

From:
Sent: 03 June 2026 10:49
To: DC Admin
Subject: Objection to Planning Application 2026/60/91251/W – Land off Meltham Road, Marsden

Planning Department Kirklees Council

Re: Objection to Planning Application 2026/60/91251/W – Land off Meltham Road, Marsden

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to register my objection to the outline proposal for up to nine dwellings on land off Meltham Road, Marsden (Application Number 2026/60/91251/W).

My reasons for objecting are set out below.

1. Development Outside the Established Settlement Boundary Marsden's north-eastern boundary has been clearly defined for decades. The Gatehead Bank estate, built in the early 1980s, forms a firm and recognisable edge to the village. The existing pattern of development along Meltham Road, together with long-established garden boundaries, creates a natural transition between the built-up area and the open countryside. The proposed layout would extend development further along Meltham Road in a linear strip, creating the appearance of ribbon development into open moorland. This would erode the clear settlement boundary and alter the established form of the village.

2. Green Belt Status and Impact on Openness The site lies entirely within designated Green Belt. The southern edge of the land already forms a strong dividing line between Marsden's built environment and the surrounding open fields and moorland. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) emphasises that the Green Belt's essential purpose is to prevent urban sprawl and maintain openness.

The Kirklees Green Belt Assessment (2017) identifies the Green Belt around Marsden as playing a key role in preventing settlements from merging and in protecting visually sensitive countryside. Parcel MA8 of the map, which includes this site, was assessed as making a strong contribution to preventing settlement merging (Purpose b). It also helps prevent an elongated settlement form. For these reasons, the land cannot reasonably be considered "grey belt" under the NPPF definition. Allowing development here would harm this parcel and undermine the integrity of the adjoining Green Belt to the north and west. Even if the site were treated as grey belt, the wider impact on the surrounding Green Belt would still make the proposal inappropriate under paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

3. Local Housing Need and Brownfield Alternatives The Kirklees Local Plan identifies Marsden's housing requirements, and there are already brownfield sites capable of meeting a significant proportion of this need. These include the Clough Lea development and the proposed redevelopment of New Mills. Affordable and social housing are essential for meeting genuine local demand, yet the application provides no clarity on whether any of the nine proposed dwellings would fall into these categories. Without such provision, the scheme does not address local housing needs.

4. Highways Safety and Pedestrian Access Concerns

This field has recently (12 months) had an entrance made directly onto Meltham Rd without prior planning or consultation. This was made by the farmer who chooses not to access his field via the existing gate on Gatehead. I reported this to Kirklees without so much as an acknowledgement or reply.

The transport assessment was carried out in November, a winter month when road use is not representative of typical conditions. This road is unlit, and during darker winter evenings many drivers and motorcyclists avoid it altogether, choosing instead to use the street-lit A62. As a result, the survey fails to capture the significantly higher levels of traffic, including motorcyclists, that use this route during spring and summer. Speeds on Meltham Road frequently exceed the posted 40mph limit, particularly on the hill approaching and leaving Marsden. The road narrows considerably north of the village, and the pavement becomes so restricted that pedestrians must walk in single file. The assessment also overlooks the fact that this stretch is used by walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. It forms part of a well-used recreational route linking to Marsden Moor, and groups of walkers regularly use the pavement to access moorland paths further up the road. Construction activity would severely compromise pedestrian safety. Once occupied, the development would introduce additional vehicle movements at a point where visibility is already limited. The assessment only considers accident data from the last five years and fails to acknowledge earlier serious incidents, including two fatalities near the bus stop south of the site. The proposed access point raises further concerns about visibility splays, particularly given the speed of traffic descending from the 60mph zone higher up the hill. It is also relevant that several years ago Councillor David Ridgeway arranged for the speed limit signs to be moved. The 30mph zone was pushed further out of the village, with a 40mph buffer introduced to slow vehicles from 60mph to 40mph and then to 30mph. This change was made because of longstanding speeding issues on this stretch of road.

5. Ecological Impact The site consists of grassland with wildflowers and is occasionally grazed by livestock. It forms a natural transition into the moorland and has been used by ground-nesting birds such as curlews, a protected species. Construction would require significant earthworks, disrupting habitats and altering the landscape. The proposed planting scheme introduces species not characteristic of the surrounding moorland environment, reducing ecological continuity. While the attenuation pond may assist with drainage, standing water is likely to increase midges and other insects, affecting neighbouring residents' enjoyment of outdoor space during warmer months.

6. Density and Character of the Proposed Development The surrounding area is characterised mainly by detached homes built from the 1980s onwards. Introducing up to nine dwellings, including semi-detached units, would noticeably increase density and would not reflect the established character of this part of Marsden.

7. Relationship to Train Station and NPPF Consultation Draft Although Marsden has a railway station, the proposed site lies outside the radius identified in the NPPF consultation draft for areas where development may be considered acceptable due to proximity to a "well-connected station." The site therefore does not benefit from this policy direction.

8. Inadequate Consultation and Notification The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 requires the local authority to notify relevant consultees and allow a minimum of 21 days for responses. Residents living next to the site were not informed by letter or by site notice. Most only became aware of the application through informal conversations. As a result, the effective consultation period has been drastically reduced, giving neighbours only a few days to review a large volume of technical documents. The applicant has also undertaken no pre-application engagement with those living adjacent to the site, further undermining the fairness and transparency of the process.

I trust that the above concerns will be given full consideration, and I respectfully request that this application be refused.

Yours faithfully,

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