

From:
Sent: 22 June 2024 11:03
To: DCAdmin
Subject: Planning Application number: 2024/62/91242/E

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Re: Planning Application 2024/62/91242/E

Land north east of, Shepley Road, Stocksmoor, Huddersfield, HD4 6XW

I would like to strongly object to this planning application on the following grounds:

1. Highways / Road Safety

This development is located at the end of Shepley Road, with the access to the site on a **dangerous** bend at the end of a 30mph residential road, and beginning of a national speed limit road (Stone Wood Lane). Whist the developers have done their visibility splay calculations, cars regularly speed on both Shepley Road, and Stone Wood Lane. As a resident of Shepley Road, I would argue I have far more local knowledge than a one week traffic survey and the risk of accidents between cars leaving and accessing the proposed site is significant. In particular, cars coming up Stone Wood Lane to turn right into the site will be at risk of a shunt from behind on a regular basis. Coming up the hill is a 60mph speed limit which, with a stopping distance at such speed being 73m or 240 feet, means cars may not be able to stop in time to avoid such a shunt as it is not possible to see the access point from 240 feet away because of the bend. Even at 40mph the stopping distance is 118 feet and again you cannot see the access point from 118 feet away on Stone Wood Lane.

This is a serious issue that should not be glossed over.

The proposal is to build 50 new house which will lead to a significant increase in cars in Stocksmoor. A survey undertaken by over 120 residents reveals that over 75% of households

in Stocksmoor have 2 or more cars, with those households with one or no cars being elderly residents in their 80s. This strongly suggests that the likely number of extra cars arising from this development will be c100.

This will have a significant impact on the local highway network and this size of development would have an unacceptable effect on highway safety. The development is located at the top of Stone Wood Lane which is the most direct route to Shepley. Shepley is the nearest village for shops, GP surgery, dentist, and school and Stone Wood Lane will undoubtedly be used by new residents.

In a residential survey carried out with 120 responses, 85% of Stocksmoor residents use Stone Wood Lane to access Shepley and beyond, which strongly suggests new residents will do likewise and will **NOT** follow the route suggested by the developers – via Station Road, Birks Lane, Dam Hill and the A629. Indeed, Dam Hill is not a suitable road for an increase in traffic as it is narrow and has parked cars at the top end, restricting access and visibility.

Stone Wood Lane is essentially a single-track road with limited passing spaces, restricted forward visibility in many places due to bends in the road, and often leads to confrontations between vehicles coming in opposite directions. Indeed, the residential survey revealed that 95% of the time, residents meet other cars and have to manoeuvre or reverse to get past. This road is already under significant pressures from current traffic and adding to it which this development undoubtedly will, is likely to lead to more problems and more confrontations.

This road and Shepley Road are not gritted in winter and we already see cars abandoned on a regular basis on this route. Adding traffic to this route will inevitably lead to accidents.

In addition, this is a route used by many residents on a daily basis to walk dogs, walk to the woods, with no footpath and no street lighting. Adding traffic to this road will add significantly to the risk of pedestrian injury. The residential survey revealed that 81% of residents who walk down Stone Wood Lane feel somewhat unsafe or very unsafe, and this will only increase with extra traffic.

Stone Wood Lane is part of the National Cycling Network (Route 627) and is used regularly by cyclists from across the area. Adding additional traffic to this route does not encourage additional cycling as per the aim of sustainable transport.

It is also a route regularly used by horse riders and farm vehicles, tractors with trailers.

I don't think there can be any doubt that this development will result in further intensification of Stone Wood Lane despite the developer's assertions to the contrary – their claims that new residents will go the long way round to Shepley are completely absurd. Newitt Homes are trying to skate over this major area of concern by stating only 3.8% of trips will be via this route. This is just a ridiculous statement.

Indeed, the crossroads at Shepley Road, Station Road, Cross Lane, and Fulstone road has seen 4 accidents in the last 12 months so as an alternative route is not a safe option for additional traffic.

Highways have already stated: **'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'.

It is inconceivable that planning would be approved at this site given HDM cannot support it and to do so would be extremely reckless.

The developer states that Stocksmoor is relatively well equipped by public transport needs. This is not true. The bus service is two hourly, not hourly as stated, and transports residents to Farnly Tyas, Almonbury and Huddersfield – residents cannot get a bus to the shops and local amenities at Shepley or indeed Kirkburton, and therefore need to use their cars. The alternative train journey to Shepley is hourly and the service is unreliable.

