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Objection to Soundness of Housing Allocation

Proposal:

RN265#

Site:

West of Bracken Edge

Allithwaite

Introduction

- 1 This statement relates to the objection to the allocation of housing of land at Allithwaite (Ref: RN265#)

- 2 The Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) has undergone various consultations. There have been continual objections to the proposed allocation, and those issues have not been resolved. This objection is based on the soundness of the proposed allocation with regard to whether it is justified, effective and consistent with National Policy.

- 3 All the land allocated for housing is sited to the southern end of Allithwaite. The land referenced RN265# is located to the west of Bracken Edge, Allithwaite, and forms part of a larger agricultural field.

Issues

- 4 The proposed allocation has a number of un-resolved issues, these include:
 - Access
 - Landscape Character
 - Flooding

Policy Context

- 5 The Core Strategy policy CS4 does make provision for small scale housing development within the local service centre, of which Allithwaite is one. However, in determining appropriate areas for development there are strict criteria to be applied, which include:
 - Ease of access to the site
 - Impact of topography
 - Impact on landscape and views
 - Impact on the local highways

Ease of Access

- 6 The proposed allocation for housing suggests that access would be from the narrow lane which leads from the highway to Brackenedge. However, the current owner of that lane advises that the owner of the proposed allocation does not have a right of access over that lane. With that in mind, it is clear that access to the site is virtually impossible. However, even there was access over the lane, it is only single width not suitable for the number of vehicles which a residential development would attract. The

access lane would require widening, and there are landownership issues either side and also at the junction with the highway. Consequently, it would be virtually impossible to facilitate a satisfactory and safe access/junction to the satisfaction of the highway authority. In addition Brackenedge also has a right of way across the field to the Lane that would need to be considered.

- 7 Access could technically be achieved from the proposed allocation RN79# located further to the south, however this raises issues of providing an access road to the rear of residential properties and would result in 'development' outside the settlement boundary which has not been through any consultation process.
- 8 The creation of the access via RN79# would in addition result in harm to landscape character of the area and be contrary to Core Strategy Policies. Although the Steering Group did suggest that a footpath should be created from the proposed housing allocation to Quarry Lane, there is no evidence that this is possible. Furthermore, the creation of such a footpath, with the pressures for additional lighting at night, would in effect result in additional development out into the countryside, and thereby adding further visual harm to the area.
- 9 It has been demonstrated that no right of access exists to the proposed land allocations site over the access lane to the site, and consequently no appropriate access to the site can be achieved.

Impact of landscape and view

- 10 Allithwaite is characterised by being predominantly centred around the church, although there is additional ribbon development along the main roads, and also along Jack Hill. On inspection of the area, there is scope for 'rounding off' development adjoining the main built up area, together with smaller areas for example in grounds of large properties off Jack Hill.
- 11 The proposed allocation may appear small nevertheless it is a substantial area of development relative to surrounding housing area. This is especially the case, given that this part of Allithwaite has the appearance and feel of being quite open and rural in character. If housing is allowed to be development on this land, it would extend the urbanised area much further along towards Grange. This sense of urbanisation would be significantly greater than if the same area of land adjoined the main built up area of Allithwaite. There are some areas which are allocated which do constitute 'rounding

off' (eg R347# and M32#). However as there are no proposed allocations for housing adjoining the main build up, those areas proposed for development (excluding those referred to R347# + M32#) would result in development extending out into the countryside and would inevitably cause harm to the character of the area, as well as the setting of the village.

- 12 There is no landscape capacity assessment which has been produced to justify the inclusion of the land for housing. In addition, the proposed area does not follow the grain of development or contours or topography of the surrounding land. As a result the proposed housing area simply juts out into the landscape, without any relationship to form or layout of the existing settlement.
- 13 The proposed housing development, although quite small, is a relatively large housing development in the context of the open area surrounding it. It can not be described as 'rounding off', nor is it a logical extension of a settlement. Therefore, the impact on the open landscape character is harmed and compounded by the size of the housing development relative to the surrounding area. In addition, there are open views towards Allithwaite from the main road from Grange, which would be harmed and this proposed large housing development, relative to the surrounding area, would be in the near distance, and consequently would dominate the more distance views. In turn this is likely to accentuate the urbanisation into the countryside and give the sense that Allithwaite was an 'extension' of Grange and Kents Bank, rather than ensuring Allithwaite has its own identity.
- 14 An alternative site R343M was highlighted through the emerging options as being a site which the Council has agreed would have limited effect on the wider landscape, by reason of its relationship with the existing built up area. However that site, has been removed in favour of site R265, subject of this objection, which would have a greater landscape impact.

Impact on the local highways

- 15 Without ownership or a suitable right of access over the access lane, there is no scope to make any improvements to the lane to enable it to cater for the number of vehicles which such a residential development would create. In addition the landowner has no ownership or control over land either side of the access lane or surrounding the junction with the main road. Consequently, it is likely that the additional traffic would result in vehicles having to wait on the main road in order before turning onto the

access lane. This alone is harmful to highway safety, and has the potential for creating an accident hotspot.

Flooding

- 16 There are extant flooding issues in that area, and no evidence has been presented to address this problem. Whilst it may be argued that this is matter for future approval, it is nevertheless an issue which needs to be satisfactorily addressed to meet the Central Government Guidance set out in the newly published National Planning Policy Framework

Soundness

Justified

- 17 It has been set out above that the proposed allocation (RN265#) for housing fails to meet the criteria and policies of the adopted Core Strategy in relation to access. By reason of the site having not logical legal access, it can not be developed for housing. The absence of a landscape capacity assessment does not provide the necessary evidence to support the housing designation of that size and orientation in that location. On that basis, the proposed allocation is **not justified**.
- 18 There has been an increase in the suggested housing numbers for Allithwaite. However, no adequate justification has been given to establish the reasoning for this increase in numbers.

Effective

- 19 It has been demonstrated that the proposed allocation (RN265#) for housing fails to meet the adopted policies of the Core Strategy, and in particular to access, impact on landscape character, impact on views, and impact on local highway. As the site has no legal access, it can not be developed, and therefore can not be monitored as making a contribution to housing completions. Even though the site can not be brought forward for development due to there being no legal access to it, even if this was possible, the harm to landscape character, view and highways means that the nearby landscape national designations to the west would preclude development in such close proximity to them.

National Policy

- 20 National policies preclude development where there is likely to cause the risk to flooding elsewhere. In this particular case, no evidence has been forwarded to

overcome existing flooding issues. Furthermore, there is a general presumption against development which causes harm to highway safety and without the ability to improve the access or junction of the access lane with the highway, it is likely there will be a build up of waiting vehicles on the highway.

Conclusion

- 21 The proposed allocation (RN265#) for housing fails to meet the criteria and policies of the adopted Core Strategy, in relation to access, landscape character, views, highways safety and flooding. In addition, it fails to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 22 On the basis that it fails to comply the requirements set out above, the proposed allocation is **not sound**, nor based on satisfactorily robust evidence to demonstrate that the proposed allocation should proceed. Therefore, this objection to the proposed allocation is justified, and the proposed housing allocation (RN265#) should be deleted.