
Sent: 14 November 2025 13:23
To: Louise Bearcroft <Louise.Bearcroft@kirklees.gov.uk>
Subject: 2025/60/92776/E - Eastfield, Shepley

Hello Louise,

I would like to register my objections to the above outline planning proposal.

The 12 acre site off Eastfield is greenbelt, surrounded on two sides by mature woodland and has grown thatching straw for over 30 yrs. In many ways it is a rural idyll, a throw back to the 1950s and 60s when in July/Aug the corn is cut using an old fashioned binder and then stooked to allow the sheaves to dry. This was recognised by Defra in 2003 when Anthony Smith, the farmer, received a grant to increase production of thatching straw, a product very much in demand, even today. Yet Banks proposal dismisses the loss of agricultural land as having no weight. Clearly this is not the case.

All previous development in the village has been agreed as part of the village plan. Two developments are currently under construction at Taylors Green and Tenterhill Gardens as per the village plan. I firmly believe in an holistic approach across Kirklees to deliver the required number of houses. This is a speculative planning proposal on greenbelt land and is totally unacceptable. How it can be reclassified as grey belt is beyond my comprehension. There are three barns on the site to support agriculture, there is no previous history nor evidence of any industry or mining. I accept that an adjacent field has evidence of a bell pit, but none on the proposed development site.

I have no plans to discuss the SPZ1, which covers the lower half of the site as this is covered comprehensively by Shepley Spring. However, once green belt is lost it is lost forever. If this site can be classified as grey belt then so can most of rural Kirklees and that cannot be right.

As a result of the mature woodland, well established hedgerows and deep headland around the two fields the proposed development site is diversity rich. We have pipistrelle bats seen flying around the house at dusk, a pair of pheasants in the garden in early Spring; you can hear the sound of Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler during early summer and the song of the Mistle Thrush during those warm summers evenings. I have a bird count of 36 species seen in the garden during the past 10 years. Similarly during the Great British bird watch undertaken each year, I typically record 12 to 14 different species and 28 to 30 different birds in an hour. This biodiversity should be cherished, yet Banks proposal plans to destroy 12 acres of greenbelt, adds some landscaping and then claims a biodiversity net gain of a minimum of 10%. How can that be - it should be a biodiversity net loss of 90%!

Highway impacts are stated in the proposal as 'can be accommodated satisfactorily without having a severe impact'. I beg to differ. Eastfield, Lea Drive and Knowle Park Avenue are quiet residential streets where children can play and where Shepley First School hold their cycling proficiency tests. At present traffic entering or leaving this area to or from the A629 has two options. It can do so by either level access along the Knowle or via Lea Drive which is a 1 in 7 steep climb or descent. Access to the A629 via Lea Drive down the slope can be difficult as visibility to the south is restricted by cars parked on the A629. Drivers have to edge slowly out into the centre of the road at a ghost junction before they can see. This is dangerous. So many drivers particularly from Stonecroft Gardens and those picking children up from school choose to use the Knowle exit onto the A629. In snow and/or icy conditions the Lea Drive exit is treacherous unless you have a four wheel drive vehicle. Even when gritted cars do slide down out of control into the middle of the A629. Last winter my carer had to leave her car on the A629 and walk up to Stonecroft Gardens on three occasions. That is the status quo.

Banks are proposing to introduce a one way system south down Knowle Park Avenue so that all traffic from Lea Drive, Eastfield, Knowle Park Avenue and Stonecroft Gardens has to exit onto the A629 via Lea Drive down the 1 in 7 steep slope. Even without the proposed development this would be a disaster waiting to happen particularly on snow/ icy days.

Residents from the four streets mentioned above would be snowbound and those children normally dropped off would struggle to get to school and home again safely. Add to this the additional traffic from the proposed development and that all site traffic must use the Lea Drive entrance and exit. The thought beggars belief. This is totally unacceptable and why should existing residents in a village have to accept double yellow lines and a one-way system to accommodate a speculative planning application. My understanding is that the minimum acceptable level of gradient for access to a modern housing development is 1 in 14, half that on Lea Drive. Access would therefore have a significant negative impact on the scheme.

I would like to make two further comments, firstly the proposal shows a children's play area in the SW corner, whilst this is very welcome it is within a 100m or so of one on the rec nearby. Secondly there are power cables running over the lower field of the site. Banks make no mention of this nor any proposals on how these would be rerouted.

Overall, given the issues around speculative development, loss of green belt, SPZ1 status, proximity to the war memorial, dangerous access etc., this is a very weak proposal and should be rejected without consideration. If however it is accepted, then this would set a very dangerous precedent for further development on greenbelt land around Shepley, which would destroy the very nature of the village.

Many thanks