As regards walking from the village, I have already expressed concerns about Stone Wood Lane, but walking to Thurstonland for school children is also a safety concern. Much of the walk up Stocksmoor Road, via Whitestones has very narrow walkways, is on a 60mph stretch for much of it and has no street lighting again for large parts of it, making it an unpleasant experience and not particularly safe. There have been several accidents on the bend from Thurstonland to Stocksmoor near Butts Farm, as the council must know as it has rebuilt the wall on several occasions.

Alternative shops are available at Kirkburton 2.1 miles away which is a 45 minute walk so new residents will not walk to Kirkburton, they will use cars.

Policy LP21 expects development proposals to show that they can accommodate sustainable modes of transport and be accessed effectively and safely by all users. 'All proposals shall: a. ensure the safe and efficient flow of traffic within the development and on the surrounding highway network'

This development clearly does not accord with LP21 nor does it meet the requirements of the NPPF.

2. Sustainable Development

This land was greenbelt until 2019 when it was reclassified as **safeguarded** land, and should not be built upon during the Local Plan period to 2031. The only reason it is being allowed to be brought forward is due to the lack of a five-year housing plan from Kirklees Council, and only then can it be developed if it is deemed a sustainable development.

Despite the developer's claim to the contrary, this is not a sustainable development and as such planning should be refused.

Social Benefits: these are limited to 10 affordable houses, the rest are 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses – Kirklees does not have a shortage of 4 and 5 bedroom houses. This is an opportunistic move by Newett Homes to build several large houses in an area where house prices are higher than average for Kirklees.

The developer claims the proposed development features high-quality, accessible and useable Public Open Space to contribute towards the creation of healthy communities – this is an absurd statement when all they are creating is a small useable space at the entrance to

the site. Stocksmoor already has a park for children and is surrounded by beautiful open spaces and woodland – we do not need Newett Homes to help us with our health!

Economic Benefits: This development will not create any jobs for the local community either during or after the construction. This is a national company building homes across the country using their own contractors, they will not use local workers, and even if they did the benefits would be extremely short term.

Kirklees council will receive council tax from residents if this development was built in a more suitable location.

Stocksmoor does not have any amenities where new residents can spend their money, so there will be no impact on the local economy.

Environmental Benefits: This development will have a significant impact on the environment.

The field in question is home to much wildlife including deer, owls, badgers, and numerous birds. Such a development will destroy this wonderful habitat.

This site is a site of outstanding natural beauty and this application should not be considered without the presence of a current Local Plan – this application is being rushed through ahead of LP2 and should not be allowed to proceed.

The site is bordered by ancient woodland and this development could cause damage to and deterioration to this woodland. It is difficult to know what damage will be done as it could take years for the impact to be felt but this is a risk that should not be taken. There will be increased levels of air and light pollution, noise and vibration, especially during the construction phase. It will destroy the natural habitat connections between the wood and the field in which the wildlife currently live. There will be significant increased disturbance to wildlife from noise, additional people, additional traffic, domestic pets. It will significantly change the landscape character of the area.

It will not enhance the landscape at all and will destroy a wonderful green area of the village.

3. The Design

The developers state that the site is 2.5 Hectares when calculating the density figures but this is the full site. When the areas allocated for a buffer zone, attenuation tanks, foul water treatment facilities, open space, are taken into account, the actual area for housing is c 1.3 hectares which means a density of 38 units per hectare, which is way above the current

residential density of around 10 units per hectare. This proposal is therefore not in character with the existing village and is contrary to LP24 of the Local Plan.

Stocksmoor is a hamlet of just c 170 houses spread over a large area and an additional 50 houses increases the size of the village by 30% in one go and is clearly over development of the hamlet – this proposal is not compatible with its surroundings so again is contrary to Kirklees own Housebuilders Design Guide.

The development will not be integrated into the village nor reflect the character of the village as it is proposed to be built on the edge of the village behind existing residential properties. It will be a separate mini housing estate stuck on the edge of a beautiful, rural hamlet.

The type of houses proposed are just generic house types from the Newitt brochure and have not been tailored to take into account the surrounding area and the materials used.

The site itself is a worry in terms of flooding. Whilst it is a Flood Zone 1, the site itself is sloped in various places and water run-off is likely to be a major issue. The area is on the site of an old reservoir and there are several underground streams and culverts in this area. This needs a full investigation as water will find its way out somewhere and with Stocksmoor this is often at Thunderbridge.

The railway line at Stocksmoor has been flooded during periods of torrential downpour and the additional surface water created by this development will add to this risk.

