50 HOUSE DEVELOPMENT OFF SHEPLEY ROAD, STOCKSMOOR

STRONG OBJECTION – APPLCIATION REFERENCE 2024/62/91242/E

ALTHOUGH THIS IS A LENGHTY AND WELL CONSIDERED OBJECTION I WOULD URGE YOU TO PLEASE CONSIDER ALL POINTS IN DETAIL

Local Plan

As this is a site of outstanding natural beauty, we feel that an application for such a large development should not be considered without the presence of a current Local Plan which would afford the highest level of consideration and an adequate level of protection for this safeguarded portion of previously allocated Greenbelt land.

Public Consultation Concerns

Public consultation was undertaken **after** the submission of Planning Application Reference 2024/62/91242/E submitted on 30th April 2024. This demonstrates a distinct lack of regard for the local community or desire to take any action based on feedback provided.

On 18th March 2024 Kirklees Council strongly encouraged Newett Home to carry out a public consultation and engagement **prior** to submitting their planning application, in accordance with paragraph 40 of the NPPF. This did not happen.

Flyers for feedback were received by residents after validation of their full application on 10th May 2024 leaving no opportunity for consideration of any local knowledge.

Newett's website provides no receipt for submission of feedback on their contact form, no tear off strip as suggested and therefore no proof of submission – is this perhaps intentional? We look forward to reviewing their "Detailed Statement of Community Involvement" following their conclusion of the consultation process as detailed in their Planning Statement.

Highways Concerns

As per Kirklees Councils Pre-Application Enquiry Response (2023/21443) 18 March 2024 we strongly agree with the following statement…

The development will generate a significant level of additional traffic along Stone Wood Lane, which leads to Shepley circa 1km to the east, with this route being attractive to development users due to the amenities available in Shepley (school, shops, medical facilities etc) and for onward journeys to the south. However, this road has a number of physical constraints, which include it being single track width for long sections, having restricted forward visibility, lack of adequate passing places, and no pedestrian provision etc. The road also forms part of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 627 (Kirkburton to Millhouse Green).

In light of the above, it is considered that Stone Wood Lane is unsuitable for any further

intensification in use from the development; and it does not appear possible to deliver any significant improvements to the road within the highway boundary to address the existing deficiencies (e.g. additional passing places are likely to require third party land acquisition). As such, HDM cannot support the proposed residential development at this site.

Although Newett Homes have commissioned an up to date Traffic Assessment, this does not include a realistic assessment of the proposed new trips generated as part of the development. Essentially, the survey states that 82% of road users would choose the least direct route to access amenities and other road users visiting the site would ignore all forms of navigation which would automatically pick the most direct route – apparently they would go from Shepley to Stocksmoor via Shelley?. The Stones Wood Lane route is one we currently use on a regular basis and we are often forced to reverse large sections to enable passing due to the lengthy areas of single track, often encountering others already in altercation. Further intensification would result in complete obstruction of the route as is the situation on occasion. This route is already challenging during quiet periods.

This route is a high frequency route for walkers and cyclists and this has huge benefits for sustainability and wellbeing and would not be possible should this route become at further risk of intensification. Large farm vehicles accessing farmland and horse riders also travel along this route regularly.

Stones Wood Lane is not a bus route and therefore is not maintained in such a way to prevent excessive accidents during snowy periods and accidents due to slippery leaves. It is not a gritted route. The gradient, narrowness and speed limit of this road gives very little allowance for errors during autumn/winter months and we have seen a number of cars have accidents or become stranded during these times. Overhanging trees on this road are not maintained, leading to large falling branches during wet, windy or snowy periods which cover the road.

All routes exiting the Hamlet have poorly maintained or no walkways in large section, with the exception of Thunderbridge Road which leads onto the major Penistone Road with no assisted crossing point. Due to the lack of a safe walking route to Kirkburton Middle School, Kirklees Council pay for our daughter to receive a free annual School Metro bus pass to eradicate the risks that would be posed should she walk the most direct route.

