**Objection from Friends of Hollin Busk to the Updated Planning Statement (dated 5/12/18) from DLP Planning (for Hallam Land Management) regarding 17/04673/OUT.**

FOHB have already submitted an objection to the original application, entitled “Safeguarding the Hollin Busk Area for Future Generations”. This present document is in response to the new updated planning statement from DLP (for Hallam Land Management) that covers much of the same original proposal. FOHB have endeavoured to only cover new/modified information. This further statement from the applicant continues to contain basic factual errors, misrepresentations and inaccuracies about the locality. This casts doubt on the validity of the rest of their submission. The type and scale of this mis-information would suggest that the authors do not have an understanding of the Deepcar and Stocksbridge area. Have they even bothered to talk to local people and visit the location?

Public Consultation.

The DLP(for Hallam Land Management) public consultation exercise has been extremely limited. A letter was sent to a small number of homes and there were only 20 replies. There has been no other communication with local residents, there has been no public meeting, there has been no feedback on the content of the replies. The applicant did not engage with the local community when formulating their proposal, to identify local needs, and did not engage with the community to address local concerns regarding impacting on this protected open countryside. There has been no communication from DLP( for Hallam Land Management) with Stocksbridge Town Council.

Planning History.

Outline planning application 89/03538/OUT was submitted in 1989, was refused, and a subsequent appeal to The Secretary of State was dismissed on the grounds of detrimental impact on the quality of the environment of the area. Subsequently it was intended to designate the land at Hollin Busk as Green Belt but this was forgotten in error. Subsequently it was realised that this would require a review of all Sheffield Green Belt issues which was not considered suitable at that time, so the land was designated as protected open countryside in the Core Strategy 2009.

The NPPF 2018 seeks to protect green spaces. The NPPF also states that policies should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF.

The Sheffield Core Policy 2009 is still current until replaced by the new Sheffield Plan. CS72 states “The green, open, rural character of areas on the edge of built-up areas, but not in the Green Belt, will be safeguarded through protection as open countryside, including … (d) south of Stocksbridge at Hollin Busk”. This is still current policy. The applicant seeks to sweep this away by talk of a fictitious invention called a “tilted balance”. Sheffield City Council should be strong enough to stick to current policy. The Sheffield Core Strategy itself provides sufficient grounds to refuse this planning application.

The applicant seeks to claim that because Sheffield City Council can not meet its requirement for a 5 year housing land supply, then a “tilted balance” should apply. This situation has now changed and Sheffield housing land supply is now 5.04 years. This negates the applicant’s argument.

Landscape.

The NPPF 2018 seeks to protect green spaces and Sheffield has adopted a policy to maintain a green network with green links. Stocksbridge, Deepcar and Bolsterstone are discrete towns/villages separated by green links. Up the hill Stocksbridge and Deepcar are separated by Fox Glen Wood, a wildlife site. The proposed development will sever this green link at the top end, isolate a natural wildlife site that was given to the people of Stocksbridge and Deepcar, and create urban sprawl across the hillside in contradiction to existing SCC policy to maintain green networks.

CS72 clearly outlines the importance and value of the rural character of the land at Hollin Busk. The applicant attempts to sweep this away in their Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and define the land as “countryside in general”. This is totally missing the point. The key issue is that the NPPF seeks to protect green space and does not support an inappropriate development in an inappropriate location. This area is highly valued by local people and is protected open countryside.

The proposed development closes off the top of Fox Glen and a green link. The applicant’s concession to designate a small area of open green space is extremely limited in size and insufficient to be regarded as a wildlife habitat.

Fox Glen Wood LWS is immediately adjacent and below the proposed site. There are already water flow concerns in Clough Dike and surface water run-off is regularly seen in the fields proposed for the development. There is local concern that changes to the surface and underground water flow into Fox Glen may have a significant effect on the local habitat. Particularly the collection of surface water from the housing, and more direct flow into the Glen, may be detrimental. This has not been adequately assessed.