4. Local amenities

Increasing the size of the village which has no amenities apart from a pub and a railway station does not make any sense in terms of sustainable transport as all new residents will use cars to access shops, schools, GP surgeries, hairdressers, cafes. It is a complete fallacy to think they will use buses or walk to these amenities – it will not happen, people will drive. It is not within a sustainable location.

The local school, Thurstonland First School, only takes 12 children each year and is currently near capacity with no room to expand.

The school nearest in distance, Shepley First School, is and has been oversubscribed for the last 5 years.

The local GP practice in Shepley is full.

All of the above means new residents will have to travel, and to travel by car to get their children to school, to visit a doctor, and as said previously, to visit the shops.

This is simply the wrong location for a development of this size.

5. Residential amenity

This development will have a significant impact on our residential amenity. We are specifically identified in Newitt's Planning Statement and considered 'Major Adverse'

In terms of our view, which is currently open fields, we are classed as Major Adverse and will be for 15 years! This is not acceptable and is contrary to LP32 as it is not enhancing the landscape character of the area.

We also object to this application on the grounds of our loss of outlook, as this development will have an adverse overbearing effect. We will be looking at the side of a house at the bottom of our garden rather than the open field we currently enjoy. We will suffer from noise and light pollution given the proximity of our property to the development.

We purchased this house in 2012 when the field in question was classified as green belt land. We purchased it because of the location, the outlook, the quiet nature of Stocksmoor, and paid a premium to live on this side of Shepley Road. This development would shatter these extremely important issues to us.

6. Community Engagement

The below statement is direct from Kirklees Housebuilders Design Guide:

Community Engagement: Developers should agree what engagement will be undertaken with the local community and elected members and work together as early as possible involving them in preparing plans. Community engagement should be undertaken in conjunction with the council, or agreed with the council prior to being undertaken. Particular attention should be paid to how the development can make a

positive contribution to placemaking, with an understanding of the aspirations and needs of the community.

Newitt Homes have been woeful in their engagement with the local Stocksmoor community. The first residents knew of the proposal was via a small postcard posted through our doors on May 11th 2024 – this was after the submission of their planning application on 30th April! They also gave us just a couple of weeks to feedback via their website. Kirklees Council strongly encouraged Newitt Homes to carry out a public consultation and engagement on 18th March 2024 prior to submitting their application yet they did not.

This demonstrates a complete lack of regard and interest in the views of the community and clearly suggests they are not interested in what the current residents think and how they feel about such a large development.

Indeed, only this week, Newett Homes objected to a small banner erected on the gate to the field by us as residents to remind locals to submit their comments by June 26th. They took a heavy-handed approach, demanding it be removed, even though they do not yet own the gate and field, and if we did not remove it, they would come and remove it and **dispose** of it themselves. Is this what is called 'community engagement!'

To reward such blatant disregard and contempt of the community with an approval of this application would quite frankly be astonishing and outrageous.

7. Construction Phase

The construction phase is an important aspect of this planning application as approval would mean serious and significant disruption for Stocksmoor, its residents, and those commuting through Stocksmoor on a daily basis, for a considerable length of time.

The access to the site, **on a bend**, will have to be via Shepley Road which is a small residential street – it cannot be via Stone Wood lane. Shepley Road will struggle to cope with the volume and size of vehicles that will be accessing the site on a daily basis. Newett Homes are currently building on Penistone Road at Fenay Bridge, and the size of the construction vehicles used on the site is likely to be a major issue for this site at Stocksmoor because of the access and the size of vehicles required to deliver them to site.

Shepley Road is not gritted in winter and consequently residents park cars on the road at times of snow/ ice and will lead to congestion.

8. Conclusion

I object to this application on a number of grounds as outlined above.

It goes against so many of the Kirklees Local Policies that to approve it would make a mockery of such policies.

Newitt Homes in their conclusion state they **'have demonstrated that the site provides a fully policy compliant scheme' 'The supporting reports have demonstrated there are no technical reasons or environmental impacts that would prevent the site from coming forward for development and that would justify the refusal of planning permission.'**

I fail to understand how they can claim the above when there can be no doubt this application fails to meet several aspects of the Local Policies, namely LP3, LP7, LP20, LP21, LP30, LP32, LP52, and Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the NPPF

In addition there are clearly a number of technical issues and environmental issues to overcome.

Stocksmoor is the wrong location for sustainable development and this application should be refused.

5 Shepley Road

Stocksmoor

HD4 6XW