

DCAdmin

From:
Sent: 24 June 2024 19:07
To: DCAdmin
Cc: Cllr Bill Armer; Cllr Richard Smith; john.taylor@kirklees.gov.uk
Subject: Objection to planning application 2024/62/91242/E

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Objection to planning application 2024/62/91242/E

Objection lodged by

I wish my objection to be lodged anonymously on the website, and any personally identifiable information to be removed.

I wish to object to the proposed development of an additional 50 homes in Stocksmoor. The proposal by Newitt Homes has been rushed through without adequate consideration and consultation. There is key information missing from the planning application, such as the EclA and the advance community consultation (which did not happen in advance). There are many inaccuracies in the Design and Access Statement provided by Newitt Homes including:

- Stocksmead Court is the most recent development in Stocksmoor, and all of the housing is natural stone with slate tiles (including the affordable housing). Newitt suggests that the predominant materials are artstone and grey tiles and use this as a basis for the main building material in the proposed development. Natural stone and slate would be more in keeping with other houses in the village, including recent development.
- The document suggests that many local amenities are within walking distance of Stocksmoor. This does not take into account the lack of pavements, street lighting, single track roads and steep gradients all of which can make safe walking a challenge. The only locations it is possible to walk to on a pavement are the train station, village hall and Clothiers Pub in Stocksmoor, or the Woodman Inn in Thunderbridge. There are no schools, shops, or health services that can be accessed by walking on a pavement for the entire route.
- The document states that public transport is readily accessible from Stocksmoor. I moved into a new-build in Stocksmoor intending to take advantage of the train station. As someone who commutes to Leeds I can confirm that that this station is not adequate for commuting. My morning commute by train door-to-door takes nearly 90 mins. By car the journey time is 45 minutes plus a 5 minute walk from my employer's car park. When running, there are only hourly train services. As widely reported in the National Press in December 2023 Huddersfield Station is the worst Station in the UK for cancellations. This not only impacts those travelling on the Penistone Line, but also any further onward journeys on the Transpennine line (Manchester and Leeds are both popular destinations for employment). Along with cancellations there are frequently significant delays. Anyone with contracted work hours – such as working in retail, education or healthcare, would find it

near impossible to rely on the train service to get to work routinely. It is only suitable for those with flexible employment schedules, or who can call on an alternative means of transport when the trains are unreliable (frequently).

- In the past year the number of train services on both the Penistone Line and Transpennine line have been reduced.
- Upgrades to the Transpennine line are scheduled to take place until 2035. Until then there will be frequent delays, reduced services, and extended periods where Huddersfield Station is not in use at all, but a temporary station in Fartown will be used. There is also much needed funding to invest in the Penistone Line, but as yet, no plans have been released and the extent of the disruption this will cause in the next 10 years is not determined. I welcome the improvement to our rail infrastructure, but until the work is complete this cannot be taken into consideration in providing a sustainable method of transport from Stocksmoor. All too frequently I have had to rely on family members to drive either to Huddersfield or Leeds to drop me/ collect me from work or use a taxi.
- The West Yorkshire Combined Authority Rail Strategy 2024 shows that there are currently not an acceptable number of weekday services per hour on the Penistone Line, and states that capacity enhancements are required to meet objectives for decarbonisation and inclusive growth.
- The bus service is not hourly. There are 8 buses a day. Three of these buses run within minutes of the train service so do not provide an alternative for those traveling between Stocksmoor and Huddersfield.
- The suggestion that residents will take bike journeys of less than 5km does not take into account the steep gradients, widths of roads, or lack of lighting. Whilst Stocksmoor is a delightful location for a leisure cycle, when journeys can be taken at less busy times of day in daylight and good weather conditions, this is not a location where the majority could cycle from as part of a regular commute, particularly in winter. As the name suggests- Stocksmoor is located on a plateau, and to reach the location of any amenity requires cycling up a significant incline at some point in the journey (e.g. Dam Hill, Thurstonland Bank – the names speak for themselves).

