DC Admin

From:
Sent: 21 May 2025 13:02
To: DC Admin; Nicole Helliwell
Subject: Supplementary Objection Letter – Planning Application 2024/92977 (Land off Lane Head Road, Shepley)

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Kirklees Council Planning Department

Application Reference: 2024/92977
Site: Land off Lane Head Road, Shepley, Huddersfield, HD8 8BW
Dear Nicole,

Please note that the below contains a number of arguments which would and therefore I would be grateful if you either severely redact this objection or refrain from publishing it provided this does not prevent it from being taken into account when the application is assessed.

I write as to the proposed Plots 2–4 of the above application. I previously submitted a formal objection to this planning application; please accept this letter as a supplementary and final objection, which responds to the recently published Highways Development Management consultation response (dated 16 May 2025) and reinforces my request that the Council refuse planning permission outright. The new Highways comments underscore the fundamental design failures of this proposal, particularly in terms of access arrangements and road safety. I address these issues in detail below, alongside additional objections regarding Plot 1's access and relevant local planning policies.

1. Objection to Proposed Barrier Separating Highfield Court and New Driveway (Plots 2–4)
The Highways consultation response dated 16 May 2025 recommends installing a physical barrier between Highfield Court and the new private driveway serving Plots 2, 3, and 4. As the to these proposed plots (and a resident of), I strongly object to any such barrier or gated separation. This aspect of the highways proposal is entirely unacceptable for several reasons:

- Isolation and Loss of Connectivity: A barrier would literally from the rest of Highfield Court, severing the only existing safe access route. Highfield Court is currently a small community of around a dozen homes connected via a shared access; introducing a partition would isolate

- Harm to Residential Amenity: Being cut off from by a fence or barrier would significantly harm . It could obstruct not only vehicular access but also pedestrian movement and social interaction with neighbours. The proposed layout fundamentally fails to respect local character and connectivity, contrary to Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP24 which requires new developments to provide safe, inclusive, and well-integrated layouts that "create safer places and make high quality and attractive places that foster civic pride". Forcing an existing resident into a cul-de-sac behind a barricade is a *poor design choice* that erodes the high standard of amenity expected for both new and existing occupiers (Policy LP24 clause *b*).
- Indicator of Fundamental Design Flaw: The very fact that Highways officers feel a barrier is *necessary* to prevent through-traffic between the new development and Highfield Court is evidence that the site layout is ill-conceived. According to the Highways consultation, the existing gated track off Lane Head Road (to serve Plots 2–4) should not be opened to Highfield Court because adding those additional houses would exceed the limit of 5 dwellings on a private drive and intensify use beyond

safe capacity. In other words, the scheme cannot safely integrate with Highfield Court at all – a damning indictment of its design. The only "solution" Highways proposes is a barrier to enforce separation, effectively walling off the new homes from the existing cul-de-sac. Such an outcome is *by definition* a disjointed, two-headed development that fails any reasonable test of good design or integration. It is not a solution at all – it is an acknowledgement that the layout is fundamentally incompatible with its surroundings.

In summary, I urge the Council to recognize that a development which requires a literal barrier between neighbours to function is wholly unacceptable. This aspect alone justifies refusal. No revision or condition (short of abandoning the barrier concept, which then creates highway safety conflicts) can "fix" this basic defect in the site planning. The proposal as it stands would severely harm , contrary to Local Plan policies LP24 (Design) and LP1 (sustainable development's social objective of strong, healthy communities). I respectfully request that the Council give paramount weight to this objection

2. No Scope for Revision – Request for Outright Refusal of the Application

The Highways Development Management response of 16 May 2025 was issued in reference to the current submitted scheme. Its many criticisms – including an unresolved turning head, inadequate visibility splays, uncertain refuse vehicle access, and the need for a barrier – all highlight that the application fails in its present form. I note that the Highways officers have, in fact, formally objected to the application on the grounds that "sufficient information" has not been provided to demonstrate safe highway arrangements for Plots 2–4. The applicant has had ample time to address these issues, which were apparent at the outset, and has not done so.

