

NORTH RIGTON PARISH COUNCIL

SUBMISSION TO HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL ON THE 2016 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

**Site references: H45, H74, which already have planning permissions.
H49, H46, H70, H36, H65, H56, H51, proposed development sites in the 2016 draft local plan**

This submission is made by North Rigton Parish Council which represents 460 residents of the parish, located 2.5 miles south west Harrogate. It is the unanimous opinion of the parish council that developments to the west of Harrogate (and specifically those listed above) lack the infrastructure to support them and will result in a significant increase in traffic travelling through North Rigton on rural village roads. The plan for south west Harrogate is inappropriate when sites to the immediate east and west of the A1 provide alternative development opportunities and a better fit with HBC objectives.

To support this submission at various points reference is made to a number of existing HBC and national policy statements and these can be found in Annex 1 of this document.

THE PLAN DOES NOT MEET HBC'S STATED OBJECTIVES

The HBC Member for Planning & Sustainable Transport, Rebecca Burnett, has stated that local plan policy is as follows:

“The council’s draft Local Plan is based on a growth strategy that is centred around the key public transport corridors. Therefore the need for new homes and jobs will be met as far as possible in those settlements that are well related to the key public transport corridor (key bus corridors and proximity to a rail station on the Leeds-Harrogate-York line)”

This statement was made at the end of October 2016 and the stated objectives of the HBC Plan (see footnotes) any further major developments to the West of Harrogate do not, and can not match the stated Aims and objectives.

It is the opinion of North Rigton Parish Council that the developments on the scale of those proposed to the West/South West of Harrogate are unsustainable, since all the town’s infrastructure, bus routes, train services, schools and supermarkets lie to the east and south of the town and the South West Harrogate area is served by rural roads not designed for high volumes of traffic.

With two sites already approved for development in south west Harrogate(H45 and H74) and seven further sites identified in the same area (H49, H46, H70, H36, H65, H56, H51) the HBC 2016 draft Plan, effectively creates the equivalent of a NEW SETTLEMENT in south west Harrogate in rural countryside. The proposal that this defacto settlement be created, with no supportive infrastructure is not only unsound it does not comply with the stated objectives of HBC for the new local plan.

This view is supported by statements set out in the Planning Inspection 2009 which states:
The lack of existing infrastructure within the SW Harrogate settlement, and the absence of any comprehensive proposals to provide a sustainable infrastructure, means that sites within the SW settlement fail to comply with the policies in the plan, including the policy that the majority of future developments should be located close to a station on the Leeds-Harrogate-York railway or within a Key Bus Service Corridor.

See Annex 1 Reference 1: Planning Inspection 2009

See Annex 1 Reference 2: Aims Ob1

See annex 1 Reference 3: Infrastructure and Connectivity

See Annex1 Reference 4: National Policy Guidance

ADVERSE IMPACT ON SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF VILLAGES FROM INCREASED TRAFFIC FLOWS

The thousands of additional traffic movements generated by the sites already approved to the west of Harrogate and the proposed developments in the Harlow/Pannal Ash area will have a dramatic effect on the rural roads and villages in south west Harrogate. Cars will be the principal form of transport for the residents of these new developments and this will be accompanied by the business traffic associated with tradesmen and deliver vehicles that serve them. With no plans for any major improvement of the local road network this will result in a significant increase in traffic using unsuitable rural roads, compromising the safety and living environments of the villages through which the traffic will travel to bypass Harrogate's congested roads, namely, **North Rigton, Beckwithshaw and Burn Bridge**.

We can find no firm proposals in the Plan for delivering sustainable transport to reduce car use. For the size of the developments proposed in south west Harrogate, several buses per hour would be needed to make any impact on reducing car movements and, without the scope for bus lanes, these buses would encounter severe delays at peak times. These developments would inevitably lead to greater and more widespread traffic congestion, contrary to the aims of the Plan, with consequences for air quality and road safety in the Otley Road corridor and on rat-run routes.

We are equally concerned that the Plan does not address the problems of accessing secondary schooling, medical facilities, shops and other services, or the demands on utility providers, all of which are acute in this sector.

See Annex1 Reference 4: National Policy Guidance. Settlement Hierarchy Paper 2016

Draft Local Plan - Transport Infrastructure

The narrow minor road between Beckwithshaw and North Rigton and its junctions with the A658, as well as Brackenthwaite Lane, are currently used in rush hours as a 'Harrogate Western Bypass' by traffic from North of Harrogate and Harrogate itself travelling from and to destinations in West Yorkshire like Leeds and Bradford. The current level of congestion on Harrogate's road network is such that the aim of many drivers is to avoid the centre of Harrogate. As Road Safety organisations often point out, traffic using rat-runs are looking to save time and such journeys are often associated with speeding.

Traffic monitoring has been carried out over a number of years, the results clearly showing

- a) a marked increase in traffic movements during the peak flow times.
- b) a significant increase in traffic movements through the village of North Rigton over the past 5 years with the development of the Cardale Business Park and housing to the West of the town.

