Ref: 2024/62/91242/E
FAO Case Officer Ellie Thornhill

Planning Department
Kirklees Council
dc.admin@kirklees.gov.uk

To whom it may concern,

I write regarding the proposed development by Newett Homes at Shepley Road, Stocksmoor.

1. My first objection is concern over the level of inaccuracies present within the application documents submitted by Newett and Newett's disregard for our local community and lack of consultation.
   It is clear this development has been planned from afar with minimal time spent on site. All aerial plans illustrate the presence of large trees at the boundary of plot 6. One of which was removed more than 4 years ago. Further to that, aerial photographs and floor plans of neighbouring properties are not up to date, these are at least 2 years out of date with reference to our own home, not demonstrating building works. These errors are clear as they are a misrepresentation of our own plot and boundary. How may more misrepresentations are likely present therefore on these finalised plans for 50 houses? Newett disappointingly leaflet dropped the village to invite consultation on their plans at the same time as submitting their planning application. This illustrates how much care and consideration was given to villagers in the plans you are being presented with. There has been absolutely no meaningful engagement with our community. It is recommended developers consult with communities before submitting applications and that they consider responses before finalising proposals and submitting, this did not occur. It is suggested that the consultation process underpins genuine community development. It does not feel Newett have any interest in benefiting our village or community but rather securing development in a lucrative area with no consideration.

2. Inappropriate location
   Stocksmoor is a small village of 180 homes. A housing development of 50 new homes is entirely disproportionate to the size of our village, an increase of around 30%. Furthermore the population of Stocksmoor is skewed towards older residents over families. Adding 50 family homes, many of which are 3, 4 and 5 bed could realistically increase the population of

the village by 50 %. This seems ridiculous for a village which does not have a shop, a school or any childcare. We are also poorly served by infrequent public transport on 2 set routes. The development is entirely contradictory to the concept of neighbourhoods for which planners and public health should all be striving. Much work has been done on the principles of neighbourhoods and that we should be aiming to create communities in which we can meet most of our daily needs within a 20 minute walk of our home.

Newett's design and access statement itself backs up the lack of access to amenities with the closest schools being 28 and 31 minute walks respectively and the nearest shop being similar. The access document does not highlight that all of these routes include large stretches of road with no pavement. Take for example the walk to Thurstonland First school, from the end of Whitstones (Stocksmoor) there is no consistent pavement until you reach 51 Town Moor road, this is a distance of 0.7 miles. From a safety perspective it would be unwise to walk these routes with younger primary aged children and as a parent, while it may take me 31 minutes at a brisk pace to walk to my child's first school, this journey would be significantly increased were I walking with a young child. You would also be unable to walk the route toward Shepley with a pram should a family have younger children, at points there is not room for a car to pass a pedestrian let alone pram and nowhere to safely move a pram off the road should you meet a vehicle. This is an important consideration when proposing family homes with Stone Wood Lane as the main route to amenities because it removes the possibility of walking and necessitates car use for young families.

Finally, such a large population increase would irreversibly change our community. We are a small village with a close knit community. There are regular celebrations and village get togethers at the small village hall which would not have capacity to accommodate 30-50% more villagers, this could destroy the very fabric of the community.

3. My main opposition to this development relates to road safety. Stone Wood Lane **IS** Stocksmoor's main route to amenities, our local shop, childcare for nursery aged children and closest health centre. It is a narrow road with infrequent passing points and steep banking through the woodland section. This route cannot cope with increased traffic. It is very challenging should you meet one vehicle in the wrong stretch. There are sections without even room to pass a pedestrian. AMA suggest 125m of the 1.5km Lane narrows but has passing places (2.2.5 Transport Assessment), the accurate distance of road which is single track is closer to 5 x this. This alone illustrates the creativity presented within the travel document.

   Again there has been no meaningful engagement with villagers for the transport assessment provided by Andrew Moseley Associates. Had there been any form of survey the numbers may have had some meaning. What is presented is factual appearing fiction painting the picture the developers need, that 50 houses can be built on the bend of this road, but only about 1 car an hour will turn left and use Stone Wood Lane everyone else wanting to drop their child at Shepley first school, nursery, visiting the GP or who needs to join Penistone Road will take a detour back through Stocksmoor, Thunderbridge and Shelley to do so! Why would AMA not have taken the time to observe or note the behaviour of villagers and model their predictions on this? Perhaps because a survey carried out since suggests around 80% of Stocksmoor residents use Stone Wood Lane to access Shepley and AMA acknowledging this or demonstrating similar car movements for new residents would give a clear indication of how unsuitable the proposals are for 50 houses at this site.

There are frequent incidents on Stone Wood Lane of vehicle damage, bumps and road rage and increasing traffic would increase the danger to those of us who use this route. It would also be a danger for cyclists who use this cycle way, pedestrians and local children enjoying the woods and need to cut through a section of road and horse riders who frequent the area.