The route along Stocksmoor Road to Thurstonland First School via Whitestones has poorly maintained and very narrow walkways (you cannot walk with child side by side) and a dangerous corner at Butts Farm where cars drive over the walkway on this 60mph stretch of road to avoid oncoming traffic. This is currently an accident black spot. Cars further round the corner regularly crash through the wall into the local field. Regularly rebuilt by Kirklees Council.

Prior to any further development of the Stocksmoor area there should be a full and honest assessment of the roads and walkways in and out of the area enabling safe and sustainable travel and access to amenities prior to further intensification. If you would not walk the route with your child it is not sufficient to justify sustainability. If upgrade is inappropriate then **no** further development should take place.

We currently have no bus service between Shepley and Stocksmoor to provide access to local amenities including the nearest local shop, GP Surgery, Dentist. To access these we would be required to use the train for sustainable travel at £3.90 return (no return within 1 hour) which adds a large cost to your pint of milk and a lot of time. Transpennine Express has plans for an upgrade by 2035 with no guarantees. Bus service into town is also less than 1 per hour. Trains are also regularly cancelled. None of these current provisions are sufficient for reliable use.

Over the past 2 years there have been numerous vehicle collisions in the village. Knocking over walls, Village Stone, vehicles lifted out of roadwork trenches, vehicle spun 180 degrees on crossroad are just a few and none of which are recorded on Crashmap but images are available should evidence be required. Luckily nobody kerbside at the time of each incident so far. Newetts travel report does not include any data more recent than 2022.

During the past 2 years there have been a number of new development sites within surrounding villages which has already intensified vehicle movements through Stones Wood Lane as this is a convenient cut through for people travelling from Shepley to Farnley Tyas, Honley, Almondbury and in the opposite direction. There are also proposals for further development on the Storthes Hall campus along with other sites which would, without a doubt, aggravate this route further.

Newett Homes have omitted to report on any critical matters which would deem this development a non-starter. This is a very dismissive attitude with assumptions made by Newett Homes to skirt over real issues with a very disappointing, disregard for Highway safety and the welfare of the local community.

Design Concerns

The proposed development includes only generic house types used across Newett Development sites.

In this rural setting we feel that a more tailored and sympathetic approach considering local vernacular design should be adopted. It should be imperative that all feedback is considered to ensure that integration is seamless and reducing the impact on the woodland boundary of this greenbelt location. Again, the presence of a Local Plan prior to consideration of any proposals in such an area so close to the greenbelt should be a must.

Due to the raised nature of the site, any development must be adapted to reduce impact on the Street Scene of the surrounding area. The current proposals pose a dramatic threat to the Street scene of Station Road. 2.5 story properties are not appropriate on this site. 2 storey properties adjacent the boundary with Station Road are approx. 3m above ridge line of existing properties.

Design elements such as entrance canopies and fenestration details are generic, poor, outdated, lack any imagination and are not in keeping with local design. House types submitted have conflicting roof details. Generic roof details have been submitted when

reduced roof pitches could have been specified to minimise impact – The Saxton is a prime example. The layout and orientation of properties shows no effort to take advantage of the fantastic surroundings available or promote a high quality of living and appears entirely driven by a need to meet road layout requirements.

Detached single garages have been specified to accommodate tandem parking which would enable the site to achieve the minimum parking requirements but would also lead to vehicles parking on the roadside, creating congestion. This is also a very outdated design and integral garaging would have been more appropriate in this instance. In one of the properties an integral double garage has been specified but can only accommodate one vehicle (being 4.5m x 6.0m Internally). No design details for stand-alone garaging have been provided. Visitor parking only meets minimum standards.

All parts of the site layout show poor amenity spaces or poor access to amenity spaces. Bin stores at or near maximum distances from roadside.

The raised nature of the site also raises concerns regarding water run off towards adjacent properties who have already experienced issues with localised flooding and taken costly measures to mitigate this. This development will also adversely impact or intensify flooding at Thunderbridge which became an issue following the Shelley Park development.

