

4 Sunside, Stocksmoor, Huddersfield, HD4 6XP

23rd June 2024

Application No; 2024/62/81242/E

Applicant; Newett Homes

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

Ward; Kirkburton

I am writing to you to object in the strongest possible sense to a planning application for 50 new homes on a 2.5 -hectare plot of land off Shepley Road, Stocksmoor that would clearly adversely affect this treasured hamlet by increasing the housing stock by roughly 30%.

The site in question is situated adjacent to protected ancient woodland with Fenay beck running through the heart of the wood itself and the proposed site forming a crucial margin area of habitat for the numerous birds and mammals that populate this space.

It would appear that these plans have been rushed through and ahead of proper process to change the use of the site from Safeguarded land in Local Plan 1 before community consultation has been carried out as part of the review of the Local Plan 2.

The Stocksmoor community understood that this land was Safeguarded in Kirklees Councils Local Plan and shouldn't have been considered for development until 2031 at the earliest, so the question is, why has it been released for potential development 7 years before this date without any level of public consultation.

I am a resident of Sunside on Shepley Road and will be seriously adversely affected by this proposed development, firstly from the commencement of the site construction work, which would probably last for 18 months – 2 years with heavy plant machinery being delivered to site on 44-50 tonne vehicles, noise, pollution, dust and water run off for the duration of the build, then a period of some completed houses with residents whilst the remaining dwellings are finished off.

After completion of the development we are left with 50 dwellings that make no contribution to the character of the hamlet, contradicting the Local Plan which states “Our Local Plan needs to be sensitive to the local character of the places which make up Kirklees” these 50 dwellings could accommodate in excess of a 100 additional vehicles with just 1 access and egress point, situated on a “blind” bend and with at least 50% of vehicles turning left straight onto a single track road of 640 metres into Shepley. .

I cannot stress enough how totally inappropriate this proposed development is for the hamlet of Stocksmoor both in the construction and full completion phases.

Putting emotions aside and being objective regarding this development proposal from Newett Homes I consider the 3 areas I of objection are:

1. SUSTAINABILITY

Stocksmoor currently has little or nothing in the way of facilities or regular reliable public transport, meaning that these new residents would be required to travel by car to the neighbouring village of Shepley to access medical facilities, schools and shops, as well as access to the A629 Penistone Road which is the main road leading towards Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield and the motorway network.

The addition of 50 new homes will put pressure on local schools with it being highly likely that some children will be offered places in nearby villages, Brockholes, Farnley Tyas, Shepley etc and this will mean additional trips in cars.

The nearest medical facilities are in Shepley, which is currently full with long waiting times to get appointments and this situation is currently exacerbated by the number of new developments in Shepley itself.

What measures have been taken to assess the adequate supply of water, sewage, electricity and Gas supplies with a 30% increase in dwellings.

This size of development could potentially disrupt the social fabric of the hamlet , leading to loss of community cohesion.

2. HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC

This is without doubt the single most worrying aspect of this site proposal and to that end it has been noted that in Kirklees Councils Pre-Application Enquiry Response, 18th March 2024, the highway officers recognised the challenges that this proposed development would cause to traffic and public safety: *“the development will generate a significant level of additional traffic along Stone Wood Lane...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”

Looking at the proposed site entrance which will be sited on a “blind” bend with restricted vision of traffic coming up the hill from the left along Stone Wood Lane will be down to 15 yards especially when the foliage on the verges is in full bloom, the view of traffic from the right along Shepley Road is also restricted as the road rises from the crossroads and then falls away about 10 yards from the site entrance which means vision of traffic from the right is also obscured.

Initially construction traffic will be the problem with poor access from all directions but particularly if they attempt to use Stone Wood lane, Fulstone Road or Dam Side, which Sat Nav systems will inform drivers that the roads are suitable, this will be a major accident risk to motorists bikers, horse riders and walkers alike whilst construction is ongoing.

Once the development is completed we have the issue of how Shepley Road and in particular Stone Wood lane deals with another potential 50-100 additional vehicle movements per day, when currently, we all endure challenging encounters when using this one track road with minimal passing places, as vehicles share this road with frequent agricultural vehicles, horse riders, bikes and numerous ramblers and dog walkers who come to walk through and into the ancient woodland. I myself have witnessed 2 accidents on the bend near to the proposed entrance to the site, not forgetting that Shepley Road and Stone Wood lane are never gritted in the winter months and I have again witnessed countless incidents of vehicles sliding off the road into stone walls fencing and ditches in the 15 years I have lived in Sunside..

The Report suggests people are likely to favour turning right out of the site and head towards Penistone Road via Birks Lane or Dam Side

3. ENVIRONMENTAL: BIODIVERSITY

The proposal will have an adverse impact on the adjacent ancient woodlands in terms of wildlife and from an ecological point of view you can't separate the woodland habitat from the adjacent open fields which provide hunting opportunities for the numerous mammals and birds that reside in the woodland. We know that there are a significant variety of species that utilise the margins around the woodland itself, the residents of Sunside have sighted many of these over the years including 3 species of Owls, Tawny, Little and the endangered Barn, Badgers, Foxes, Roe Deer, Rabbits, Brown Hares, pipistrelle bats, Buzzards, Sparrow Hawks and Kestrels and up to 40 species of

woodland/meadow bird varieties suggesting a very rich level of biodiversity exists within the woodland and nearby margins which includes the proposed development site.

It has to be said that the woodland and open fields are tranquil and beautiful places and let's not forget that this natural environment provides valuable ecosystem services , such as water filtration, air purification and carbon sequestration which will be compromised by this development and for this reason I passionately believe that this site and surrounding area should be preserved as they are greatly valued, by not only the residents of Stocksmoor, but also people from our surrounding villages, they need to be treasured and protected from the constant encroachment of the urban sprawl into our beautiful green areas.

There are existing problems regarding the management of surface water across the village, which has been reported to Highways and Yorkshire Water on several occasions and in particular to the rear of some houses on Station Road immediately adjacent to the proposed site, living in Sunside, which is sited below the level of the proposed dwellings, I am particularly concerned about the potential effect of water runoff from the site during construction and when complete.

In conclusion, I believe this site proposal for 50 dwellings on Shepley Road is clearly inappropriate, poorly thought through with build design that is out of character with the existing dwellings of the hamlet and will desecrate an area of what should still be Green Belt and therefore I urge for it to be rejected out-of-hand.

Yours faithfully