

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Section 77 Call in inquiry.

Statement by Bernard Poulter B.A.(hons)

(Public Management & Community Governance)

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/W4705/V/18/3208020

Summary objection:

The Council and the Developers have failed to demonstrate the need for the development of 700 homes in the Village of Burley in Wharfedale. Whilst they have identified the majority of occupants within Burley as being commuters to the employment centre of Leeds, and , to a lesser extent, Bradford and Harrogate, they have failed to adequately assess the current and predicted market for homes within the A650 and A65 corridors in conjunction with the huge developments of housing taking place along this route in the neighbouring Leeds City Council Area.

They have failed to follow the councils own directives and research that shows the overwhelming need for housing within the BMDC area is within the City Centre, the M606 corridor, the canal road corridor, and the area around Keighley. The councils own Employment Land report showed that these areas were also where the great majority of employment opportunities were being developed.

They purport to show a need for swiftly delivered housing to relieve pressure on accommodation, but have signally avoided the opportunities available at the abundant Brownfield sites across other areas of the district, as these lack the huge commercial potential for homes in Wharfedale.

The Council and developers have both made reference to the Sty lane decision letter from the Secretary of State to support aspects of their case, but ignore the fact that even that site, 2 years after detailed permission was received has yet break earth.

The developer has used sustained and overwhelming pressure on the Council to have the policies it had created to protect the perimeter of the South Pennine Special Protection Area from harm, and have succeeded in completely rewriting the policy so that it has become a window of opportunity to apply for development.

The developer secured an option on an area of Green Belt land, beyond the boundary of the Village.

In the creation of the recently required Core Strategy and accompanying development plan, with its underpinning statements and aims, there presented itself an opportunity to add the parcel of land that they controlled to the development plan.

This required several things to be changed from the Council's original consulted upon ideas for the Area. The removal of the strong protection of the land by its position on the periphery of the South Pennine SPA; the change in the position of the Village in the Settlement Hierarchy from a Local service Centre to a Local growth Centre; the dramatic increase in housing development numbers expected of the Village to accommodate the developer's site's potential; the creation of a belief that there existed "exceptional circumstances" to justify building on the Green Belt; the removal of the suggestion that Burley in Wharfedale was in any way an "Historic Town" or in danger of merging into one of its neighbours; and, not least, to delay any other competitor from affecting, by other contributions, the total number of units required.

All of these things have happened, in a well-documented sustained manner over the last 4 years or so.

I do not believe that any of the changes that have been pushed through on the range of Core Policies are in the spirit of the Council's original concept of the long term vision for Burley in Wharfedale, and the surrounding Green Belt of Wharfedale, and all its outstanding natural beauty.

Bernard Poulter 10.4.2019