

UPDATE

April 2018

Racecourse Approach

Many, many thanks to all of you who came to the Leeds Planning Panel meeting on Thursday 28th March. **Your physical and vocal support had a beneficial affect.** Although the Leeds planning officers were pushing for approval, the Panel deferred their decision after listening to three hours of debate and triggered by members of the Better Wetherby (BW) case for refusing the application. The vote to defer was won by 8 votes in favour to 4 votes against (and these 4 wanted to refuse the application).

Over 70 supporters of the BW attended the meeting at Leeds Civic Hall with a coach laid on by the Wetherby Ward Councillors. Ward Councillor, Alan Lamb, and BW Steering Committee member, Eric Cowin, spoke in the 4 minutes allowed against the application and answered the many questions raised by Councillor members of the Planning Panel. These questions echoed many of the concerns of local residents about the impact on local roads, services and the environmental impact and Councillors questioned Council planning officers about why they were recommending the scheme be approved.

The deferral was accompanied by the requirement that applicant, Taylor Wimpey, consult on how to alleviate the many problems associated with building 800 houses on this site with Wetherby Ward councillors, Wetherby Town Council and the BW. The Councillors noted that the developers had not consulted fully with Wetherby and we would expect them to do so before any re-submission.

Peter Swales, Co-Chair of BW said; "I want to thank those who spoke up on our behalf and it was heartening that so many local residents took the time to attend the meeting and support us. The numbers of people attending clearly had an impact on the panel decision. While we are disappointed that the application was not refused we will continue to make the arguments that these are the wrong type of houses in the wrong place. We do want to see more housing in Wetherby but we need smaller houses for young people to buy and rent and older people to downsize to."

The application by Taylor Wimpey to build 800 houses as part of the 1,100 planned for the site will be brought back to the Planning Panel at some time in the future, thought to be at least after the local elections in May.

WE REALLY, REALLY WANT AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE TO ATTEND THE PANEL MEETING AT WHICH THIS APPLICATION IS AGAIN RAISED, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WETHERBY CONTINUES TO BE OPPOSED TO THIS APPLICATION AND TO ENSURE IT IS REJECTED. Be assured the next (and final) meeting will not last as long! We will notify you of future Panel dates to put in your diary and will give notice of the applications next appearance as soon as we know, but this may be only a week's notice.

Objections to the Taylor Wimpey Racecourse Approach planning application can (and should) still be made by via the website <https://publicaccess.leeds.gov.uk/online-applications/> or by post to the council quoting Ref. No: 17/02594/OT - [Land Off Racecourse Approach Wetherby LS22](#)

Stockeld/Harrogate Road

The Minister has still not given his decision on whether to have this questionable planning approval “called in” for a Planning Inspector to hold a public planning enquiry. Meanwhile, Harrogate Council has agreed not to progress this further until the decision is made. However, we can be sure that informal talks are continuing and you will have noticed that no crops are being grown in these fields.

On our behalf, our Ward Councillor, Alan Lamb, is pursuing a Freedom of Information Request to obtain the “secret document” which changed Harrogate Councillors’ minds from refusing the application to accepting it. So far, Harrogate Council has refused to disclose this report and a complaint has been lodged with the Information Commissioner. Confirmation has been received that the Information Commissioner is pursuing this matter and Councillor Lamb has updated the request with our belief that it contained incorrect information as to the years of land supply in Harrogate District, which we now know is in excess of the statutory 5 years supply.

AS SOON AS WE KNOW THE RESULTS OF THESE INITIATIVES, WE SHALL LET YOU KNOW. WE MAY NEED TO APPEAL FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT A PUBLIC ENQUIRY IN THE EVENT OF A “CALL IN” OR TO PAY FOR A JUDICIAL REVIEW IF NOT CALLED IN.

And Finally

Please pass this newsletter on to friends and neighbours and if they wish to receive future updates directly they should contact betterwetherby@gmail.com to be put on our mailing list.