

Stephanie Tolson
Clerk to Oxspring Parish Council
43 Nether Royd View,
Silkstone Common,
Barnsley,
S75 4QQ

19th February 2018

Dear Mrs Tolson,

I write on behalf of Yorkshire Land Limited and further to my letter to the Parish Council dated 30th January 2018.

I understand that the Parish Council are due to hold a public exhibition in the coming weeks to inform local residents of their intention to object to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC) proposed allocation of up to 298 homes in the Village as part of the emerging Barnsley Local Plan (which includes existing Safeguarded Land Allocation SAF18 located at Roughbirchworth Lane). Importantly, 146 homes of the potential 298 homes are proposed to be allocated on land that is currently located in the Green Belt.

In my letter dated 30th January 2018, I identified that there are two immediate avenues of work available to the Parish Council should they see fit. The first being to write to BMBC to object to the newly proposed allocations in the Village. The second being the progression of a Neighbourhood Plan that identifies clear alternatives to the Council's current approach.

I also stressed in my letter that, it is our view that the time for objecting to any development in the Village has passed and thus the focus should now be on what is the right development option for the Village. In any response to BMBC, the Parish Council needs to identify an alternative preferred development option in order to respond constructively to the Draft Local Plan process. If they do not, then it is highly likely that the current proposed allocations will remain.

Furthermore, Oxspring has recently been identified by BMBC as the most sustainable Village in the Western part of the Borough in their village sustainability assessment work undertaken following the request of the Inspector to find additional housing sites in the Villages. Linked to this is also the evidence presented in the independent URS Housing Report for Oxspring, prepared on behalf of the Parish Council, which confirms the needs for new homes in the Village. Consequently, evidence is available to justify that should BMBC's current proposed allocations not be supported, or prove undeliverable, then an alternative suitable site should be identified.

With regards to the progression of the Neighbourhood Plan, as you are aware it must be in general conformity with the Borough Local Plan. However, as we have identified on numerous occasions, given the Borough's Local Plan is still in the process of being examined, there is an opportunity for the Parish Council and the local community to proactively influence the housing and safeguarded land allocations to ensure that the Village's own identified needs and aspirations will be delivered in the Plan Period to 2033.

Time is however running out and as a result it is imperative that the Parish Council take the opportunity available to them to influence the Local Plan now.

I have been informed that the Parish Council have publicly announced that they are unable to support the Oxspring Fields site as an alternative to BMBC's current proposed allocations on account of the site not being located in the Oxspring Parish.

Fortunately, this is simply not the case.

First of all, we believe it is pertinent to again point out that 3.17 hectares (7.83 acres) of the Oxspring Fields site is currently included within the adopted Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

Secondly, as the Parish Council are aware, the proposed Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan boundary can be amended. Indeed, the Parish Council previously successfully amended the boundary back in February 2015 to include land located within Hunshelf Parish. The Parish Council therefore has the power to write to BMBC to request a further amendment to the boundary to include the whole of the Oxspring Fields site.

National planning policy guidance states (in Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 41-027-20140306 of the National Planning Practice Guidance) that a single parish or town council (as a relevant body) can apply for a multi-parished neighbourhood area to be designated as long as that multi-parished area includes all or part of that parish or town council's administrative area. But when the parish or town council begins to develop a neighbourhood plan or Order (as a qualifying body) it needs to secure the consents of the other parish councils to undertake neighbourhood planning activities. Hunshelf Parish were previously amenable to the extension of the boundary and there is no reason they wouldn't be again given they would stand to benefit from such an amendment.

Finally, settlement boundaries and land allocations within Local Plans are not governed by Parish boundaries. A clear example of this is BMBC's proposed allocation of land to meet Penistone's employment needs within the Oxspring Parish boundary, at Site Ref. P2, Sheffield Road, Oxspring.

Put simply, there is nothing stopping the Parish Council from informing BMBC of their support for the development of Oxspring Fields as an alternative to BMBC's current proposed allocations in the Village. Once they have done so they can then apply to BMBC to extend the current Neighbourhood Plan boundary using the same process as they previously have.

The Parish Council are therefore faced with a choice. Object to BMBC's current proposed allocations without proposing a deliverable/suitable alternative and take their chances as part of the examination process. A process that has already identified the need to deliver new homes in the Village. Or object to BMBC's proposed allocations and identify deliverable/suitable alternative which can also deliver significant social and community benefits to the Village.

The Parish Council are due to enter into a period of consultation on the new Local Plan which focuses on matters that local residents have not had to consider up until this point. Where is the most appropriate location for new homes in the Village. Not should there be new homes in the Village. We therefore trust that the Parish Council will do all they can to inform local residents of the options that are available to them. Which of course includes the proposed Oxspring Fields development proposals.

It is our clear and valid view that without the delivery of new homes as part of the Oxspring Fields development, the majority of the ambitions and aspirations of the Parish Council identified in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan will be undeliverable. As we have previously stated, such ambition will remain as words on a page rather than tangible facilities that the local community can use and enjoy unless significant changes are made to BMBC's current approach to development in the Village.

Our client's Oxspring Fields development proposals present a rare, unprecedented and unrivalled opportunity for Oxspring. Land owned privately by YLL is being offered to provide community benefits that will facilitate the sustainable development of Oxspring, in accordance with the spirit of the National Planning Policy Framework, they will also enable the delivery of the desires and recognised needs of Oxspring.

The Oxspring Fields development proposals will facilitate the provision of new and enhanced Village, Parish and Borough-wide assets. BMBC's proposed site allocations in the Village will simply not do this.

The Parish Council now only have one final opportunity to seek to make amendments to the emerging Local Plan in order to ensure that the objectives and visions of the Village and its residents can be delivered.

In order to ensure that transparent consultation is undertaken with local residents, we believe it is essential that the Parish Council inform local residents of the ability to support the Oxspring Fields development proposals as an alternative to BMBC's current proposed allocations in the Village. Should it be the consensus of local residents to do so.

The Parish Council have the tools to do so, it is now up to you whether you choose to use them or not.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Butler', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

PAUL BUTLER
Director