

Planning reference number 2024/62/91242/E (50 houses in Stocksmoor, Shepley Road)

I am writing to object re plan reference Reference number 2024/62/91242/E

Thank you for giving me the time to give my objections and I do hope that you have the time to carefully read my case.

I was born in Stocksmoor in what would have been described as 'social housing'

I was shocked to be advised by my mum that it has been proposed to build 50 houses in the last field out of the village and into to the woods that take you to Shepley. The proposed building is huge and will change the whole dynamics of a hamlet into a large village with no infrastructure. I was confused as to how a proposal could ever be deemed possible given the lack of resources currently in the village and surrounding area couple with the location of usable farmland surrounded by woodland with little drainage.

As someone who is currently in mid-twenties I feel I am part of a generation crying out for and increase in affordable housing yet, despite this I feel it is imperative to safeguard green, usable farmland. The field that is being proposed has been used for farming since I was born in Stocksmoor (I have witnessed lambs, harvesting, rewilding all on that top field) . With climate change getting increasingly worse and the world becoming a more unstable place I can think of nothing more important than the UK being able to produce its own food and nurturing green spaces within the UK. While this land is totally unsuitable for building for a multitude of reasons, this land remains usable as farmland. As someone who is being impacted on with the current lack of housing, I feel it is important to build first within brownbelt lands and refurbish buildings/home that are currently sat empty, leaving green spaces alone. On reading the policy on safeguarded land it does not overrule common sense. It is also apparent from the list of areas placed on LC1 that many of the areas were unsuitable and nonstarters due to common themes such as lack of third part rights. The National Policy and planning framework states:

The NPPF is clear that there are strong caveats to the application of the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' in that the starting point for decision making remains with the statutory development plan for determining planning applications, along with any material considerations, and that the sustainability and quality of proposals must not conflict with the policies within the NPPF as a whole.

☐ The development plan retains a significant degree of weight despite "the most important policies relevant for determining the application being out-of-date" (NPPF paragraph 11d). That does not mean that they carry no weight. Where there is a conflict with the Local Plan, it is necessary to make a judgement on whether the adverse impact of the development plan conflict, and any other identified harms, significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits of the proposal.

When reviewing the above and putting it in contexts of the planning proposal of Stocksmoor, I feel that **this plan does have an adverse impact and will outweigh any benefits.**

Additionally, upon learning that the developers failed to carry out any meaningful communication (bar a leaflet) with the residents of Stocksmoor, indicates the developers are aware that this area is unsuitable and would not be welcomed due to economic, social and environmental reasons. None of these reasons have been mitigated by anything the developers have proposed or said as they would have no control over these factors if they were to build.

The three key areas are the economy, social and environment impact:

1. Economic: this development will bring nothing to the people of this area and will only benefit the landowner, the building company, the local authority with the levy and the contractors that attend. The local people will be left with no economic benefit and a hamlet that will be stretched and more difficult to live in. I know from living as a young person in Stocksmoor that it is an expensive place to live with amenities in working distance at Shepley. There is just a coop there which is expensive, the post office closed several years ago and there is a proposal to shut the library. There are no provisions coming into the village other than the ice cream van. When I left the village to attend my various clubs as a child my mother had to drive me which cost her more money, bringing a family up here can be financially challenging.

2. Social and transport- What Stocksmoor has is swathes of ancient woodland and a beautiful beck. I have walked, ran and cycled around the villages and hamlets in the area, but I have over the years found the access and egress more challenging. The track between the woods where the housing is proposed is a track lined with overhanging trees and roots seeping into the road. It has become increasingly more important to safely navigate in and out of the areas as the roads are becoming snarled with traffic from the many vehicles that are avoiding the main roads. It is now a common occurrence when driving or cycling on Shepley road to end up stuck due to oncoming traffic, I have seen many people get stuck in the steep laybys and cars damaged when trying to let other cars past. Additionally, I have myself been on the receiving end of vitriol from the many delivery drivers that use the Shepley road, likely using Sat Navs and being unaware of how difficult that road is. As a child walking to school, I have had to be very careful as there are no pavements or street lighting along the path to Holmfirth and there has never been a bus service and there are no plans to do so. Many people travel to Holmfirth and the roads there are all difficult and there is no other means than car. I have read the transport report that is utter nonsense suggesting that people do not take the quickest route and effectively limit leaving the site. The alternative routes are equally challenging. The dentist and Shepley Health Centre, which recently moved into a larger premises, are all at capacity and do require the usage by locals of this tree lined road. The site will add nothing other than remove our identity and our quality and add to our misery when we do try and move between the villages. The public transport is now woeful with the bus service being slashed to minimal the transport documents are wrong they have not been hourly for many years. While we are one of the smallest villages in the UK to have a train station, these trains have become increasingly unreliable with daily cancellations. Additionally, the work on the Trans Pennine line has further impacted on this and is not due to end until 2044. Driving can be financial difficult and again, more damaging to the environment.

