

NEWSLETTER July 2019

Issues regarding planning in Wetherby and the surrounding villages may not regularly make the news headlines, but they affect all of us who live in the area. **Better Wetherby** is a partnership consortium of local people from a variety of organisations who are particularly concerned about the negative impact resulting from large scale house building. But **Better Wetherby** is not just about housing. We contribute to issues designed to help make Wetherby better for the community of both current and future generations. This newsletter provides an update on the housing situation and other matters. We hope you find it useful.

RACECOURSE APPROACH

- A total 1100 houses are planned for development on this site. Currently Taylor Wimpey have submitted a planning application to build 800 houses.
- In June 2019, a public “consultation” was held in the Town Hall. This “consultation” was forced on the developers, Taylor Wimpey, at a Leeds Council Planning Panel where representations were made by **Better Wetherby**. During the Planning Panel Meeting the developers struggled to highlight any material changes to overcome various issues raised.
- Again, at the behest of the Leeds Council Planning Panel, Taylor Wimpey representatives presented their case to the Wetherby Town Council on 9th July.
 - In justifying why the site should be developed, the only answer from the representatives was *“It’s in the Leeds Site Allocation Plan so it’s suitable”*.
 - Responding to a number of questions about traffic implications, the representatives stated that *“We’ve had experts look at it and they say it’s OK.”*
 - They also stated that some of the money they would provide to Leeds City Council could be used to build a new Car Park. But they could not explain where!
- There is also meant to be a consultation with **Better Wetherby**, but our requests for a date and agenda from Taylor Wimpey have not yet gained a response.
- **Better Wetherby** Steering Group members, Clive Smithson and Peter Catton, were recently interviewed on Tempo FM and explained the case for refusing the planning application. Taylor Wimpey did not take part, confining their input to a written statement.

Based on the above it seems evident that the developers feel they do not have to justify building on this site. If allowed to proceed, this may well lead to the prospect of further building taking place on other sites to the east of the A1(M) next to Wetherby on either side of Walton Road.

There are many issues around Access, Health & Safety and Air Pollution which make this site unsustainable, yet these valid concerns appear to be dismissed by the Developers.

Please make your voice heard - It is **very important** that as many people as possible make the effort to submit objections. This can be done, quoting reference 17/02594/OT, either:

- online at <https://publicaccess.leeds.gov.uk>
- or in writing to Planning Services
Leeds City Council
9th Floor, Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds
LS2 8BB

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Better Wetherby also encourages people to attend the Leeds Planning Panel meeting where this application will be decided. Once the date of that meeting is known, details will be circulated together with information about free coach transport to Leeds for the meeting. Please lend your support. It is very important that efforts are maintained to ensure that this application does not proceed by default.

SPOFFORTH HILL/STOCKELD PARK

This relates to the building of 210 houses on the Wetherby boundary adjoining the current “Bellway” development. As the actual site is in North Yorkshire, the application sits with Harrogate Borough Council. Many of you will recall that in August and September 2018, Harrogate BC Planning Committee members made a dramatic and unexplained U-turn, from a virtually unanimous rejection of this application to unanimous approval only a few weeks later.

Representatives of **Better Wetherby** have maintained efforts to seek to have this decision overturned and the situation continues to evolve. It is now clear that the decision to approve the application was made despite the site not being included in the Draft Harrogate Local Plan.

Better Wetherby is seeking financial support, some of which is required to seek a legal opinion on the viability of pursuing a Judicial Review of this case. This is a costly process, but receiving specialist legal advice and support is essential to increase the chance of success. ***Please consider helping with a donation.***

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY & SITE ALLOCATION PLANS HARROGATE LOCAL PLAN

These documents relate to longer term planning in the respective areas. **Better Wetherby** volunteers constantly review the content for updates and make appropriate representations where any proposals affect Wetherby either positively or negatively. Most recently **Better Wetherby** responded to the Leeds Core Strategy Selective Review.

WETHERBY LOCAL PLAN

During the open consultation period, comments were submitted and errors corrected in the Wetherby Local Plan. This is now undergoing independent examination by Leeds City Council. Once completed, the final plan has to be approved by a local referendum, which is currently anticipated in late October 2019. Once approved, Wetherby’s share of any Community Investment Levy payments from developers, will increase from 15% to 25% (basically the levy is a tool for local authorities to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area).

AIR POLLUTION

As traffic has continued to increase, the dangers to health caused by air pollution is receiving a higher profile. Substantially more housing from the Racecourse and Stockeld Park developments can only result in more cars with the consequence of more air pollution. There are already serious concerns about several air pollution “hot spots” in Wetherby which are being overlooked by Leeds City Council. Representatives of **Better Wetherby** are therefore, subject to sufficient funds, intending to establish the facts through traffic surveys and air pollution measuring devices.

CONTACT US

We welcome further volunteers and supporters to assist our endeavours. Please feel free to contact us with any comments and queries or requests to be included on our mailing list.

Email: betterwetherby@gmail.com

Facebook: [Better Wetherby Partnership](#)