

4 Sunside
Stocksmoor
Huddersfield
HD4 6XP

23rd June 2024

Application No; 2024/62/81242/E

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

Applicant; Newett Homes

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to object strongly to a planning application for fifty new homes on a 2.5 - hectare plot of land near Shepley Road, Stocksmoor, which will adversely affect the hamlet and surrounding areas.

From reading the application it is disappointing to see that the use of safeguarded land was changed without any consultation with the community or myself given how close my property borders this field. I am aware that this land should not be considered for development until 2031 and therefore should not have been released early. Residents at Sunside previously had applied for additional parking for four cars on the same location which was rejected due to being on greenbelt land and increased risk of vehicle movements. Application No 2009/62/91818/E2 – Why has this now changed and become safe for fifty dwellings?

The site is also 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. Within this space at least three species are listed on the Kirklees local species of principal of importance which include bats, barn owls and fungi are all found to hunt or grown in the wood.

I have lived and enjoyed my past 15 years at No 4 Sunside and know that I will be sufficiently affected due to the increased vehicle movements, whilst exiting my drive due to the reduction in my visibility and the potential safety hazards these pose / increase the risk of accidents whilst during construction and post development as the entrance to the site will be on a blind bend.

Also with site construction work, lasting for circa 18 months – 2 years with heavy plant machinery of upto 44-50 tonne per vehicle, noise, pollution, dust and water run off for the duration of the build, this will affect my physical and mental well-being

After completion of the development 50 dwellings that will make no contribution to the character of the hamlet, and contradict 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 will 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. Also, in addition to these movements, internet / parcel deliveries to service these dwellings have not been considered.

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

Below are my three main objection points against this unsuitable development: -

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 fifty 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 including dental are in Shepley, which are currently both full of 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.

HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC

The 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.

During my 15 years at Sunside, I have experienced a vehicle crash and cause substantial damage to my car whilst parked on the road and have witnessed two accidents on the bend near to the proposed entrance to the site.

Throughout the winter Shepley Road and Stone Wood Lane are never gritted and I have witnessed numerous incidents of vehicles sliding off the road into the stone walls fencing and ditches.

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, but clearly this is complete nonsense, when over 90% of current Stocksmoor residents use Stone Wood Lane to get to Shepley and beyond.

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 cannot separate the woodland habitat from the adjacent open fields which provide hunting opportunities for the numerous mammals and birds that reside in the woodland.

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 believe that this site and surrounding area should be preserved as they are greatly valued, by not only the residents of Stockmoor, 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.

We currently own and graze sheep on our land and their well-being could potentially be affected by this disruption and longer-term effects surrounding quality of grazing grasses. I also have right of way access to the field you are proposing to build on and keen to understand why we have not been consulted as we own 0.3 hectare of land leading onto Fenay beck and the ancient woodland.

Overall, 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.

Thank you for considering my concerns.