

Planning Policy,
Harrogate Borough Council,
P.O. Box 787,
Harrogate, HG1 9RW.
8th November, 2022.

Dear Sirs,

Pre Submission – New Settlement (Maltkiln) Development.

I am writing as Chair of Better Wetherby (BW) in representation to this proposal which will have a profound and most probably, detrimental effect on Wetherby, a situation and prospect which appears to have been overlooked by both Harrogate Borough (HBC) and the Developers in what appears to be a wholly unnecessary rush to 'get spades in the ground', all of which is cautioned in the HBC Local Plan Report (LPR) of Inspector, Richard Schofield dated 30 January, 2020. Comments in that report will crop up in this letter which lead to the simple conclusion by BW that this proposal is premature.

I am going to set out various elements which lead to this conclusion, be they timing or impact or co-operation.

Duty to Cooperate (DtC) – The LPR at Para 13 questioned the proper exploring of synergies with Wetherby and stated "detailed mutual consideration (be given) to the future development of Wetherby". The pre submission document fails to demonstrate that, in so far as there is no evident to support the DtC is in place, there is evidence that York CC have been consulted. Equally there is no Wetherby location noted in the Public Notice of a location where the proposals can be viewed. This severely limits or even prevents the democratic rights of Wetherby inhabitants being exercised.

HBC fell down on this in relation to the 2019 Inquiry into the proposed Stockeld Park housing development and appears to be making the same error again which could lead to legal challenge. BW would expect to have seen some proof of this DtC from Leeds but non is forthcoming at this time, does this indicate LCC has not been involved where York CC apparently has?

LPR – As is known the current Plan Period runs to 2035 and at Para 26, the Inspector concluded that delivery from Maltkiln was not needed to support the 5 year supply. This statement is important given the demographic of HBC, an aging population giving potential rise to a decline in demand coupled to higher interest rates for some time and the location of the site which will rely on car borne transport with the higher costs associated (fuel). In the opinion of BW these factors render the proposal premature and the view of BW is that there is no need for this proposal now and that it should be reviewed against national trends closer to the LPR expiry date, not now.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – The reported reduction from the published HBC standard of 40% affordable accommodation to 20% which will then be transferred into the Development Plan for Harrogate is an appalling indictment of HBC and frankly smacks of double standards, bordering on elitism. More important it flies in the face of Central Government policies to get

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the housing market open to first time buyers / entry to the housing ladder. The reasons given that as the proposed development is not located on a bus route (the one service indicated no longer runs), then by definition the lower paid who do not have a car will not be able to live in the development. BW submission is that in this case the development is clearly in the wrong location to support what has been the policy of HBC on Affordable Housing provision. Further the transfer of this standard into the Development Plan and thus relating and applied to ALL future Applications within HBC is an alarming prospect for the young and first time buyers. Is HBC to become some Monte Carlo style enclave?.

HOUSE TYPES – Whilst at this stage there is no requirement for detail the LPR at Para 66 states 25% of homes should be accessible under the definitions within Building Regulations, etc. and further at Para 71, 5% should be self build. BW can see no reference to this. This Developer is not a recognised National or Region volume house builder so are they to build the ‘up to 4000’ dwellings or is this simply a profit generation exercise?, some transparency would be welcome.

TRANSPORT – This proposal will give rise to some 6,600 additional cars based on the current average ownership of 1.64 per household. In this location the view of BW is likely ownership is likely to be closer to 2.00 per household, given the absence of bus travel and the infrequent train service to either York or Harrogate and the relatively short distance to the A1 Motorway. This gives rise not only to probable congestion on the A59 at peak times but also a serious issue with emissions. There is no evidence BW has seen to illustrate what measures are likely to be put in place but, again, the wrong location for this development to work without significant impact.

WETHERBY – Wetherby will be the one major settlement to feel the brunt of this development. The LPR stated that the implication of this proposal on nearby villages needs careful assessment. There is no evidence of this in the proposal. As to Wetherby itself it already suffers through traffic to the A1 Motorway and will get a new settlement of 1100 homes in the next 10-12 years. The Developer’s presentation on Maltkiln glosses over Wetherby as if it doesn’t exist, even excluding it from maps in the initial part of their document but goes on to say Wetherby has many service facilities, true but consider Doctor’s Surgeries over subscribed, along with Dental care, Primary school places creaking, Secondary school pupils being bussed in hundreds to Harrogate, high levels of atmospheric pollution in the Town centre, car parking in short supply. All this with a further 1100 homes to come. Wetherby is little more than a 10 minute drive from the proposal and the consequences for the Town and quality of life for those residents is clear. In the view of BW given any detailed Planning process comes forward then the Developer should be compelled to make significant capital contributions for the direct benefit / offset of major upheaval to Wetherby.

Conclusion – BW would wish HBC to put this letter on the Plans Portal and in front of the Inspector in due course and again repeat that given the LPR conclusions under Paras 174 and 181 the Inspector found a 25% over supply of housing after discounts and further stated there is no need (in the current Plan Period) to identify additional allocations (premature to do so).

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Please advise of future key dates, such as Public Inquiry and accept the representation of BW in this form which will also be covered by a Recorded Delivery hard copy.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Owen,
Chair,
Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd.

Home address for correspondence:-

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The above details are not for general publication but comply with your identification requirements.

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