

Kirklees Local Plan Examination

Stage 4 – Other Site Allocations

Matter 26 – General Approach in Part 2 of the Plan

and

Matter 34 – Green Belt Releases MX1905.

My name is Jim Aveyard; I am a Morley Town Councillor representing the Woodkirk Ward of that Council. The Woodkirk Ward adjoins the Kirklees Council area in the vicinity of the Chidswell site (MX1905). The implications of the proposed release of this site spread beyond the boundary of the site itself and will have a significant impact on residents in the area that I represent.

This overlap of effect has led me to have involvement with Chidswell Action Group over a period of several years. I have had some limited input to the submission provided by the group and fully endorse the stance they take. The detailed work is provided by them and this statement is intended to give a 'view from over the border'.

The duty to cooperate has not, in my opinion, been given appropriate weight in the development of this plan. This impacts in many ways through many issues from the soundness of the plan in general to more specific details including the sustainability of the proposed site and issues of coalescence of communities and administrative authorities.

Had the duty to cooperate been fully embraced then there would have been acknowledgement of the potential effects that we in the neighbouring authority would face. Perhaps the most obvious effect is the increase in traffic that development of this site would engender. Even if the mix of housing and employment is delivered as described, this settlement is not going to be another Saltaire or New Lanark. Residents will seek employment in Leeds and will make their way to work along the A653. This route takes in the M62 junction 28 gyratory which is already the subject of great concern to Highways England. Any commercial traffic generated is also likely to use this route to access the wider network.

This should have led to the two councils confronting the elephant in room, the issue of pollution. The A653 has been developed over the years so that in effect from Shaw Cross to the White Bear roundabout at Junction 28 there are dwellings on each side of the carriageway. Some have a very limited distance between the living space and the live carriageway. Often there is standing traffic outside these premises. There has been no work done on the air quality in these buildings though some has been done in the area of the roundabout. The area of residential development in the Tingley area adjacent to the roundabout suffers from background noise levels that are considered to be unacceptable. Any additional burden from this site will only exacerbate the situation.

The councils should have been in consultation regarding the coalescence of the two districts. Should this site be fully developed then, at Woodkirk, KirkLeeds becomes a reality. There would be no significant open space from joining the urban area of Leeds at Eccup in the north to leaving the Kirklees urban area in the region of Holmfirth or Meltham. This cannot be acceptable.

If the two authorities are to coalesce at Chidswell where is the joint working to provide the necessary infrastructure? The MX1905 masterplan suggests that a primary school will be provided but have they not realised that primary school children ultimately become secondary school children and will need to be accommodated somewhere. The Woodkirk Academy would be quite a draw as it has a good academic record and is within easy reach of this site. It is already operating at capacity. Had the two authorities been cooperating fully this issue and the issue of extensive housing developments proposed by Leeds City Council in the immediate area should have led to at least tentative proposals to remedy the situation.

The issues are replicated with regard to health care within the district. This, it is claimed, is the responsibility of the Clinical Commissioning Groups but unless there is a significant and meaningful dialogue between the two parties then the necessary services will not be forthcoming in a timely manner. This can only be detrimental to existing residents and to any new residents alike.

The health impacts on local residents of building over open green space and public footpaths are not considered in these proposals. It is possible to escape the bustle of the A653 corridor and enjoy peace and quiet in a semi-rural environment to the significant benefit of both physical and mental health. One does not enjoy such benefits in the middle of a huge housing estate.

There have been no exceptional circumstances demonstrated for the removal of site MX1905 from the green belt.