5 Year Housing Supply

The need for new housing is acknowledged, as is the fact that Sheffield City Council have identified the Upper Don Valley as an expansion area for new housing. CS33 states that “new housing will be limited to previously developed land within the urban area”. The valley from Oughtibridge up to Stocksbridge contains a number of brownfield sites with good access to main routes, local shops, Stocksbridge bypass and any future extension of the Supertram network. There are a number of housing developments already underway at Fox Valley, Deepcar Station Road, Peggy Tub site, Oughtibridge old paper mill, and several other infill sites in Stocksbridge and Deepcar that total about 1000 new houses on brownfield land. There are also 159 homes planned on greenfield sites in Stocksbridge and Deepcar and that is a significant share. This makes a considerable contribution from the area towards the SCC 5 year housing supply requirement.

The DLP(for Hallam Land Management) statement only identifies 36 new houses per annum in Stocksbridge/Deepcar and hence grossly underestimates the full extent of brownfield land housing development that is currently underway in Stocksbridge and Deepcar. The applicant needs to get their facts right. The application is not part of the original Sheffield Housing Plan and is an opportunistic proposal in an inappropriate location. It is not a sustainable development for the reasons outlined later in this document.

There is no need to abandon the policy of “brownfield development first” and build on green fields on the hill tops. SCC should maintain the declared Government intention of “the right homes in the right places.”

Recent information from Sheffield City Council now indicates that Sheffield has a housing land supply of 5.04 years.

Access and Transport

The applicant’s updated statement brings nothing new to this issue apart from provision of a zebra crossing.

The site access for construction lorries and resident’s cars is virtually opposite Royd Nursery and Infants School. Because Carr Road is a steep hill, many parents bring their children by car. There is already considerable congestion in this area due to parked cars at school drop off and pick up times.

The traffic assessment acknowledges that the Carr Road/Manchester Road traffic light junction exceeds capacity at peak times and proposes that this will be addressed by traffic light sequencing. There is regularly queuing and congestion with traffic trying to get up Carr Road against down flow traffic and parked cars. Traffic also queues both ways along Manchester Road. The problem is road capacity not traffic light sequencing.

Since the initial study was completed the situation has now changed with the commencement of construction of 416 new houses at Deepcar, Station Road and plans for a further set of traffic lights on Manchester Road about 100m from the existing crossroad traffic lights. The traffic study in the application grossly underestimates the situation and is out of date.

Heritage

The DLP (for Hallam Land Management) description of the listed buildings at Royd Farm is incorrect. The Heritage Assessment was a deskbound exercise and the report contains significant errors that demonstrate this fact. There are no ”barn and farm buildings NE of Royd Farm”. These have been converted to domestic dwellings. There are no “modern farm buildings in the core setting”.

The plans submitted by the applicant show that the Royd Farm site will be surrounded on 3 sides and indicates new housing to be within 5m of existing listed buildings. This clearly impacts on the setting of the listed buildings.

The photographs in the applicant’s documents are a misrepresentation of the true appearance of the site. Some more representative photographs of the site and Royd Farm are appended.

Sustainability

The application is not a sustainable development for a number of key reasons.

* It will significantly impact on the rural, green, open countryside nature of the area.
* Hollin Busk is 0.75 miles up a steep hill and hence access is very difficult by foot and bicycle. There is an infrequent and inadequate bus service some distance away that does not provide good commuting to places of work. The majority of people use their cars.
* The main routes, main roads and Stocksbridge Bypass are 0.75 miles away in the valley bottom where other new housing developments on brownfield land are located.
* This development will contribute to a significant traffic problem at the Carr Road/Manchestyer Road junction that already exceeds capacity at peak times, before the 416 new houses at Station Road are taken into consideration.
* Access to local community amenities, shops, doctors etc is about one mile away and down a steep hill so people use cars.
* The proposed road access to the development is nearly opposite Royd Preparatory and Infants School.
* The development would sever and cut off an important green link (Fox Glen WLS) that separates Stocksbridge and Deepcar.
* It is an inappropriate development in an inappropriate location

Community Feeling.

