been re-allocated from student use to use as housing for asylum seekers, could this figure be incorrect?

School provision – The planning case report submitted suggests that Highburton and Kirkburton First Schools along with Kirkburton Middle, Honley High and King James would be the schools of choice.

The assessment from Kirklees has calculated additional spaces for Farnley Tyas, Kirkburton Middle and Shelley College as this is the pyramid structure for the area. There are buses for Kirkburton Middle and Shelley College that run along Farnley Road into Thurstonland and Stocksmoor and then to the relevant school.

For any of the other schools mentioned there is no school bus service and would necessitate journeys by car as they are not within a reasonable walking distance, especially during periods of bad weather or during the winter when there is limited light during the mornings and evenings.

Parking outside the local first schools is already an issue during drop off and collection times so additional cars from a development on the outskirts of the villages will only add to this.

The travel plan suggests a maximum of 20% of children will be taken to school by car but due to the remote nature of the site and the lack of school transport how else will they get there?

The assessment from Kirklees has calculated that Farnley Tyas and Kirkburton Middle would need financial support to increase class sizes to provide for additional children as they are currently full. Would this calculation be applied if other schools in the area are chosen?

Healthcare provision – There is no mention of dental provision for any additional patients arriving in the local area. Research on the NHS website shows that there are no local Dental Practices taking any adult NHS patients, the closest NHS Dentist currently taking patients is based on Trinity Street in Huddersfield which is a good 20 mins from site providing there is no traffic on route.

Both Kirkburton and Shepley Health Centres say they are accepting new patients but there is a statement on Shepley's website saying that due to the volume of housing being built in their catchment area and the lack of additional funding patients should expect that waiting times for routine appointments may be longer than expected. From experience and also comments in the Kirkburton and Highburton community facebook group, a routine appointment can be anything from upwards of 2 weeks at Kirkburton.

Will the developers be able to provide funding to assist with the volume of new patients expected in the area?

Transport/Travel – The planning case report states that there is a regular bus service from site that operates between every 5 and 15 minutes at peak times or 30 mins at off peak. Unfortunately, this is a University operated service which I assume will cease once there are no longer any students that require the service.

In the Transport Assessment it says that *A development of 261 dwellings would not provide sufficient demand to fund the extension of the existing dedicated bus service. Discussions will be held with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to determine whether proportionate bus service improvements are feasible.*

The 341 Stocks Moor to Huddersfield used to travel via Storthes Hall Lane, turning round in Dene Bottom but due to the lack of interest this section of the route was removed and it now only travels on Farnley Road.

Currently the only options available for buses are either the 341 which runs on Farnley Road every 2 hours or the D2/D3 which run on Penistone Road every hour, unless you walk to either Far Dene Highburton or George Street Kirkburton where the buses run every 30mins.

The volume of traffic on Penistone Road would suggest that the estimated walking times included in the Travel Plan are not realistic. I do on occasion walk from my property to Kirkburton and can be stood for nearly 10 minutes just waiting to cross the road.

The Travel Plan suggests that a co-ordinator is going to be appointed to promote working from home and also home deliveries, with the objective of reducing travel.

It may reduce travel from the actual occupants but surely home deliveries are still going to arrive with vans travelling on the same roads that the occupants would use if they travelled themselves, with the result of travel not being reduced at all.

The same plan has a list of local shops within walking distance, including the Costcutter shop on site which according to a further document is due to be demolished. Was the author of the plan not given full details of the proposal or has this all been generated on a computer model?

The transport assessment claims that between 143-156 two way trips will be generated during the peak period. As there are 261 houses, assumption would be that most of these will be 2 car, if not 3 car families and would expect that there will be more than 156 trips a day leaving site.

The same transport assessment states that there is a 40mph limit and has carried out a speed study with the view that there is an excellent safety record.

From experience, standing in my garden, there are a number of vehicles leaving Penistone Road that like to speed up to the bend just before the Mansion gates and then have to brake sharply. If there are additional vehicles using this road, it may be advantageous to look at traffic calming measures as there has recently been an accident where a car missed the bend and caused damage to the gate pillars at the end of the Mansion drive.

Construction period – The planning case reports suggests that the construction period will generate significant investment in terms of construction value and associated spend. Where is this spend likely to occur? There are no immediate local shops other than Kirkburton which has traffic and parking issues already and probably won't sustain any additional requirements for parking, especially once the village car park becomes pay and display and cars that would ordinarily use this are parked along the local roads instead.

Drainage – Are there any plans to look into alternative drainage arrangements for the surface water on site?

Currently in periods of bad weather water can be seen cascading through the dry stone wall at the side of the Mansion gates. This then flows all the way down the lane to collect at the bottom and more often than not causes a flood in the yard at Jones Lighting, as this is at a lower level than the road surface.

Bridge – The bridge over Woodsome Beck at Dene Bottom raises concerns. There is no footpath nor is the bridge wide enough for a footpath which means that pedestrians have to use the road to pass. If there is an increase in traffic, will this be a safe for pedestrians?

The bridge is also very narrow and not wide enough for more than one car. It is already damaged – cracks are visible, and the parapet is moving away from the road. Are there any plans for this to be repaired/strengthened to cope with not only the anticipated volume of traffic from new residents but also construction traffic?

Junction with Penistone Road – Table 7.2 in the Transport assessment shows the junction is predicted to operate within capacity with the addition of growth during peak hours. I assume this is another computer generated model as this junction is already an issue and will only get worse with the addition of any more traffic.

It only takes 2 cars waiting to exit the junction from Storthes Hall Lane travelling towards Shepley for traffic to build up over the bridge and up the lane. Whilst these cars are waiting to exit there isn't much space for cars leaving Penistone Road to get past due to several narrow pinch points, especially by Loading Systems yard. This then causes traffic to build up on Penistone Road waiting to turn right.

There's also recently been issues with cars not exiting Penistone Road by the Spring Grove on the left filter lane and actually trying to turn left on the tight bend. When the driver realises that there isn't enough room to actually turn left they are reversing back onto the main road, again causing traffic to build up.

This junction will require serious improvement to be able to cope with any extra volume of traffic but how will that be possible when the road levels are so differing and there doesn't appear to be any scope to widen Storthes Hall Lane.

Before the University developed the site there was a consultation from another planning company that had a proposal for more houses (as they were also going to use the space now owned by Younger Homes) which never went before planning. They had a proposal for an alternative road which now seems quite sensible but unfortunately due to the change in land ownership this would no longer be feasible as Shepley Spring have their distribution centre where the road was supposed to join into Penistone Road.

Historic Buildings – It is disappointing to see that neither The Venue or Reception building will be kept on site. Both buildings are being used by the local community as well as the student population. The Venue has many community events, gift fairs and also offers a wedding venue that seems to be quite popular. Surely there could be some benefit to keeping these buildings on the development?

Local developments – There are currently 2 sites in Shepley being developed and also an advertising hoarding on Penistone Road at Jumble Wood for another development due to be started. There is an application for more houses by Hermitage Park, adjacent to Penistone Road. How many houses can this area sustain with an infrastructure that hasn't been designed for the volume?

There have been recent reports in the national media that a large number of the major house building firms have actually slowed down their rates of construction due to the current economic crisis.

Indeed it appears that one of the developments in Shepley has slowed their construction as they are unable to sell the houses planned.

If the ground is cleared for the development at Storthes Hall before an upturn in requirements for new homes will we be left in the same situation as the adjacent site which is supposed to be a retirement village but is currently a barren wasteland and has been for at least 15 years.

I trust that these comments will be taken into consideration when the application is discussed.

Regards

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