I strongly oppose any attempt to defer, amend, or resubmit this application following the Highways comments. The correct and fair outcome at this stage is refusal of planning permission outright. Allowing a withdrawn and resubmitted scheme (or significant late revisions) would undermine the transparent process and public participation. Residents have engaged with the application as submitted – we should not be expected to start the fight anew on a modified proposal that might seek to paper over these fundamental cracks. The development's flaws are *not* minor technical matters; they go to the heart of the design. In particular, the awkward access arrangements and site layout cannot be simply "conditioned" or tweaked without essentially designing a new scheme.

Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) makes clear that development should only be approved without delay if it accords with the development plan. In this case, the application manifestly does *not* accord with multiple Local Plan policies (detailed in section 4 of this letter). Moreover, the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh any claimed benefits, failing the NPPF's sustainability balance (LP1 and NPPF para 11 test). As such, there is no justification to prolong the determination or invite redesigns; the proposal should be refused now in line with the development plan.

I respectfully remind the Council that the applicant is not entitled to an endless iterative process at the community's expense. The Highways consultation response provides more than enough evidence to support an immediate refusal (highway safety alone is a clear reason). I ask that the Planning Authority stand by the primary duty to protect public safety and amenity, and issue a refusal decision on application 2024/92977 without further delay.

3. Road Safety Objections to Plot 1 – New Accessonto Cross Lane (Accident Blackspot)

I wish to expand my objection to Plot 1's proposed access via Cross Lane, in light of both the Highways comments and well-documented local road safety issues. Plot 1 is a large detached house planned to gain vehicular access off Cross Lane (using the existing Highfield Court junction). While Highways Development Management did not object in principle to one additional dwelling there, they acknowledged this would cause a "*small intensification of use*" of the Highfield Court junction with Cross Lane. I submit that even this increment is unacceptable at this location, given the dangerous conditions and congestion routinely experienced on Cross Lane and at its junction with Lane Head Road.

Accident Blackspot and Traffic Volume: The junction of Cross Lane, Carr Lane and the A629 Lane Head Road (near the Sovereign Garage) is locally infamous as an accident hot-spot. It has been labelled an "accident blackspot" by residents and local councillors, with a recent petition garnering over *3,000 signatures* urging the Council to improve safety at this very location. Crash data confirms the community's concern. Cross Lane is also heavily used as a commuter cut-through, regularly suffering long queues and congestion during peak hours.

Unsafe Access and Exacerbation of Risk: Introducing a new private drive (even serving one house) along Highfield Court/Cross Lane will exacerbate safety risks, especially due to restricted visibility, turning conflicts, and cumulative traffic impacts. Even one additional access point near this junction is a meaningful risk multiplier in a sensitive area. The NPPF (para 111) is clear: development should be refused if it results in unacceptable impacts on highway safety or if cumulative impacts are severe. Both apply here.
Obstruction to Highfield Court During Construction: In addition to the longer-term access risks, I must highlight the acute disruption that would be caused to all residents of Highfield Court during the construction of Plot 1. Highfield Court is a narrow private road with no turning head and only one access point. The introduction of heavy plant, delivery vehicles, scaffolding, and skip lorries for Plot 1 would obstruct safe egress for residents, particularly during working hours. This would:

- Block refuse collection vehicles, which already require clear space to manoeuvre in and out of the cul-de-sac;
- Restrict emergency service access, including ambulances or fire engines, which could be delayed or prevented from reaching properties—posing unacceptable health and safety risks;
- Severely inconvenience existing households, who may be unable to safely enter or exit their own homes during key phases of the build.

This disruption is not hypothetical—it is unavoidable on a road as constrained as Highfield Court. The applicant has provided no phasing plan, construction management statement, or mitigation strategy to address this. As such, the Council cannot grant permission for Plot 1 without knowingly allowing a health and safety hazard to unfold in a residential setting.
In summary, Plot 1 should not be considered separately or in isolation from the rest of the scheme. Its construction and use would pose clear and present risks to the safety, access, and amenity of Highfield Court residents. It must be refused along with the wider application.
In summary, Plot 1's access arrangements are not truly safe or suitable, despite the minimal Highways commentary. They might appear minor on paper, but on the ground they could mean life or death. Given the known accident record and community outcry about Cross Lane/Lane Head Road, approving another access point would be irresponsible. I urge the Council to give significant weight to road safety (as required by NPPF and Local Plan policy) and refuse the application on this basis alone if necessary. There is no overriding public benefit to justify adding risk to a residential cut-through and accident hotspot – indeed, public sentiment is strongly opposed to *any* move that could make these roads more dangerous.

