

DCAdmin

From:
Sent: 25 June 2024 22:00
To: DCAdmin
Cc:
Subject: 2024/62/91242/E - Objection to Planning Application

Dear Sir/Madam,

Date: 25/06/2024

To: Kirklees Council Planning Department

Subject: Objection to Planning Application 2024/62/91242/E

I am writing to formally object to the planning application 2024/62/91242/E, which proposes the erection of up to 50 dwellings with associated access on land north-east of Shepley Road, Stocksmoor, Huddersfield.

As a resident of Shepley, living on Jenkyn Lane, I have significant concerns regarding this development and its impact on the local area.

Introduction

I am a resident of Shepley. I have lived here for many years and have witnessed first-hand the charm and character that make our area unique.

This proposed development threatens to undermine these qualities and poses numerous challenges that our communities are ill-prepared to handle.

Traffic and Highway Safety

One of my major concerns is the impact on local roads, particularly the access road connecting Shepley and Stocksmoor.

I have witnessed numerous incidents on this narrow, single-track road. Vehicles travelling at the national speed limit often struggle to navigate the tight bends and limited passing places, leading to frequent near-misses and incidents.

The proposed access point to the development is near a dangerous corner on Shepley Road. This area is already hazardous due to limited visibility and the high speed of vehicles.

Introducing additional traffic from 50 new homes will significantly increase the risk of accidents, posing a serious threat to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. This is in direct conflict with **Policy LP21**.

In the event of a development being authorised, considerable investment by the council is required, including but not limited to one way traffic (road/ single track connecting Shepley to Stocksmoor),

road widening (carriageway/ cycle path/ pedestrianised access), area of the road require embankment stabilisation, including new restriction of HGV traffic on this lane making our

area safe (which should not all reside in council funded costs), in the event of incidents, supporting evidence of our current issues please feel free to contact me.

Further development may appear to be a 'marginal' impact (from a developer perspective) however a local perspective,

I do not believe this to be the case, you may not be aware of the current road traffic risks that are present which is extremely important to be discussed and

I request specific documentation (including risk assessment or equivalent) relating to this matter during your review in the event of this development progressing.

We rely on our council / highways government support to ensure that our areas are safe to live in. When I walk with my children and often use this road

(where absolutely necessary nowadays) we're often met with traffic, unsafe speeds, HGVs blocking the road including 3.5T / 5.2T delivery LCVs, poor corner visibility for vehicles and ultimately unfortunately,

a severe incident waiting to occur. I have personally witnessed various road traffic incidents including recoveries, stand offs (where traffic cannot reverse in either

direction safely requiring passengers to exit vehicles and act as banksmen(/women). Some of the worst situations I have witnessed including drivers mounting the pavement

on the wrong side of the road (exiting stone wood lane/ entering Jos Lane) in attempt to avoid incidents (due to speed and volume of traffic) luckily no vulnerable pedestrians present that could

not enter neighbouring properties to avoid the situation. Various walking routes enter/exit on this road, where members of the public congregate again, a dangerous mix of metal and people.

For what is already a highly unsafe situation any increases in activities (even if 'assumed' to be 'marginal' will be enough to increase RTIs and a matter of time until something more severe may/will occur.

The additional traffic that this development represents cannot be offset to public transport/ train travel, due to infrequent services, limited destinations,

which ultimately could result in 120+ additional daily commutes, trips to the local shop, schooling, other services etc not with standing the support deliveries

(home shopping, HGV deliveries, general development traffic involved). Furthermore, I comment based on personal experience and have not commented on other road suitability / infrastructure from other directions.

The development plans site access, approach on blind bends and angles are further concern for safety of proposed future residents and existing residents.

Lastly, Shepley has seen multiple large housing developments, in recent years, builds of which have recently concluded which all increase the volume/ type related risks noted above.

Impact on Local Services and Infrastructure

Stocksmoor lacks essential amenities such as shops, schools, and healthcare facilities. Residents already travel to nearby villages, including Shepley, for basic needs.

Adding fifty more homes will exacerbate this issue, increasing traffic (aforementioned) and placing additional strain on surrounding infrastructure.

Local services, including GPs and dentists, are already overstretched. The influx of new residents will lead to longer wait times and reduced service quality for existing residents (appreciate this requires other investment / expansion to help cater for additional 148 people.

This is contrary to Kirklees Council's commitment to providing well-planned places and sustainable communities as outlined in **Policy LP47**.

Environmental Impact

The proposed development will lead to the loss of valuable green spaces and habitats for local wildlife. Stocksmoor is home to a diverse array of wildlife, including deer, badgers, owls, and various bird species.