During periods of heavy rain, we often experience water rushing along Station Road creating a mini river effect and then travelling down Birks Lane and coming up through its carriageway on the approach to Thunderbridge.

Current parking for Sunside, Stocksmoor is limited and there are no proposals to mitigate this as part of the proposals. Cars currently parking at the proposed new entrance to the site. Cars will potentially be forced to move further along Shepley Road, causing congestion.

A threshold strip of land around the ancient woodland has been proposed but there has been no reference to protection of the site against any future development. The homes proposed meet minimum standards leaving no opportunity for expansion without limitations and further impact.

Biodiversity planting is minimal and not respectful of the area.

Given the rural setting of the development site we would consider the proposed densities as extremely excessive. The proposals for this hamlet increase the total number of properties by 30% with this 1 development. The Stocksmoor hamlet and its infrastructure simply cannot support these densities.

Huge, unsightly walls are planned to retain earth where build-up of land is proposed to permit additional housing – is this necessary and would earth brought in affect current biodiversity close to the site boundary? These walls will also have an impact on the aspect from within the ancient woodland and could intensify flooding in the direction of properties on Station Road.

Materials Concern

An inappropriate material pallet has been proposed with Artifical Stone, Brick and Grey concrete roof tiles specified, rather than the more sympathetic use of Natural stone (tumbled & dyed) walling and Grey/Blue natural slate roof coverings for this rural development.

Ecological Concerns

As parts of the site will only allow for excavation to a maximum of 2m depth without blasting (due to hard rock) it would not be possible to mitigate the impact of this development on the Station Road Street Scene through the excavation method.

The longest resident of Stocksmoor advised of a number of culverts and historic wells running through the site which would require further investigation.

Wildlife and Landscape Concerns

Current inhabitants of this development site are several species of Owl including Barn Owl's (filmed this May, hunting prey within development site) and a variety of other birds, Deer, Bats, Foxes, Pheasants, Badgers and Reptiles. We have seen no evidence of investigation into how the development will negatively impact this wildlife haven and their feeding ground. There have been no details provided to demonstrate how wildlife will be accommodated or protected i.e. bat boxes, development restrictions during nesting periods and the impact on this feeding ground along with other appropriate measures.

3 No. trees along the edge of the greenbelt are proposed for removal to facilitate the site access which would be detrimental to the local amenity and community. These trees are on the boundary of an ancient woodland and form an important part of the landscape and are a haven for wildlife. TPO for these 3 No. trees submitted 27th May 2024 - Currently Pending Decision.

Light pollution from the proposed development would have a significant negative impact on the adjoining woodland and associated wildlife.

Amenity

An additional 50 homes would put a huge amount of pressure on our very small local Schools. Thurstonland First School is the closest to Stocksmoor and has recently been extended to it's capacity. The school has an annual intake of 12 children and so even a small increase in need would have a large impact. Alternatively, the pressure would fall on Stones Wood Lane for residents to travel to Shepley (twice daily) for a school place.

The nearest local shop, GP Surgery and Dentist are not on a safe walking route and therefore require access via car or train which is not sustainable.

Public transport is currently limited, costly and unreliable.

In conclusion

Whilst the proposal would have positive benefits in terms of housing provision, the site does not represent a sustainable location and would result in obvious and irrevocable damage to the surrounding countryside and the character of this clear edge to the settlement.

The proposals unfortunately have all the hallmarks of an ill-conceived and opportunistic response to the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan and a corresponding shortage of housing land.

Permission for this development would conflict with national planning policy objectives of securing good design, conserving and enhancing the natural environment and open countryside, and ensuring all development is supported by appropriate transport infrastructure. It would also demonstrate an utter disregard for highway safety, in particular the safety of local residents and would have a significant adverse traffic impact.

The layout and design of the proposed development are mediocre and unimaginative and not to a standard fitting for this particular site. The proposals are lacking in any attempt to achieve successful integration into this beautiful rural setting.