Many of the suggestions on car movements are again questionable. There is a suggestion the bulk of new residents will work from home, this is a trend very quickly changing with hybrid working becoming more of an expectation rather than pure home working, I say this both as an employer and wife of a recruiter. The suggestion of home working also conveniently overlooks what is happening to the children of these households. As we have already covered no schools and amenities are in walking distance. That means multiple car journeys to get children from A to B, often in different locations at different times. My husband works from home but typically makes 3 – 4 journeys a day getting our children where they need to be. AMA does acknowledge this home working will increase delivery vehicles. My main worry with that is delivery drivers follow sat nav, sat nav leads you down Stone Wood Lane if approaching from near Shepley not through Thunderbridge so increases the risk of meeting cars unfamiliar with the road as well as the increased risk of meeting vehicles on this route. At 2.50pm today (Friday) driving Shepley to Stockmoor I met 5 vehicles. On one occasion I needed to reverse to a passing point as did the car following me to allow 2 cars to pass, on the next occasion the vehicle approaching had to reverse to a passing point to allow myself and the vehicle following me past, the 4th vehicle was met on a section of road with sufficient width for both cars to continue and the 5th vehicle stopped at the bottom of the hill through the woods on sight of my approach and had to wait for us to pass as this section is single track only. This time on a Friday is hardly peak time.

Which brings us on to Thunderbridge. Birks lane might be a slightly better road but it is by no means a good route for large or heavy vehicles or increased traffic, it is narrow, steep, has several blind bends and cars travel far too fast with frequent near misses. There are many cars parked on both Thunder bridge Lane and Dam Hill at peak times which often leads to delays when meeting oncoming vehicles and it is not infrequent for cars to have to reverse at the top of Dam Hill to allow oncoming vehicles to pass – the angle of this junction alongside it's width make it quite tricky.

Of all the documents submitted I find the transport assessment the most disappointing. It is truly an insult to the intelligence of anyone reading it. I really hope it is scrutinised appropriately. I do not wish to feel unsafe walking with my children to the woods or down Stone Wood Lane due to an ill thought out housing estate on a small country lane. I do not want to find the route to Shepley stressful or worse, unusable, because plans for 50 houses on this route get passed. It is unfair to our community to threaten our main access to amenities by increasing pressure on an unsuitable route.

4. Schools. This is a huge number of family homes. The catchment primary school, Thurstonland, has an intake of 12 per year group with no realistic scope to expand. A handful of extra primary school children would struggle to be accommodated, let alone the numbers you would realistically be looking at with 50 family homes, building going ahead could increase the number of children in the village anywhere from 30% to 50% (given current population skew). Shepley first school is also over subscribed due to large developments. Where will these children end up? It worries me as the mother of a 2 year

old that my son may struggle for a school place in our local community because of a disproportionate housing development. This will have direct knock on effect to number of car journeys also as families have to travel further and potentially to multiple schools.

5. The site is in use for farming to this day. We enjoy the sheep in Winter months and the farm vehicles in summer, we've seen agricultural vehicles farming the land even this week. This is not a piece of unused waste land, this is a lease being taken away from a local farmer in order to build. We see deer, owls, pheasants, bats and foxes in this field. It is important for woodland birds such as owls to have open ground to hunt. It is valuable for children growing up in the country side to see farming and understand the importance. There are many brownfield sites, sites closer to amenities, developments more sympathetic to their area which are much more practical than Newett's suggestion for farm land and which aren't on such an inappropriate and unsafe lane as Stone Wood.
   Previous planning application 2009/62/93597/E2 proposed a change of use for the access point of the proposed development, and was refused as " inappropriate development in the green belt which would be harmful to its openness and conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In the absence of any very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development' As such there is precedent for refusing even very minor development at this very site.

6. It is vital to maintain access to woods and our natural environment. Any building on Stone Wood lane would impact the safety of pedestrians walking to the foot path by the beck or the foot path opposite it. It can feel unsafe walking this route now and I feel very concerned about potential increase in passing vehicles on this route.

   The Beck which runs through this wood is a wonderful environmental feature as well and important habitat. I worry that water run off from such a large development with impact this delicate environment. I am also greatly concerned about the impact of this run off on the residents of Thunderbridge which is prone to regular flooding in heavy rain. The development suggests water run off via this route which will reach Thunderbridge down stream.

   The developer also suggests a green corridor at one edge of the development but they also leave hammer heads so this appears to be more of a contingency to allow addition of more houses to cover unforeseen costs rather than to protect any natural habitat so any final development may encroach even further than the plans suggest and add an even greater proportion of houses.

7. Benefit to local residents
   It is suggested in the short term local residents will be benefited by construction jobs. This is a stretch and on the whole will benefit the minimum if anyone. In the medium and long term all we are offered is additional road users and reduced access to amenities such as school places and GP appointments. The developer seems to think they're doing us a favour by giving us a playground. We already have one in the village and had they done their homework they would have been aware of this.

8. Finally, housing demand.
   At the nearest new development Knowle Grange in Shepley, just over 1 mile away, plot 5, plot 8 and plot 9 have all had the prices reduced in recent weeks and plot 4 has been available for over 8 weeks and is not yet under offer. On Woodhead road 2.9 miles away prices were being reduced on new builds as of last Wednesday. The area is becoming saturated with like for like developments such as the Newett proposal which offer a small proportion of affordable housing at a premium location but build a majority of large family homes and charge premium prices unaffordable for the majority.
   I am not convinced there is demonstrable need for yet another development such as Newett propose given Knowle Grange have ongoing price reductions. In the scope of damage that will be done the village with no perceivable benefit I ask the planners give this great thought. Without planners pushing developers to redevelop areas in need of regeneration and create affordable housing we will continue to destroy green belt land for unaffordable homes.

   Yours sincerely,