

DC Admin

From:
Sent: 20 November 2025 10:23
To: DC Admin
Subject: Planning application 2025/92776 – Land at Eastfield, Shepley – OBJECTION

Good morning,

I am writing as a local resident to object in the strongest terms to planning application 2025/92776 for up to 110 dwellings at Eastfield, Shepley. In my view the proposal would cause significant, unnecessary harm to the local environment, infrastructure and community, and conflicts with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Kirklees Local Plan.

1. Green Belt / “grey belt” and harm to the rural character of Shepley

The Eastfield site is presently open countryside forming part of the historic Green Belt setting of Shepley. Earlier Local Plan documentation for this land (H652 / HS203 – land to the north-west of Eastfield Mills, Abbey Road North, Shepley) records its existing use as “Green Belt – unused land” and notes multiple constraints.

Under the NPPF, the government attaches *great importance* to Green Belt, whose essential characteristics are openness and permanence; inappropriate development is *by definition harmful* and should not be approved except in *very special circumstances*. A large suburban estate of 110 houses on open farmland is clearly “inappropriate development” in this context. Simply labelling the site “grey belt” does not remove the requirement to give substantial weight to harm to the Green Belt and its openness.

The development would extend the urban edge of Shepley, erode the clear countryside setting of Eastfield and irreversibly alter views across this side of the village. Once built, the *harm is permanent and cannot be undone*.

2. Unsafe access, traffic and parking pressure

The developer’s own information indicates around 110 homes, which realistically equates to at least 200+ additional cars in and out of Eastfield every day. Local coverage has already reported residents’ fears that this would create a “nightmare” on already busy local roads and put extra strain on schools and health services.

Key concerns are:

- One-way arrangements and junctions: The proposed access and any associated one-way system would funnel all estate traffic through narrow village streets that already struggle with congestion, poor visibility and on-street parking. This increases risk for pedestrians, including children walking to Shepley First School.
- Pedestrian safety: Much of the local network has narrow pavements. More traffic, especially at school and commuting peak times, significantly raises the risk of collisions and near-misses.
- Parking overspill and blocked pavements/roads: Many new-build estates under-provide real-world parking. Any shortfall here will inevitably displace cars onto surrounding streets in a village that already has limited parking and very narrow roads. In practice, drivers will be forced either to mount the pavements (creating serious hazards for disabled people, wheelchair users, those with pushchairs and other pedestrians) or to park fully in the carriageway, further narrowing already tight roads and restricting access for emergency vehicles, refuse collections and other essential services.

Taken together, the highways proposals fail to demonstrate a safe and suitable access for all users and would materially worsen existing conditions.

3. Inadequate local infrastructure – health centre, school and amenities

Shepley is a small rural village with one first school (Shepley First School) and one health centre (Shepley Health Centre), plus small local shops and services. These are already heavily used. It already takes weeks to secure a routine GP appointment and school places are limited.

An additional 110 homes could mean 250–350 extra residents, including many children, yet there is no evidence of committed, funded expansion of:

- GP capacity at Shepley Health Centre;
- School capacity at Shepley First School or nearby schools;
- Public transport, parking or other community facilities.

Recent national reporting has highlighted the growing problem of large housing schemes being built ahead of or without adequate community infrastructure, leaving residents dependent on cars and overstretched services. *Approving this application would risk repeating that mistake in Shepley.*

4. Source Protection Zone and risk to Shepley Spring Water

Kirklees Local Plan allocations and technical background papers for the Eastfield land (HS203 / H652) identify it as lying within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) designated to protect a potable water supply. The Environment Agency explains that SPZs are defined specifically to safeguard drinking-water abstraction points and to constrain activities that could pollute them.

Shepley Spring itself states that its water is drawn from a local groundwater source in Shepley, reinforcing the sensitivity of the aquifer beneath and around this site.

Intensive residential development here would bring:

- Extensive hard-surfaced roads and driveways, increasing polluted run-off (oil, fuel, de-icing chemicals, etc);
- New drainage infrastructure, soakaways and/or attenuation basins interacting directly with the groundwater;
- Construction disturbance (earthworks, piling, compaction) in the recharge area of a drinking-water source.

In an SPZ, the precautionary principle should apply. Unless the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water can unequivocally demonstrate that the scheme poses no unacceptable risk to the water source now or in the future, this site is simply the wrong place for a major housing estate. The application, as far as is publicly described, does not give that level of assurance. I also understand that this development is **not included in Yorkshire Water's current 5-year investment planning**, raising further doubts about whether any necessary network reinforcement can actually be delivered without harming existing customers.

5. Questionable housing need and cumulative impact

There have already been recent housing developments in Shepley (including a large estate very close to this site on The Knowle, and just off Marsh Lane) which are still being built out and actively marketed. The Knowle has been in development for >4years now, with phases of the build being stalled due to lack of sales of the previous phase. Additionally, current listings for the Marsh Lane site show three-bedroom homes being marketed starting at £550,000+, with larger four- and five-bedroom properties in the same cluster reaching close to £900,000. These are hardly “affordable” homes in the context of local incomes, and yet even at these high price points sales have been slow/stalled. This proposed development is suggesting only ~39 of the 110 would be ‘affordable’ (yet do not supply sufficient information as to if these are actually reasonable pricing for the average UK salaried worker and therefore truly ‘affordable’ at all. I also cannot see how the 71 ‘non-affordable’ homes are required, if the ‘non-affordable’ ones already built/currently being built in Shepley are not even selling after years on the market.

When the clear and lasting harms to:

- the Green Belt setting and rural character,
- highway safety and parking (including obstruction of pavements and emergency access),

