

The Planning Inspectorate
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Temple Quay House,
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Temple Quay,
Bristol
BS1 6PN

1st February 2010

APP/N4720/A/09/2117920/NWF

Dear Sir

Land at Grimes Dyke, York Road, Leeds LS14 2AE
Outline application for 500 dwellings and ancillary facilities

This is an appeal against the refusal of outline planning permission for the erection of some 500 new dwellings on a green field site at the outer edge of the city conurbation.

Thorner is a rural village of some 1250 residents (per Electoral Roll) some 8 miles from Leeds city centre. The village is encircled by a green belt of mixed farmland. There are arable fields, fields with livestock (cows, sheep and horses) and various areas of woodland. It is this green belt that creates, and preserves, the character of the village.

The proposed development at Grimes Dyke, which is seen as the precursor of the proposed East Leeds Extension (ELE), is an encroachment into that green band.

Although Grimes Dyke may be allocated as a site suitable for housing development, Thorner Parish Council, through its advisers, was able to convince the Inspector at the RUDP Inquiry in 2004, that such sites, and the ELE, should only be developed as a last resort, and only after other sites have been exhausted. That stage has not been reached. Therefore the release of this site for development at this stage would be premature.

Green field sites are more easily developed than brown field sites, and if green field sites are released, the development of alternative sites is affected. Many of the brown field sites are in areas of the City where regeneration is important. Such regeneration is therefore prejudiced by the premature release of green field sites.

Thorner Parish Council supports the City Council general policy, to be enshrined in the Local Development Framework, of requiring previously developed sites to be re-developed, before green field sites are released.

There are currently two major redevelopments within close proximity to the site at Grimes Dyke.

The Leeds City Council scheme at EASEL (East and South East Leeds) is one of social necessity. The areas covered by the scheme have become areas of social deprivation and poverty, and the redevelopment is intended to bring to the residents of those areas, a more acceptable standard of accommodation.

The Vickers tank factory at Barnbow, is a large redundant industrial site that is appropriate for re-development, and plans are well advanced.

These two major sites meet any realistic demand for housing accommodation in this area of the City. Whatever government targets are set, the reality is that houses will not be built unless and until there is a market for them. Houses on the site at Grimes Dyke are likely to sell for more money, and be cheaper to build, than houses on the other sites. Therefore to allow the release of a green field site at Grimes Dyke, will undermine and jeopardise the developments at EASEL and Barnbow, in particular, and other brown field sites in general.

At the RUDP Inquiry it was confirmed that the Leeds Outer Ring Road (ORR) at Seacroft was running at, or over, capacity. The proposal for the ELE included a proposal for a new link road, to connect the ORR at Redhall, with the M1 north of Thorp Park. Furthermore the proposals took into account the new Super Tram system that was to be introduced with Government backing. Such backing has not been forthcoming and plans for this new transport system, to serve this area of the City, are now on hold.

The development at Grimes Dyke will inevitably lead to an increase in traffic on the ORR at its most congested part.

Therefore the development of Grimes Dyke is premature and should not be considered until a new link road has been constructed, and/or major improvements to the ORR undertaken.

The congestion on the ORR, around the A64 junctions, is already resulting in an increase in traffic close to the village of Thorner. At busy periods in particular, traffic is using Skeltons Lane and Thorner Lane, as a link between the A58 (and Leeds ORR at Redhall) and the A64 York road. This is increasing the volume of traffic using the Thorner Lane/York Road junction, and there have been a number of accidents at this dangerous junction.

Therefore any major development that would add to traffic congestion in the area should be avoided, as it will lead to an increase in the number of vehicles seeking alternative routes to avoid the congestion.

Thorner Parish Council submits that the Appeal against the refusal of permission should be dismissed.

Thorner Parish Council would welcome the opportunity to address the Inspector at the forthcoming Inquiry, to develop these issues.

Yours sincerely

Steven A Wood,