

Objection to Planning Application 2025/60/92776/E

Dear Louise Bearcroft

**I would like to submit my application and happy to have my comments posted on the website but would like my address removing please, I understand this is possible and that my objection will still be taken into account?**

I would like to submit in the strongest terms my objection to the proposed new homes at Eastfield. I understand that there is a need for housing, but I feel that this site is at an unsafe and unsuitable location.

Firstly, the site is classified as Greenbelt land. The National Planning Policy Framework attaches great importance to Green Belts and states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless exceptions apply, that I cannot see this site meeting. Building on Greenbelt land requires special circumstances. Unmet housing need while a significant factor, is not by itself enough to outweigh the harm to the greenbelt and other sites should be looked at before this one, as set out in the NPPF. The area of the proposed site is clearly protecting the countryside from encroachment. The views up to the trees, the openness and to the Shepley War Memorial, the natural landscape and green space and wildlife here once built on, can never be brought back and is a treasured element of life in Shepley. It is why people want to live here, it is why we personally bought our home here. If Shepley is turned into urban sprawl with no openness feel, no walks by the fields, congested roads and no character then it no longer becomes a desirable place to live.

The application puts forward the suggestion that the land is 'Grey Belt' land, however the land has not been previously developed and the land is on greenbelt that does contribute strongly to its purpose, I cannot see how this could be classified as such. Grey Belt land has been described by government as 'poor quality and ugly areas' on parts of protected land, this site is certainly far from what is intended by Grey Belt, it actively enhances the area, is attractive green agricultural land with reaching views.

If it is to be argued that this is Grey Belt land, the it does not meet the requirement that 'the development should be in a sustainable location' and does not meet all the 'Golden Rules'. Shepley has one small convenience store for which there is zero parking facility. The only parking is on the side of the road and this causes safety issues and limited access. Trying to park near the coop is pretty much impossible at busy times and the centre of Shepley is often very congested. Have the implications of the other large developments already built or being built in Shepley been assessed in terms of the affect they will have on the school places and the doctors surgery? Grey Belt development should be in a location with 'good transport and infrastructure'. The site absolutely does not have good infrastructure to support it, in terms of the roads leading to it. This site certainly does not have good transport and people would rely on car use due to its location, which is in contradiction to the local authority supporting walking and cycling. It is possible to walk, if you are able bodied, to the train station but there is only one train every hour going either to Sheffield or Huddersfield, which are frequently cancelled or delayed and certainly could not be relied upon. Only one direction has access for wheelchair users. There is a bus service from Shepley but i would question whether this could be classed as good transport in terms of time to get to destination or frequency of service.

In terms of affordable housing, it would be interesting to see what the cost to purchase these or rental of these homes would be and if they truly reflect an affordable option for the people of Kirklees.

One of the Golden Rules also states to comply, 'necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure to be made' I cannot see how the developer is proposing to meet this from their submissions or how this would be possible.

I did not oppose any of the other planning applications for the large developments in Shepley, particularly on Abbey Road, 50 metres away from my home, as I can see that those sites were more appropriate and had less of an impact on the openness and feel to the area. They also have safer access and egress to the site. I am not oppose in general to having to build new homes as I understand the pressure the council is under to do so. But I think where these sites are, need to be very carefully considered.

The building of this site will result in an unacceptable impact on highways safety. Kirklees local plan states ' The council is committed to ensuring new developments do not materially add to existing highway problems or undermine the safety of all users of the network' Kirklees Local Plan policy LP21 a) states proposals shall 'ensure the safe and efficient flow of traffic within the development and on the surrounding highway network'

Access to the site proposed initially off Abbey Road South onto the Knowle, then turning right up Knowle Park Avenue, would undermine safety of the users. The application states that Knowle Park Avenue would become a one way street, and leaving the site would be via Lea Drive. The junction from Abbey Road South turning into The Knowle is on a corner with limited visual ability due to the house at the corner of the Knowle and Abbey South blocking the view of turning traffic. Please see photo below for reference, showing limited visibility.