We do not believe that any of these traffic assessments have been factored into the 2016 plan, as they are beyond what are classed as "critical junctions"

Reference 5: (6.23)

Reference 2: Objectives 12-15

North Rigton Parish Council believes that the traffic assessment of the development sites, set out in the DPD for Harrogate Borough Council by Jacobs, does not reflect the true picture for the areas likely to be impacted by the developments. It does not include those rural areas in the south west of HBC which will be affected adversely by increasing levels of through traffic from developments to the west of the town. Specifically, it does not cover the traffic impact on North Rigton, a village 2.5 miles from the development and directly connected to it by the B6161 and a minor road from Beckwithshaw. This is notwithstanding the fact that the junction of this minor road and the B6161 is within 500 metres of the Otley Road / Pot Bank junction. Jacobs found this junction was inadequate to handle the additional traffic generated by the proposed developments in 2014 - nothing has changed to improve this since then which leads us to question why HBC is now proposing significant developments on Otley Road.

The “rat run” traffic then has to negotiate the dangerous junctions when joining the A61 near Pannal and crossing the A658 at North Rigton, together with the Rigton railway crossing are sites of frequent road traffic incidents. These junctions are not designed to cope with high volumes of car, van and HGV traffic especially during the peak rush-hours of the day.

It is the view of North Rigton Parish Council that the traffic movements associated with 2,600 new properties are completely underestimated in the draft plan. The logic of this is simple. With two huge urban conurbations, Leeds and Bradford, within easy commuting distance, inevitably a sizable proportion of the new residents will work in those city regions. The temptation to increasingly use North Rigton and the neighbouring villages as an unofficial western by-pass will be considerable and will ruin the safe and quiet environment and character of Green Belt villages.

North Rigton’s roads are popular with cyclists, walkers and horse riders. Some parts of the village have limited or no footpath provision and use of the road by pedestrians is unavoidable. Additionally, roadside parking at School pick-up/drop-off times and by visitors to the village pub often restricts the width of the carriageway to one lane for considerable distances which is a hazard for through traffic to negotiate. Any increase in current traffic levels through North Rigton’s rural roads could have tragic consequences and we strongly urge HBC to change its local plan to avoid this.

See Annex 1: Reference 5 Draft Local Plan, Transport Infrastructure

CONCLUSION

There should be no further development, beyond the 2 currently approved, to the west or south west of Harrogate.

The North Rigton Parish Council objects to the sites identified for development in South West Harrogate specifically: H49, H46, H70, H36, H65, H56, H51 sites. Taken together with sites already approved for development to the West of Harrogate along the North Rigton, B6161, Killinghall road corridor the potential for a significant increase in traffic travelling through North Rigton on inappropriate rural roads is considerable and we must oppose. The lack of a suitable road network is compounded by a lack of infrastructure generally in this part of Harrogate required to support these developments.

As a more appropriate approach to the Aims & Objectives of HBC we strongly suggest that HBC review its focus on West/ South West Harrogate in favour of the proposed new settlements at Flaxby, adjacent to the A59/A1(M) and sites in the Hammerton, Green Hammerton/Kirk Hammerton/Cattal areas which should all be pursued as they fit closely with HBC’s stated objectives and there will be the opportunity to develop these settlements with the necessary infrastructure from the outset.

Issued by:

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Date:

Attached: Annex 1: Supporting Information References

ANNEX 1: SUPPORTING INFORMATION: REFERENCES

We add this additional Information (references) to support our submission and justify the conclusions we have drawn from our inspection of the draft documents presented by HBC planning department.

Ref: 1 Planning Inspection Report 2009

The Planning Inspector's recommendations in her January 2009 report (paragraph 3.93) found that the identification of West Harrogate for urban extensions was fundamentally unsound.

Ref:2 Harrogate Borough Council's stated Aims

Objective 1

Sustainable Development Patterns To contribute to sustainable patterns of development, the Local Plan will:

Objective 1: Focus housing and employment development in locations which are, or can be made, sustainable; these are locations that take full advantage of existing opportunities to walk, cycle, or use public transport, or have the potential to increase these opportunities, in order to access jobs, shops, services and facilities.

Objectives 12 – 15

Infrastructure and Connectivity To facilitate the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support a flourishing local economy, reduce the impacts of transport on the environment and communities, and enable reliable journeys between key centres regionally, nationally and internationally.

Ref:3 Infrastructure and Connectivity

To facilitate the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support a flourishing local economy, reduce the impacts of transport on the environment and communities, and enable reliable journeys between key centres regionally, nationally and internationally, the Local Plan will:

Objective 12: Enable greater opportunities to travel on foot and by bike, and support increased access to public transport as well as improvements to the quality and frequency of services.

Objective 13: Seek to ensure good rail, bus and road connectivity between key centres.

Ref:4 National Policy Guidance

Settlement Hierarchy Paper 2016

Where practical, particularly within large scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties (paragraph 38)

Harrogate Borough Council Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper 20162

Introduction:

Planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable (paragraph 17 bullet point 11) Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development... however, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable development solutions will vary from urban to rural areas (paragraph 29)

Ref: 5 Draft Local Plan, Transport Infrastructure

6.23 The second part of the policy seeks to ensure that new infrastructure and services are necessary, delivered either in advance or alongside the development they are intended to support, cause minimal disruption to existing services, and are appropriately located and designed.

The council has commissioned consultants to prepare an Infrastructure Capacity Study to identify the infrastructure and services required to support the level of planned growth in the district, prepared in consultation with infrastructure and service providers.

The purpose of this document is to assess the existing quality and capacity of the district's infrastructure; inform the council's selection of a preferred development strategy for the district; determine what infrastructure is required to support the council's selected growth strategy and preferred development allocations - setting this information out in a delivery plan; identify the priorities for investment and the bodies responsible for delivering the infrastructure required; and provide the evidence needed to support funding bids for identified infrastructure projects.

ENDS

North Rigton Parish Council
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