The construction of fifty houses will destroy these habitats, leading to a decline in biodiversity. Moreover, it is unclear whether valid surveys for wildlife, particularly endangered species, have been conducted.

The council has a responsibility to protect endangered species, such as badgers, and ensure their habitats are not disturbed as per **Policy LP30**. Proper ecological surveys should be mandated to assess the impact on local wildlife thoroughly.

Transport

The development site is adjacent to a railway, raising concerns about potential impacts on National Rail undertakings (ground works would/ should require adequate investment into soil nailing to ensure

stabilisation of slopes etc, NIAs, vibration assessments, safety risk assessments, air quality assessments, planning policy framework (re any restrictions for developments close to railways etc) and

visual impact assessments (generally). Construction activities could interfere with railway operations, posing safety risks and operational disruptions. Furthermore, the area is prone to flooding,

and the proposed development could exacerbate flood risks, contrary to **Policy LP27**. Measures to mitigate flooding must be thoroughly assessed and implemented to avoid future hazards.

Design and Character

The proposed houses are planned to be built with artificial stone and slate, which are not in keeping with the local architectural style. Stocksmoor is characterised by its traditional stone-built houses,

and the introduction of modern materials will detract from the village's aesthetic appeal. The design of the houses is considered basic and lacks character, not reflecting the village's heritage.

This inconsistency in design and materials will create a visual disjunction, further diminishing the village's unique character. This does not comply with **Policy LP24**.

Heritage and Conservation

The planning documents acknowledge ancient woodlands in the designs, but there is a justified concern that this could set a precedent for future encroachments.

If this development progresses, it may only be a matter of time before the council considers changing its stance on the adjacent ancient woodland, further endangering the local ecosystem.

The preservation of heritage assets, including these woodlands, is vital, as outlined in **Policy LP35**, which leads to a concern present that there are of course other brownfield development

opportunities not being pursued which should be justified and explored and ultimately reported to the community that other alternative sites could not be pursued.

Overdevelopment

Stocksmoor currently consists of c.170 homes; adding fifty more would be disproportionate and unsustainable. The essence of Stocksmoor lies in its rural charm and close-knit community.

Introducing such a significant number of new dwellings would disrupt this balance, effectively turning a quaint village into an overdeveloped suburb.

This change is neither in the interest of the current residents nor in line with the preservation of rural village life, contravening Policy LP7.

Lack of Affordable Housing

The development includes the introduction of one bed maisonettes to aid qualifying housing count for affordable homes (x4 of the ten affordable homes) this should be challenged in principle.

This appears to be a superficial attempt at affordable housing requirements. The plans appear to seemingly be designed to maximise gross development value/ margins rather than meet the needs of future residents.

The policy should be considered in the next review changing count of homes to ratio of sq. ft of affordable homes, as a developer could easily qualify with 10 x 1 bed apartments on this example to qualify for affordable housing,

lastly, price caps to affordable housing should also be considered.

This is evident from the planning elevations submitted, which prioritise end-of-day margins over quality and liveability, failing to meet **Policy LP11** requirements.

Community Opposition and Engagement

The development will dilute the strong sense of community in Stocksmoor. The village is known for its close-knit community, where residents know each other and participate in local activities.

The sudden influx of new residents will strain social cohesion and reduce the quality of community life. Local schools are already at capacity. The addition of 50 new homes will put further pressure

on educational facilities, potentially leading to local children missing out on school places. This is particularly concerning given the importance of education and community stability, as highlighted in **Policy LP5**.

Furthermore, policy should mandate appropriate communication by developers, community engagement, in the area and surrounding area –

simply a poster on community boards would be helpful as I was shocked to hear of this development so late in the process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I strongly urge Kirklees Council to refuse planning permission for this development. The proposed 50-dwelling housing development on Shepley Road, Stocksmoor,

poses numerous risks and challenges that outweigh any perceived benefits.

The impact on village(s) dynamics, lack of infrastructure, traffic and road safety concerns, environmental degradation, inadequate wildlife surveys, inconsistency with sustainability goals,

inadequate (appropriate) affordable housing, unreliable noise monitoring, and the inappropriate use of safeguarded land are significant issues that cannot be ignored.

Stocksmoor is a unique and valuable community that deserves to be preserved and protected. I recommend that the council explore alternative locations better suited to accommodate such a

project without compromising the infrastructure, amenities, environment, and character of our village(s).

Thank you for considering my concerns. I am willing to provide further information or discuss this matter in more detail if needed.

Yours sincerely,