

Written Representations of Objectors

Thank you for this opportunity to communicate directly with the Planning Committee.

My name is Neville Keep and I am representing a number of Wark residents who object to this planning application.

Wark is currently NOT dying a slow death. I have lived in Wark for over 37 years and have worked in the village for most of those years. During that time the village has been slowly growing with small infill developments and developments on brown field sites such as the old bakery and engineering works. There has also been housing built for older people in Westacres now managed by Karbon Homes.

There is a First School in the village with 50 pupils. There is a GP surgery, a multi award winning hotel, two pubs (currently closed because of Covid) a Post Office and general store and a butcher's shop. The owners of the Black Bull and Grey Bull pubs are currently making a significant investment to extend a building to open a Mini Market shop. There are other numerous independent businesses operating from the village.

A recent planning application in Wark for 9 dwellings in an agricultural field west of Westacres was refused permission in August 2019. The main reasons for refusal were that the location was in open countryside contrary to Tynedale LDF Core Strategy Policies and that the development would encroach into the open countryside and would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area contrary to various current planning policies.

On appeal on August 2020 the Planning Inspectorate dismissed the appeal, upholding the permission refusal. The Inspector confirmed that the site although adjacent to the existing build development it was in open

countryside and not within the village and would conflict with various adopted Northumberland planning policies.

Another recent planning application for Barrasford village, originally for 26 dwellings, resubmitted for 18 dwellings, was refused permission in May 2020. Quoting from the delegated report *“By virtue of its location and scale the proposed development would result in encroachment into the open countryside beyond the established build form of Barrasford and would have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area “* ... Contrary to various policies of the Tynedale Local plan, Tynedale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

This application under consideration is for a LARGE development of 17 dwellings off Church Lane Wark. This is similar in size to the recent Barrasford application and it is also in open countryside on an agricultural field. It is outside the Settlement Boundary and would dominate visibility approaching Wark from the North and would also be visible from the road down from Birtley Village. The development would therefore have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

Policy GD1 only supports SMALL scale developments and Wark already has outstanding permission for a proportionate level of new housing for the plan period. There is therefore NO compelling need to release more land and there are NO exceptional reasons to allow an extension of the village into open countryside beyond the settlement boundary.

The SHLAA report 2018 identified this site as “Not Suitable” - because of “...a lack of safe access off a busy road near the brow of a hill.”

Despite the plans submitted by the applicant to improve access, local residents still have significant concerns as the road is normally a busy tourist route and is used regularly by large heavy timber wagons going to and from Kielder forest. This traffic causes many near misses at Chapel House and at the entrance to the village.

The FRA submitted by the applicant states that the site is not susceptible to surface water flooding. Surface water flooding actually occurs every winter and some summers. The water flows down the field from the North

across the site and overflows into the garden of Braeside. Photographs taken on 12.8.19 and 2.2.2020 submitted to the planning department show this extensive surface flooding. Further submitted Photographs taken this year on 20.1.2021 show surface flooding across the site.

This scheme is clearly contrary to policies GD1 and H3 of the adopted development plan and is identified in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan as in open countryside where development is strictly controlled.

In view of other recent planning decisions rejecting similar applications outside village boundaries we would urge the planning committee to refuse this application.