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## **THE SUITABILITY OF OXSPRING TO ACCOMODATE NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

It is a fact that the majority of Penistone's working population commute out of the Town to their place of employment, many to the surrounding centres of Barnsley, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Wakefield and Leeds.

It is recognised that a large proportion of commuters travelling out of Penistone by vehicle to Barnsley and Sheffield specifically route along the B6462 'Sheffield Road' through Springvale and into Oxspring, to access the wider road network whilst avoiding traffic congestion which builds up at peak commuting times in Penistone Town Centre and around the Bridge End road junction, causing much disruption. We are aware that there has also been a notable increase in traffic from Green Road in Penistone onto Sheffield Road at Springvale and around the back country lanes (including Oxspring Road, Long Lane and Roughbitchworth Lane) to the south of Cubley, which lead onto the B6462 'Sheffield Road' in the centre of Oxspring; this again is mostly a result of residents on the south side of Penistone, in and around the area of Cubley and Castle Green, naturally attempting to avoid the traffic congestion which builds up into the Town Centre from the Bridge End road junction.

The Local Penistone West Ward Councillor, Joe Unsworth, is quoted within an article entitled 'Congestion Needs Sorting' which featured within the Barnsley Chronicle (Penistone Edition) on Friday 16 January 2015:

*"I think one of the big problems might be the proposed developments in Cubley... A lot of cars from these new developments, most trips they make will be through the centre of Penistone. How we can cope with the infrastructure issues in terms of highways is the really difficult one actually."*

Yorkshire Land Limited (YLL) wholly concurs with Councillor Unsworth in this regard. We believe that any housing development to the South of Penistone would without doubt be detrimental to the Town Centre and affect local trade.

We have developed proposals for the provision of a Transport Interchange on land in our ownership adjacent to Penistone Railway Station in an attempt to help improve the Transport infrastructure in

Penistone, alongside new housing development. For further information in this regard, please visit our website: [www.PenistoneTransportInterchange.co.uk](http://www.PenistoneTransportInterchange.co.uk)

With regard to any future development to the south of Penistone, in and around Cubley and Castle Green, our consultants Peter Brett Associates specifically recognised and made reference within a formal representation to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council dated 10 January 2015, regarding the then proposed Housing Proposal reference H80, indicating the delivery of 318 dwellings on a 9.94 hectare (24 Acre) site North and East of Joan Royd Lane - Cubley, that:

***The delivery of draft allocation site 'H80 - Land North & East of Joan Royd Lane, Cubley' will only exacerbate existing highways problems.***

*This site (H80) would substantially increase car journeys through Penistone Town Centre as Cubley has very limited bus services; it is also far less accessible to Penistone Railway station.*

*When leaving Penistone to return to Site H80, there is a long steep incline which is likely to discourage residents of the scheme from walking or cycling. Due to very limited bus services in Cubley (which is located away from the major road network) travel by private car is likely to be the favoured option.*

*It is likely that motorists leaving this site at peak times would attempt to avoid traffic congestion in the town centre, queuing back to the controlled junction at bridge end, by travelling along Mortimer Road, Oxspring Road, Long Lane and Roughbirchworth Lane, which leads onto the B6462 in the centre of Oxspring.*

*Oxspring Road, Long Lane and Roughbirchworth Lane are all narrow country lanes which are unsuitable for increased volumes of commuter traffic. These lanes will become a 'rat run' and the increased traffic will cause a road safety hazard.*

*The increase in the amount of motorists utilising this route will lead to additional traffic entering Oxspring near the centre of the village, at the junction of Roughbirchworth Lane and the B6462, adjacent to the primary school.*

We can confirm that the proposed allocation of site reference H80 has now been removed entirely by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council from their Publication Draft Local Plan, which proposes instead to retain the site within the Green Belt.