The green fields around Hollin Busk and the rural nature of the landscape are much appreciated by local people. Hollin Busk Lane is regularly used by schoolchildren (Stocksbridge High School and Royd Preparatory and Infants School), walkers, cyclists and regular commuters for access along the hillside between Stocksbridge and Deepcar. This is valued open countryside with tremendous views across the valley and of sunsets in the west.

There has been a huge community response to yet another attempt to build on this land. There are now over 500 objections posted on the planning website. Key objectors include Stocksbridge Town Council, local MP Angela Smith, The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, The Upper Don Action Group, Friends of Hollin Busk Action Group as well as over 500 local residents. There have been letters and articles in the local press including The Sheffield Telegraph, Yorkshire Post and LookLocal.

Since the submission of further documents by the applicant in early 2019, new and updated objections are appearing on the planning website.

Local feeling is extremely high about this issue.

Site Locality.

The applicant’s updated statement continues to contain basic errors and mis-representations which include:-

1. 2.3 Grade 2 Listed Buildings. There are no barn and farm buildings 15m NE of Royd Farm. Royd Farm is a private dwelling believed to date back to the 16th C. Other private dwellings include Bennewell, The Boskins and Glen View.
2. 2.5 The Peak District National Park boundary may well be 0.7km away at Bolsterstone but the Green Belt starts just across the road (Hollin Busk Lane) from the proposed development. This land was originally intended to be included in the Green Belt but was accidentally left out. To correct this error Sheffield City Council designated it as “protected open countryside” and it is specifically mentioned by name in the Core Strategy 2009.
3. 2.7 The site does not “gently slope down from Hollin Busk Lane in a SE direction” but in a northerly direction.
4. 2.8 This area is not a flood-free zone. There have been recent instances of floods down Carr Road with both Bennewell and The Boskins having their ground floors flooded. There is regularly water running down Carr Road in times of heavy rain.
5. 2.10 states that “local facilities are within easy access by foot” and are between 1-2km away. This is not the case as Carr Road is a steep hill with an ascent of around 200m and virtually everybody accesses local facilities by car.
6. 2.11 “Tata Steel Works has recently been regenerated to form a new retail centre”. Liberty Speciality Steels is very much in existence and produces around a fifth of the worlds aerospace steel and special steels for other markets such as oil and gas, power generation, automotive and specialist engineering. They make a major contribution to the economy of the area.
7. The assertion that there is an adequate bus service at this location is a misrepresentation. The bus service is poor and infrequent and many people resort to using their cars to travel to work.

Conclusion

An earlier proposal in 1989 to build on this land at Hollin Busk was refused and an appeal to the Secretary of State was turned down. This resulted in the decision to designate it as protected open countryside and this was built into Sheffield City Council policy and The Core Strategy 2009. Hollin Busk is specifically mentioned by name as “to remain as protected open countryside” and “not to be built on”.

The NPPF 2018 also reflects on the importance of retaining green open space. Sheffield City Council should enforce the existing policy and safeguard this open space for future generations.

In the Upper Don Valley, an area designated for housing development, there are significant new housing developments already underway at Fox Valley, Deepcar Station Road, Peggy Tub site, Oughtibridge old paper mill and several infill locations, all on brownfield sites, totalling around 1000 new houses. These are all within the valley and have good access to existing main road networks. This is a significant provision towards the Sheffield 5 year housing supply requirement that currently stands at 5.04 years.

There is no need to encroach on protected green open countryside on the hill sides that is in an inappropriate location.

Local public feeling is extremely high and objectors include Stocksbridge Town Council, local MP Angela Smith, CPRE, UDAG, FOHB and over 500 local residents.

This application should be refused.

Friends of Hollin Busk (Peter Morgan 18th Feb 2019)



