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Our Ref: ZA10121

13 January 2021

Dear Sir,

Further Responses to questions raised by Mr Sagar enclosed below.

1. In terms of density I hoped the position was very clear despite the fact that Mr Sagar appeared to be confused by my answers. Whatever number of homes are built on the Owlthorpe Fields site, if the density is as it is required in the Local Plan the amount of land taken will be less than it would be with the current application. In terms of the wider effect on the city, given the Council will eventually have to facilitate the provision of a given number of homes according to Government targets then the higher the density the smaller amount of green space that will be taken up by house building.

2. In terms of the affordable homes, all that has happened from the initial application to the current one is the moving of three homes from near the Medical Centre to farther back on the site. This is simply cosmetic tinkering. It does not address the fundamental issue that affordable homes should be integrated properly into the development. With regard to the fact that these homes are different in appearance I did not mention that in my previous submission but I think reference to it simply adds to the view that there has been little attempt to properly integrate either in terms of location or appearance.

3. Reference was made to a previous Master Planning exercise and I may have appeared to have been a little bemused by this. That is because I do not recognise any previous Master Planning exercise. In 2014 the Council produced a Design and Planning Brief for the Owlthorpe sites. I was aware of this and indeed referred to this in a letter I wrote to all local residents in 2019. This was very clearly a Design and Planning Brief for the purpose of eventually marketing these sites for sale. It was not a full Master Plan in progress working in detail about the precise future housing, environmental and other arrangements on the site in close and detailed consultation with the local community. Specifically in that Planning and Design Brief there is a very important comment and I quote directly, "The sites need to be considered as a whole to ensure comprehensive development". That is precisely what a Master Planning exercise would do and what so far has not been done either in this application or in that Design and Planning Brief itself. The Brief refers to density and says it could be at the lower end of the scale of 40 to 60. It does say the number of homes could drop below 257 but it does not say that in doing so the density should drop below the lower end of the scale of 40 to 60.

Furthermore and importantly, three quotes from the Design Brief are that there are key opportunities for "optimising the green field character, topography and landscape value of the sites and context" and "the development must contribute to the success of the green infrastructure in the area to enable more sustainable development and lifestyles." The last point is absolutely key and quite clearly the current application does not do that in any respect.

Finally the brief says "the new neighbourhood at Owlthorpe should reflect the distinctive green character of the setting and utilise the site's natural assets." The clear presumptive is that the 3 sites will be seen collectively as one neighbourhood not as 3 separate developments.

Yours sincerely

Clive Betts MP for  
Sheffield South East