We understand that The Publication Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for its review by Wednesday 21 December 2016. However, a number of other sites on the southern side of Penistone, in and around Cubley and Castle Green, continue to be proposed as safeguarded Land allocations within the Local Plan, which may ultimately be brought forward for development in the future. Clearly, our concerns regarding development on the south of Penistone apply equally to these Safeguarded Land sites.

The issue of vehicular traffic utilising narrow back country lanes between Cubley and the B6462 'Sheffield Road' in Oxspring is also identified within a representation submitted to Barnsley

Metropolitan Borough Council's Public Consultation on the 'Barnsley Local Plan Consultation Draft 2014' by Oxspring Parish Council on 10 January 2015:

*"With the considerable increase in the number of homes proposed to be developed over the Local Plan period in our nearest Town we have major concerns about the volume of traffic that could potentially be coming through our village.*

*Our concerns apply not just to Sheffield Road but also the back roads from Penistone into our village which in turn bring traffic down Roughbirchworth Lane and onto Sheffield Road to access the M1 motorway. Roughbirchworth lane is a very narrow country road which is already very congested at certain times of the day, not least with farming generated traffic to serve the needs of local working businesses/farms.*

*We would request therefore that the Borough's emerging Transport Strategy considers active ways to restrict the use of country roads as 'cut-through' or 'short-run' routes and that suitable transport corridors are provided for new housing developments..."*

Development of our Oxspring Fields Proposals would (unlike any development to the south of Penistone) allow for the delivery of much needed new homes for Oxspring (including affordable homes) in a sustainable location which, importantly, would not contribute to the recognised issue of traffic congestion in Penistone, nor require residents to navigate through the Town at peak times considering that access to the wider highway network from Oxspring is achievable without the need to travel through Penistone.

The proposed Oxspring Fields site is accessed directly from the B6462 'Sheffield Road' nearby the historical centre of Oxspring where (as set out above) many residents on the south of Penistone commute through to avoid traffic congestion in Penistone Town centre.

Locational and Transport benefits of the proposed Oxspring Fields development include that the majority of residents arising from any future housing development at the Oxspring Fields site could access Penistone Town Centre at off peak times of the day when the traffic congestion in that location is subsided, additionally, the Trans Pennine Trail which forms the southern boundary of the Oxspring Fields site provides a safe and level route to Penistone on foot or by bicycle, as a realistic alternative to the private car. Indeed Penistone Railway Station and the site of the proposed Transport Interchange are only 10 minutes along the trail by bicycle from the Oxspring Fields site. Oxspring is also well served by bus services to Penistone.

Considering the above, the Oxspring Fields development appears a common sense allocation which is not constrained by infrastructure or traffic congestion issues and will minimise any additional flows of vehicular traffic out of Penistone via Oxspring, which would inevitably arise from any development to the south of the Town. Indeed, The Councils Unitary Development Plan (UDP) identifies in Paragraph 4.12 that:

*"Oxspring is one of the locations in the Western Community Area for additional development because of its physical relationship to the Penistone Urban area and because it has the*

*infrastructure capacity to accommodate some further development without serious detriment to the quality and character of the Green Belt. If in the long term, there is a need to release further land for housing then there is the scope to accommodate additional development...”*

The Senior Plan inspector specifically reiterated Oxspring’s suitability to accommodate housing development within paragraph 13.4.219 of his Inspectors Report:

*“I consider that Oxspring is well located in the Community Area for additional housing development. This is particularly so in the light of its relationship to Penistone and the proposed allocation of land for employment development...”*

As the Barnsley Local Plan represents the first full scale review of Barnsley’s Local Development Plan since the UDP was adopted, the Senior Inspectors comments regarding future development in Oxspring provide a most sound and pertinent evidence base.

Clearly all factors highlighted in this letter, which are supported by tangible evidence, weigh wholly in favour of the allocation of the Oxspring Fields site within the Barnsley Local Plan.

Yours sincerely  
**YORKSHIRE LAND Limited**

**Steven Green**  
Managing Director