

DERBYSHIRE DALES LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

SESSION 13, MATTER 10 & 11 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS AND SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES - DARLEY DALE

Hearing statement on behalf of Mr. A. B. Smith (1044) & Mrs J Dickinson (1060)

1. I am Roger Yarwood. I have set out my background and qualifications in a separate appendix to an earlier hearing statement.
2. I represent a client with land suitable for housing development in Darley Dale.
3. I submit that:
 - The expectation that Local Plan will deliver over 2000 dwellings on the 7 strategic sites in Matlock, Wirksworth and Darley Dale is unrealistic.
 - As a consequence, other sites in Darley Dale (and elsewhere) should be allocated to help meet any resulting shortfall.
 - Several smaller sites, including sites which I and others have put forward for allocation, would give more certainty of delivery and provide better choice.
 - Settlement boundaries are in general too tightly drawn to the extent that good development opportunities will be stifled. This is particularly true in Darley Dale.
4. The expectation that Local Plan will deliver over 2000 dwellings on the 7 strategic sites in Matlock, Wirksworth and Darley Dale is unrealistic. Constraints render it unlikely that these "strategic" sites will be deliverable within a reasonable timescale and the reliance on those sites to deliver the housing need in Matlock, Wirksworth and Darley Dale (even at the reduced level as proposed in Main Modification MM23) is not a realistic approach.
5. As with the Quarry sites in Matlock and Wirksworth, the reliance on Stancliffe Quarry to deliver a substantial element of this provision demonstrates that the Council is unduly optimistic in its expectations of meeting its OAN target.
6. Despite being granted permission for housing development over 16 years ago Cawdor Quarry remains undeveloped and this experience demonstrates the difficulty in developing former quarries. Despite this history, the Council is now to be largely reliant on the development of even more quarry sites. Although not as challenging as Cawdor Quarry, Stancliffe Quarry suffers from many of the constraints that have hampered delivery of development at Cawdor.

7. Several excellent sites for development in Darley Dale have been put forward for consideration, all with good access to community facilities and with the best possible access to public transport. Yet, in preference to these sites, unsustainable sites have been allocated in relatively remote locations with a far more dramatic and adverse impact on the landscape.
8. I submit that the Council's Landscape Assessment is fundamentally flawed. Many sites in Darley Dale have been classified as having a harmful impact on the landscape, whereas in reality, sites in the Darley Dale valley are clearly less harmful than many of the allocated greenfield sites in exposed open countryside.
9. As Appendix 2 of the Council's Local Plan Advisory Committee's meeting on 20/01/16 explains, constraints attributable to flood risk have been cited as the reason why the site was not allocated, but only part of the site is within the flood zone and the owner has commissioned a flood risk assessment which we confidently expect will show that any risk of flooding can be mitigated by careful design.
10. The only other reasons why the site receives a "red" classification are due to it being "greenfield" and that "open space would be lost". These are factors which would have discounted most of the allocated sites from consideration!
11. The site at Chesterfield Road owned by my client, Mrs Dickinson (SHLAA 181) together with sites put forward by my other clients and some sites put forward by other agents, would bring flexibility in housing provision, provide choice and give greater certainty over delivery.
12. I submit that further flexibility and choice would be secured by a less tightly drawn settlement boundary. The Council, regrettably appears to have approached the drafting of settlement boundaries from the standpoint of excluding as much land as possible.