

PRESS RELEASE

Racecourse Approach Plans for 1100 houses delayed by Leeds City Council Rethink

Plans to erect 800 houses on the other side of the A1[M] at Wetherby took a setback at the City Council Plans Panel meeting last Thursday 28th March. The Panel decided to defer their decision after listening to three hours of debate and triggered by members of the Better Wetherby Partnership (BWP) case for refusing the application.

Over 70 supporters of the BWP attended the meeting at Leeds Civic Hall with a coach laid on by the 3 Wetherby Ward Councillors. Members of the plans panel echoed many of the concerns of local residents about the impact on local roads, services & the environmental impact when questioning council planning officers about why they were recommending the scheme be approved.

Ward and Town Councillor Alan Lamb who spoke on behalf of the BWP said “We maintain that this site would have a negative impact on Wetherby. Pressure from such large-scale development on the road, health services, and education infrastructure of Wetherby would impact heavily on the town and its historic Town Centre character in particular. I’m pleased that the panel chair insisted on more meaningful consultation with the local community before they are asked to consider these plans again.”

Eric Cowin who also addressed the panel for the BWP, said “placing 800 homes, possibly rising to 1100, on the other side of the second busiest north /south A1[M] motorway corridor wholly detached from the existing natural footprint of the Town was unsustainable on both social and accessibility grounds. If it was necessary for Wetherby to take more housing other better sites exist. Just a day earlier, Leeds City Council had declared a climate emergency in the city. It was clear that the panel members shared our view that a development that would be served exclusively by cars was not at all desirable in this location.”

Peter Swales, Co-Chair of BWP said; “I want to thank those who spoke up on our behalf and it was heartening that so many local residents took the time to attend the meeting and support us. The numbers of people attending clearly had an impact on the panel decision. While we are disappointed that the application was not refused we will continue to make the arguments that these are the wrong type of houses in the wrong place. We do want to see more housing in Wetherby but we need smaller houses for young people to buy and rent and older people to downsize to.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The officer recommendation to the City Plans Panel was to “defer and delegate” which is effectively an approval to the Chief Planning Officer to work with the developer on the detail of the application. The panel decision to defer the application means they felt unable to make a decision based on the information in front of them at the meeting. They wanted more information on Highways, accessibility, infrastructure requirements, schools and environmental impact as well as insisting that the developer undertakes more consultation with the local community.

Further info may be requested via [betterwetherbypartnership@ gmail.com](mailto:betterwetherbypartnership@gmail.com)