

Your Ref:  
Our Ref:

18 March, 2013

The Planning Department  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
MORPETH  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

Dear Sirs

**OBJECTION to the application to build 22 dwellings and associated landscaping on land west of the Grove, New Ridley Road, Stocksfield, Northumberland; Reference no. 12/0347/FUL**

I **OBJECT** to the above application on the following grounds:

**1. National Planning Policy Framework**

This application is in the Green Belt. Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs is allowed under policies set out in the Local Plan. In this case the application **fails the criteria** within the Tynedale Core Strategy 2007 Saved Policies and the Northumberland Core Strategy.

**Policy H23**

As an exception to Policies H9, H10 and H15, residential development will be allowed on land within or adjoining settlements **with an adequate range of services and facilities** where it is clearly demonstrated that there is an **overriding local need** for affordable housing which cannot be met in any other way, provided that:

- (a) appropriate legal agreements (such as Section 106 obligations) are entered into to ensure that all dwellings provided will be, and will remain, available for occupancy by eligible local people at an affordable cost either to rent or buy and that proper management is guaranteed in the long term; and
- (b) developments do not have any adverse impact on the character and/or appearance of settlements, their setting or the surrounding countryside.

The Applicant has **failed to include proof of overriding local need** for affordable housing which cannot otherwise be met.

The **Appearance and Character** of the dwellings clashes with the existing village dwellings. The proposed dwellings are densely packed onto the site, unattractive, lacking any architectural features, with communal car parking and typical of urban city development not a rural village. Regarding the plan layouts Building Regulations will not permit toilets opening out directly onto a kitchen area and onward through an external door. These dwellings have no place in this village setting.

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Within the local area other suitable Brown Field sites have been identified which satisfy the Local Plans and those are the sites which should first be developed before considering permitting any encroachment onto this Green Belt site far removed from services and amenities.

## 2. Northumberland Core Strategy Policy 5

Policy 5 states that “*development in other smaller settlements will be supported where it is of appropriate size for the size of the settlement*”. This proposal, an increase of 22 dwellings in an existing settlement of 55 dwellings, i.e., a 40% increase in the size of the village, is grotesquely disproportionate and would irreversibly change the character of the village.

## 3. Northumberland Core Strategy Policy 9

Policy 9 states that the “*development of rural exception sites will be permitted if the proposal provides affordable housing in perpetuity and all of the following criteria are met*”:

(d) “*the development is well related to local services and facilities.*”

This site **fails this test**. There are no daily bus services. The local First School (Broomley) is 2.4 pedestrian miles away 370 ft downhill. A parent walking a child to School would walk nearly 10 miles a day in all weathers. The local Spar shop is 1.55 miles away down hill.

(e) “*The development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the settlement*”.

This site **fails this test**. An increase in dwellings of 40% is totally at odds with (e). In addition, this application is a Phase 1 development and should be considered as a precursor to Phase 2 which would no doubt follow bringing the new dwelling total to 55. This would double the size of the village.

## 4. Tynedale Core Strategy 2007- Saved Policies

Policy H3 refers to a smaller village if it has adequate services as defined by:

(a) “*A school or Shop selling food to meet day to day needs*”. New Ridley has neither and **fails this test**.

(b) “*A village hall/community centre or pub.*”

New Ridley has a pub.

(c) “*There must be Public transport to a larger settlement.*”

There is no daily bus service, and so the application **fails this test**.

On this basis the Application fails the criteria and is **not sustainable**.

## 5. SAJ Transport Plan included with the Application

### Access to Education

#### Primary School. 3.2.9

Broomley First School is 2.4 pedestrian miles, 3.85km from New Ridley and 370 ft downhill. Any parent walking with a child to and from school would walk 9.6 miles/day ascending 740 ft daily, in all weathers partly along an unsafe footpath 2ft wide on a blind bend. By any standards this is unsafe and not viable.

#### Secondary School

“*No Secondary Schools within an acceptable walking distance*”. **Fails to comply.**

#### Access to Bus Services

Two buses from the village run twice on a Tuesday to the A695 2.4 kms away and on no other day. “*Not within an acceptable walking distance*”. **Fails to comply.**

### *Public Transport- Conclusion*

3.4.6 “*The proposed development is not readily accessible to regular public services by foot*”. **Fails to comply.**

### *Site Accessibility*

3.5.1 “*The site is not readily accessible by walking, cycling and Public transport*”. **Fails to comply.**

### **Comments on SAJ Transport Plan**

On all the criteria listed for the Applicant by Transport Consultants SAJ, this proposal fails and it is perverse in the extreme that Fairhurst in their Planning Support Statement 7.78 in contradiction assert that “*the proposed development is acceptable in terms of transport planning policy*”.

### **6. Disability Access**

The design includes disabled parking spaces but this only caters for those disabled tenants who can drive. There are no daily buses. No consideration has been given to day-to-day living for disabled persons who do not drive and rely on a personal electric wheelchair for transport. Without question, the return trip down and up hill to the local shop would not be feasible even if a scooter battery had sufficient capacity. The Applicant has not included a Disability Assessment within the Application.

### **7. Carbon Footprint and Climate Change**

NCC signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate change 2005 and are a Local Carbon Framework Authority which requires minimisation of the Carbon Footprint of any new development. This Application site is not sustainable without environmentally damaging car or taxi journeys for day to day living and this site, so distant from all facilities, should be the last option when other sites close to amenities and public transport are available in the local area with a much reduced Carbon Footprint.

### **8. Northumberland Local Development Plan**

#### **Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal February 2013**

#### *Rural Exception Sites (Policy 9)*

*4.92 Rural exceptions policies permit local authorities to consider allocating and releasing small sites for affordable housing in perpetuity where they would not normally be used for housing. The site should meet the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connections. Small numbers of market housing on rural exception sites may also be allowed where this would facilitate the provision of significant affordable housing to meet local needs.*

This need by the local community has **not been demonstrated** by the Applicant and based on discussion with the Developers at the public meeting they have in mind tenants from much further afield. The public opposition at that consultation meeting was overwhelming.

#### *Rural Exception Sites (Policy 9)*

*4.80 However further to concern from the majority of respondents that the evidence used to inform the Issues and Options document was out of date and insufficient to support the suggested housing requirements the Council has commissioned further population modelling work together with an update to its long term employment forecasts to test a series of growth based scenarios. In summer 2013 further engagement on policies informed by this modelling; a further Housing Need Study to identify required types and levels of affordable housing; a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability (SHLAA); and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).*

### **8. Need for Local Social Housing**

The Applicant has not demonstrated or quantified the volume and type of Social Housing which meets the Local Need. Indeed, referring to The Local Development Plan 4.80 above it is apparent that NCC plan to carry out further work to establish these facts.

I urge you to reject this Application.

Yours faithfully