4. Disjointed Development – Policy Conflicts and Conclusion
Beyond the specific issues above, I wish to stress that the entire proposed development is disjointed, poorly integrated with the existing Highfield Court community, and fundamentally unsafe by design. The scheme fails to meet several core policies of the Kirklees Local Plan, beyond those which I described in my previous objection:

- LP1 (Achieving Sustainable Development): Rather than supporting a strong, healthy, and safe community, this plan would create a segregated mini-enclave of luxury homes with no integration. It offers no social or environmental benefits to Shepley – only private gain at public cost. The development's adverse impacts (on safety, amenity, character, and possibly ecology) far outweigh any benefits, meaning it cannot be considered sustainable development in the meaning of the NPPF or Local Plan. Approving such a scheme would run counter to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is only meant to apply to proposals that do not cause significant harm.
- LP3 (Location of New Development): This policy requires proposals to reflect the Council's spatial development strategy. The application 2024/92977 appears to be piecemeal "backland" development on a greenfield paddock, not identified for housing in the Local Plan. It is surrounded by established housing, yet it fails to connect coherently to either of the adjacent streets (as evidenced by the need for a barrier). Far from reflecting a plan-led approach, this feels like development wedged in without proper regard to settlement planning or infrastructure, purely because a land opportunity arose. Such uncoordinated development is what Policy LP3 seeks to prevent. It is notable that the site was historically served by an old lane (the one now proposed to be revived for Plots 2–4) which was closed for safety reasons due to the brow of the hill. The spatial strategy in the Local Plan does not suggest reopening unsafe accesses or adding housing in locations that create more problems than they solve.
- LP21 (Highways and Access): As elaborated earlier, the proposal fails to ensure safe and suitable access for all users. It would introduce multiple substandard access situations: a long private drive of dubious construction (part loose track) coming out near a hill crest on a primary A-road, and an

intensified junction on a notorious side road. The Highways consultation explicitly stated they "cannot support the current application" and object on highway safety grounds for Plots 2–4. The need for swept-path analyses, wider drive widths, refuse vehicle turning, etc., are all unresolved. Even basic visibility to the left (south) on Lane Head Road is insufficient (only ~45m shown where 120m would be needed for 40mph approach speeds). This falls foul of LP21's requirement that new development "provide adequate layout and visibility to allow the development to be accessed safely". There is also no evidence of a proper Transport Statement or consideration of cumulative traffic impacts (though clearly the impacts *would* be severe in this sensitive spot). Approving this scheme would directly conflict with LP21 and the Council's commitment to road safety.

- LP24 (Design): Good design is about more than aesthetics – it's about functionality, safety, and integration. Policy LP24 demands that developments "provide a high standard of amenity for future and neighbouring occupiers" and that they respect the character of the townscape and landscape. The proposed layout, with one house orbiting off Cross Lane and three hidden behind via a quasi-gated drive, does not respect the existing development pattern of Highfield Court or Lane Head Road. Instead of "placemaking," it creates an awkward partitioned arrangement that will feel tacked on and isolated. Neighbours are faced with either a new access road abutting boundaries or a solid barrier – hardly a high standard of amenity.

Conclusion: For all the reasons outlined above – the unsafe and divisive access arrangements, the harm to , the exacerbation of a known accident blackspot, and the clear breaches of multiple Local Plan policies – I respectfully urge the Council to REFUSE planning application 2024/92977 in full. This development is ill-conceived and unsalvageable through conditions or minor tweaks. It fails to achieve the basic requirements of good planning in Kirklees: it neither "protects and enhances" the community nor does it "reflect the local character and infrastructure capacities." On the contrary, it would make environment (and the wider neighbourhood) markedly less safe, less pleasant, and less cohesive.

As a final note, I trust the Council will give due consideration to this objection in tandem with my initial letter and the numerous other objections from local residents. The strength of local feeling is palpable – we want development that benefits Shepley, not development that endangers and divides it. Development should only proceed where it improves our area's economic, social *and*environmental conditions. This proposal achieves none of those. I urge you to refuse it and encourage the landowner to go back to the drawing board (if not withdraw entirely from developing such a constrained site).

Thank you for your attention to these serious concerns. I am happy to be contacted if further clarification is needed, and I request to be notified of the Council's decision in due course.

Yours sincerely