

OBJECTION TO APPLICATION REFERENCE 2024/62/91242/E - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OFF SHEPLEY ROAD, STOCKSMOOR

Local Plan

The site is currently identified as 'Safeguarded Land' in the 'Kirklees Local Plan – Strategy and Policies (Adopted 27 February 2019)' given that the Local Plan is now more than five years old and there is no Local Plan Review available to supersede it the current policies still remain relevant in particular Policy LP6.

'The status of Safeguarded land sites will only change through the review of the Local Plan'

In addition, the proposed site access requires the removal of 3No. mature sycamore trees that form an important visual reference to edge of the Greenbelt. In fact, the proposed site access uses land which is still classified as Greenbelt which is contrary to Greenbelt policy and as such this development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Public Consultation/Community Involvement

Newett Homes were strongly advised to carry out a public consultation with the local community prior to the submission of a Planning application for the Site by Kirklees Planning in the Pre-Application response dated 18th March 2024.

This advice was consciously ignored by the developer and instead carried out circa 10th May 2024 (with a return date of 21st May 2024) after submission of Planning Application 2024/62/91242/E on 30th April 2024 thus rendering the consultation process pointless as no amendments could possibly be made to the submission from any feedback received. As such Newett Homes were unable to submit a 'Detailed Statement of Community Involvement' at initial submission and any document that follows on will only pay lip service to the process and should be given no weight.

It seems rather ironic that as we reach the end of the 'Public Consultation' period afforded to planning applications there is still no evidence of a 'Statement of Community Involvement' from Newett homes which I believe speaks volumes to their complete lack of interest in what the local community might have to say.

Highways

The increased traffic generated by the development will have a severe impact on the local highway network in particular that of Shepley Road/Stones Wood Lane contrary to Policy LP21 (a) however this has been disregarded by the developer and instead they have tried to play down the reality of vastly increased traffic with dubious traffic predictions that do not stand up to scrutiny at any level.

As per Kirklees Councils Pre-Application Enquiry Response (2023/21443) 18 March 2024

The development will generate a significant level of additional traffic along Stone Wood Lane, which leads to Shepley circa 1km to the east, with this route being attractive to development users due to the amenities available in Shepley (school, shops, medical facilities etc) and for onward journeys to the south. However, this road has a number of physical constraints, which include it being single track width for long sections, having restricted forward visibility, lack of adequate passing places, and no pedestrian provision etc. The road also forms part of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 627 (Kirkburton to Millhouse Green).

In light of the above, 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 (e.g. additional passing places are likely to require third party land acquisition). As such, HDM cannot support the proposed residential development at this site.

For Newett homes to suggest that they will somehow be able to influence the movements of future residents of the development is completely absurd. As a result, the Highways scheme that they propose relies on unrealistic 'best case' scenarios to justify a substandard approach to Highway safety and is surely not one that can be supported by any responsible Highways Department.

Density

The proposed density of 35.46 Dwellings per Hectare whilst in line with the parts of Policy LP7 it fails to recognise the requirement for developments to be in keeping with the character of the area.

Housing density should ensure efficient use of land, in keeping with the character of the area and the design of the scheme:

- a) *developments should achieve a net density of at least 35 dwellings per hectare, where appropriate;*
- b) *higher densities will be sought in principal town centres and in areas close to public transport interchanges*

- c) *lower densities will only be acceptable if it is demonstrated that this is necessary to ensure the development is compatible with its surroundings, development viability would be compromised, or to secure particular house types to meet local housing needs*

The current density of Stocksmoor is Circa 10 Dwellings per Hectare. The Disparity between these existing and proposed density figures illustrates how ill-conceived and inappropriate this development is.

The proposals for this hamlet increase the total number of properties by 30% with this 1 development. The Stocksmoor hamlet and its infrastructure simply cannot support these densities.

Architectural Design

Newett Homes have chosen to disregard any of the prevailing architectural styles within the local area and have instead chosen to put forward an estate consisting of Generic house types (that can also be found on any of their other developments, regardless of the vernacular architectural style of the local area) an inappropriate pallet of materials consisting of Artificial Stone, Brick and Concrete roof tiles that can only have been chosen on a purely financial basis rather than choosing a sympathetic rural pallet of Natural stone (Tumbled & Dyed) paired with Grey/Blue natural slate roof coverings that would blend with the local environment.

This poor choice of materials fails to protect and enhance the characteristics of the built, natural and historic environment, and local distinctiveness which contribute to the character of Kirklees and contra to Policy LP24

Proposals should promote good design by ensuring:

- a) *the form, scale, layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape;*

Scale/Layout

No attempt has been made to mitigate the height of the proposed dwellings in order to help them integrate with the surrounding properties, many of which are bungalows, or the topography of the site, instead they have utilised retaining walls to build up areas to give them a 'level' site with which to work. This approach shows a lack of understanding of the site and surrounding landscape.