

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to submit a strong formal objection to the above application for up to 123 dwellings on Green Belt land to the south of Barnsley Road, Upper Cumberworth. The proposal is wholly inappropriate, contrary to the adopted Local Plan, and would result in serious, long-term harm to the Green Belt, landscape, settlement character, infrastructure, and public wellbeing.

The applicant's Planning Statement is selective, incomplete, and often misleading. The scheme fails on multiple planning grounds and should be refused.

1. Conflict with the Adopted Kirklees Local Plan

The site is not allocated for housing,
Lies outside the settlement boundary,
And is designated Green Belt, where development is inappropriate by definition.

Upper Cumberworth has not been identified for growth, and the Local Plan allocated zero housing sites here. Any attempt to bypass the proper plan-making process fundamentally undermines democratic planning.

2. Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

Under NPPF paragraph 153, inappropriate development must be given substantial weight. The applicant's attempts to minimise harm are unfounded.

A development of this size:

Expands the built footprint far beyond the village form,
Creates clear urban sprawl,
Encroaches deeply into open countryside,
Erodes rural separation between settlements,
And transforms a rural edge adjoining ancient woodland.

Claims of "limited harm" are inconsistent with reality.

3. Openness and Landscape Harm

Openness will be permanently and severely reduced through:

5.6 ha of open countryside being replaced with dense built form,
Estate roads, hard surfacing, lighting columns and urban activity,
A stark urban edge next to ancient woodland,
Visible harm to users of footpaths, public roads, and neighbouring homes.

Landscape mitigation cannot disguise or offset this fundamental loss.

4. Misrepresentation of Sustainability and Accessibility

The suggestion that Upper Cumberworth is an “extremely sustainable location” is inaccurate.

Public transport is rural and limited.

Facilities are few and small-scale.

No GP, secondary school, supermarket, or employment centre exists locally.

Walking distances quoted by the applicant are unverified and overly optimistic.

Selective Use of Village-Scale Facilities

While Upper Cumberworth has a post office, small convenience store, first school, pub and church, these are village-scale facilities and cannot support major housing expansion without forcing residents into private car dependency.

Presenting these limited amenities as evidence of a higher-order service centre is misleading and inconsistent with Local Plan settlement hierarchy and rural planning policy. Such facilities are appropriate for the existing community, but not for an additional 123 dwellings.

5. Settlement Character – Gross Overdevelopment

Upper Cumberworth has a population of about 663 residents. Adding up to 123 dwellings represents a 40–60% population increase, which would:

Overwhelm the existing village form,

Destroy its rural linear character,

Introduce a suburban estate entirely at odds with the settlement’s scale and identity.

This is not “rounding off” but a large, intrusive housing estate.

6. Housing Need Does Not Create Very Special Circumstances

The applicant relies heavily on the housing land supply shortfall. However:

Housing need alone cannot outweigh Green Belt harm.

Very special circumstances must be site-specific and compelling, which they are not.

Green Belt release is a matter for the Local Plan review, not speculative development.

This argument fails both in law and policy.

7. Flood Risk – Problems Deferred

Flood risk has not been addressed, only postponed, contrary to NPPF requirements.

Serious concerns include:

The Lead Local Flood Authority has offered only conditional, in-principle support, not approval.

Essential drainage details are incomplete and deferred to conditions.

The drainage plan relies on land not controlled by the developer, creating major delivery risks.

No evidence confirms that Pike Dike or other watercourses can safely accommodate additional flows.

Construction will generate significant runoff once topsoil is stripped, yet temporary drainage only accounts for ordinary rainfall.

Flood risk is real, unmitigated, and unresolved.

8. Wastewater – Sewer Network at Breaking Point

Yorkshire Water has issued a formal objection, confirming that the existing sewer network cannot accommodate a development of this scale.

The consequences are severe:

High risk of flooding, sewer surcharging, and pollution events.

Public health implications from system overload are serious and unacceptable.

The site was not included in long-term infrastructure planning, leaving no guarantee that required upgrades can or will be delivered.

Surface water cannot legally be discharged into public sewers without external approvals and freeholder consents—none of which are secured.

Approving the development under these conditions would be premature, unsafe, and irresponsible, placing future residents and existing communities at risk.

9. Technical Reports Do Not Overcome Fundamental Policy Conflict

A large list of reports does not compensate for:

The proposal's conflict with Green Belt policy,
Significant harm to settlement character,
Misleading sustainability claims,
Unresolved flood and wastewater risks,
And a complete lack of very special circumstances.

The Planning Statement's assertion that there are "no technical reasons for refusal" is demonstrably false.

10. Conclusion – The Application Must Be Refused

The proposal:

Conflicts with the Local Plan in multiple respects,
Represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt,
Causes substantial landscape and openness harm,
Overwhelms a small rural village,
Relies on inaccurate sustainability claims,
Includes unresolved flood and wastewater risks,
And fails to demonstrate any genuine very special circumstances.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Kirklees Council REFUSES this application in full.

Kind regards