Upon turning into the Knowle, if the car user happens to meet with a HGV coming the other way, which is quite possible bearing in mind use from HGVs from Shepley Spring, cars have to wait for the HGV to come out of the junction first. If you add an increase in vehicles turning into this junction, traffic would then have to wait to Abbey Road South for cars to turn in safely, which is clearly unsafe. The Knowle is too narrow for two cars to pass comfortably, and with the addition of HGV's from Shepley Spring, it leads to cars having to mount the pavement or means pulling into the opening of Knowle Park Avenue to be able to pass safely. The application from the developer confirms that the access route is less than 5.5m wide, which is the required minimum width from what I understand, and should have payments on each side, which this road does not. Please see photo below for reference.



Bearing in mind the bus stop for Kirkburton Middle School is just outside The Knowle and children walking to Shepley First School walk on the Knowle. Knowle Park Avenue, Eastfield, Lea Drive and surrounding roads. The addition of potentially 200 cars (presuming each household has 2 cars) or in the construction phases which could last for months or years, for lorries and heavy machinery to drive on the roads will cause an indisputable level of unsafety particularly for children and pedestrians walking on the pavements. I urge you to assess these small roads only designed for a small number of homes and imagine children walking

on the pavement at the same time as Heavy Machinery or 200 more cars, delivery drivers to the homes proposed. The infrastructure at this particular site and safety is simply not good enough to support additional development to this scale. Please see photo below showing cars parked on Knowle Park Avenue, narrowing the width of the road and making it unrealistic for a large increase in vehicles. The developer has outlined in its own documents that 'concerns were raised over increased traffic volumes using the northern access route to the A629 via The Knowle owing to pinch points along Knowle Park Avenue and substandard visibility at the priority junction of the Knowle/Knowle Park Avenue by Shepley Spring'



Leaving via Lea Drive as a one way enforced route is proposed. This route however, unless you are familiar with the area and using the roads regularly around here you may not be aware - becomes very congested during school drop off and pick up times as the road is used for parents to drop off their children and walk up the snicket to school, thus avoiding Firth Street where parking has been an issue for some time and where the school has asked residents not to park. Lea Drive is on a slope and this becomes hazardous during winter when ice and snow make the road slippery - Abbey Road South is a busy main road where cars regularly drive in excess of the speed limit. I understand that its gradient is much steeper than what is deemed acceptable by the council when joining a priority junction. Taken from the Kirklees Highways Guidance notes 'steep gradients on the minor road

approaches to priority junctions can be dangerous' and 'for the final 10m of the approach to a priority junction, the carriageway gradient of the minor road should be no more than 1 in 40'

Joining the main road from this junction is poor in terms of visibility and I can see a proposal to use double yellow lines, however has this taken into account where residents of Abbey Road would park, as many of the homes do not have any parking. In addition to this, double yellow lines do not prevent people physically parking there and does the council realistically have the capacity to be monitoring parked cars at this location. This area is a route frequently used by children to walk to school or ride their bikes, as the council would like to promote, however it will not be safe to do so if the levels of traffic through narrow roads is vastly increased. There is a zebra crossing not far up from this junction with limited visibility and where cars often do not stop. The main road up through Shepley near the Sovereign is also an accident blackspot. I appreciate we need new homes, but not in places where access would cause safety concerns and prevent children from being able to walk safely to school. Policy LP21 b states 'where needed, provide new infrastructure or improvements on or off site to ensure safe access from the highway network for pedestrians, cyclists public transport users and private vehicles'. I cannot see in the proposals any suggestions of new infrastructure nor improvements that mitigate these risks. Policy LP21 e states 'take into account the features of surrounding roads and footpaths and provide adequate layout and visibility to allow the development to be accessed safely'. The reality is that the development cannot be accessed safely and poses a genuine risk to pedestrians and car users.

The proposed site is also inside SPZ1. This is the highest-risk groundwater protection area. It feeds directly into Shepley Spring's drinking-water source. Shepley Spring provides many job opportunities, employs a large amount of people and boosts the economy in the area. This development threatens that. Any job opportunities arising from the development will be short term whilst the development is being built and not a long term economic boost to the area.

Thank you for your time and please take into account my objections. I sincerely hope that the right decision will be made here.