In addition to the above, the application does not take serious consideration of the potential impact on Upper and Lower Stones Wood Wildlife Site. Having read the documentation, I cannot find an Environmental Impact Statement. The calculations for Biodiversity net Gain are provided, but with no reference as to how these were calculated. The Kirklees Council report from 2021 on Biodiversity Net Gain in Kirklees states '3.3.2 In order to demonstrate a Biodiversity net Gain, planning applications within scope of this guidance will need to be supported by appropriate information. The current validation at the time of writing requires all major applications to be supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) produced in accordance with national good practice guidance (CIEEM, 2018). In addition to drawings showing the existing habitats and those to be created, the EclA should include an accurate summary of the Biodiversity Net Gain calculation to demonstrate how the policy requirements are met. However, in all cases, the calculation spreadsheet and any GIS files of habitat maps should also be supplied to enable the Local Planning Authority to verify the calculations....'

Where is all of this information?

Given the site is adjacent to ancient semi-natural woodland it is imperative to ensure that adequate measures are undertaken to assess the impact on the woodland, in particular the biodiversity. The location of woodland bordering farmland will provide a safe habitat for birds, insects and mammals to live, with access to areas for foraging and hunting in the adjacent field. Or functioning in reverse where bats may move across the field from roosting in individual trees and buildings, to use the woodland for foraging. These adjacent habitats provide a stepping stone. So although the developer may be able to introduce biodiversity net gain, the ecological function of the site as a stepping stone for bats, birds and mammals is diminished.

The government recognises the importance of ancient woodland through the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 175c). Their website states that indirect effects of development can cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland by:

- Reducing the amounts of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitats for woodland species.
- Increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution.
- Increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic.
- Changing the landscape character of the area.

Along with other indirect effects these should all be taken into consideration.

Many other objections have listed the mammals and birds that we see currently on the site (personally I have seen badgers, deer, stoat, and hares in close proximity to the site). In addition to this I see the greatest diversity of butterfly and dragonfly species in Stocksmoor on the field boundaries adjacent to the woodland. I am also aware of the countless invertebrates that live in the woodland.

Many invertebrate species have specific habitat requirements that aren't addressed when priorities and measures are focussed solely on broad habitat types. An example would be Stone Wood Dike that runs along the boundary. This is a seasonal stream that can almost dry up in summer months, creating temporary ponds, and be a full flowing stream after periods of heavy rain. This is a unique habitat that will be altered if constant flow from soakaways or drainage systems is added. As reported in the scientific press relating to studies in Northern Europe on temporary ponds almost three-quarters of temporary ponds supported at least one nationally scarce macroinvertebrate and 8% supported at least one nationally scarce plant. The NBN data records 5 species of dragonfly along this dike. Please can we ensure that we understand what is already living in this valuable woodland, before we introduce changes to natural water flow that will alter the balance of species that live there or restrict the movement between adjacent habitats.

In the Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan, it lists Lower Stone Wood as one of only two sites in Kirklees where the fungus *Strobilomyces floccopus* is found (the other site is in Farnley Tyas). This is a species for which Kirklees holds a significant part of the West Yorkshire population and is a Kirklees Local Species of Principal Importance.

Kirklees created the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network to connect designated sites of biodiversity and geological importance and notable habitat links within the district, such as woodlands, watercourses, natural and semi-natural areas (Environmental Designations Technical Paper 2017, section 6). The site sits above and adjacent to LWS91/ LGS19. These are part of a Kirklees Green Infrastructure Network- D29 Fenay Beck. "Its biodiversity interest lies in the network of hedgerows, woodlands and, where they still exist, species-rich grasslands." Notably the paper states "Biodiversity - Upper & Lower Stones Wood SSI. Hartley Bank Quarry SSI. Myers Wood. BAP habitats including Deciduous Woodland. Networks of hedges connecting ancient woodland and grassland." (Environmental Designations Technical Paper 2017, Appendix 7).

The problems relating to surface water concern me not only relating to the change of flow and nutrients running into Stone Wood Dike. The geological survey shows there may be a need for blasting to accommodate soakaways. The proposed development site sits above the woodland, the railway line and Station Road. Given the area is known for natural springs and reservoirs blasting could change water flow and create new springs affecting residents on Station Road, who live below the development, but also flow onto the railway line. One of the main causes of cancellations on the Penistone line is flooding. Currently the platform is already awash following heavy rainfall and a waterfall cascades onto the railway track. Any diversion of water from the field onto the railway line