3. Environmental – The description of our village does not accord with my experience of being brought up here. Stocksmoor is a rural hamlet, it has in my life time grown quickly with the building of Crangle fields and Stockmead. It simply cannot be built on anymore as it will lose its sense of place. It was not on the map until a few years ago, it was a hamlet of houses in a rural village it was never a conurbation. It is surrounded by ancient woodland and this particular site has woodland all around it. I note that Nature England have disappointingly not objected to the proposal, but I would suggest that the report has limited value as the author has based it on material presented to them and has NOT carried out a site visit. I find it baffling that someone can write a report on a place that they have never been or conducted any sort of ecological research. Given the extent of woods and the proximity, the proposed buffer will not be adequate. There has been no thought of the additional predators being introduced from the cats and dogs that will also come and change the dynamics. The government advice which has been kindly attached to the Natural England report confirms that buffers are significantly less effective to the size of the wood. It seems that the report is site specific and does not consider the wider impact on the woods that lead across to all the surrounding villages. There is no proper consideration in this report on the impact to the beck which will have its ecology irreversibly destroyed when the building starts. Especially if the builders must blast the rock as they have alluded to in their reports. The environmental damage will be here for the perpetuity of the next generation. The NNPF underline the need to protect ancient woodland and it is a thread that feeds through all the planning policies that where there is such a significant risk this trumps the presumption to build. In the wood there are protected animals, flora and fauna. There has been an increase in the barn owl population and water birds such as the the grey and yellow wagtail. I have also seen frogs and toads by the beck. In early spring there is a wonderful display of wood anemones, wild garlic and bluebells. There are simply far better and less damaging places to build housing on than this site. The report from Nature England has not done a proper analysis of how all these animals, trees and fauna use the woods and the beck and the impact on them. This is not a local environmental issue but one that will travel the distance of the Beck.

Arising from the above is the drainage and flooding risks. This has been flagged up by Martin Stephenson. The beck rises frequently and the added pressure and the change of the ecology on the Beck is disastrous. Many a time there is flooding in the village and rivers forming into Thunderbridge caused by the many diversions from previous builds at Crangle fields, Stockmead, Station Road and Fullstone. I have personally witnessed, numerous times a year, the drains and river overflowing to such a degree that water companies must be called out to pump the drain and clear the road (I am sure there will be evidence to support my anecdotal account). This added diversion will place more risk.

As evidenced by the Claire Haygarth on her report on the affordable housing the houses do not come within the expected amount and they are next to railway line being used as a buffer to the noise and fumes: *'The proposed layout shows that the affordable homes are not distributed evenly throughout the development, as they are all grouped together at the back of the development. In addition to this it is noted that some aspects of the design brief indicate that the Affordable dwellings have specific differences to the market dwellings (eg boundary fencing). Therefore, Strategic Housing does not support the current proposal.'* This failing does evidence the objective of the housing company is not about providing 'affordable homes' but in making

money. The people in the affordable homes would have to shut their windows to avoid the noise and fumes.

Arising from the above the housing is less than 200 metres from the line, we live in affordable housing just outside this and we are still woken up by the noises on the line and the frequent nighttime working.

The material used on all the housing is not in keeping with the rest of the village it is cheap looking and shoddy. It appears to suggest that cheap materials are being used to make maximum profit. The houses are 2.5 in height and will take the light away from the valley and residents and the view for all the many passersby. The plans lack any design or sensitivity to the landscape and place further salt in the wound.

The topography of the area has been wholly misrepresented, the slope to the Beck and Railway is much steeper than portrayed and will contribute to significant fallout from the debris and pollutants when the work begins, and the people placed here.

This area is a very special area. In parts not touched by humans, it is an area to look after in perpetuity for others. If this proposal is agreed, it will result in irreversible and disastrous consequence to the area and wider environment at a time where climate change is a priority. This damage cannot be negated by placing in a few trees and I therefore ask you to reject the proposal and protect our environment.

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