

WGSA Meeting 30/07/22 – Local Plan & Leverhulme Estates Applications

Follow-up HELP Notes

Thank you for attending the Meeting. Too much was said to take it all in, so here's some helpful pointers on the Local Plan and Leverhulme Estates' Applications:

**STOP
PRESS**

- **Helpful Wirral Census 2021 Population figures released mean:**
 - > WGSA figures for 'Housing Need' were right, the Council's badly wrong.
 - > Wirral 10-Year Population Growth was just **417** NOT many thousands - **that's less than 3 times the number attending the meeting!! or 20 new homes for each new resident!! True but nonsense.**
- > The Local Plan must be modified and approved; or else **Green Belt will** be built on.
- > Please, **PRESS** Councillors to **REDUCE** figures in Plan submitted for Examination.
- **WGSA invites Local Party Leaders to meet us within days to discuss.**
- **Help and Contacts given below for submitting Comments/Objections about Leverhulme' Applications to build wrong houses in Green Belt**

Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA) had **SUCCESS** in turning the Local Plan Strategy around from mass-Housebuilding in **Green Belt** to a 'Regeneration' led Plan, to 'level-up' across Wirral, addressing longterm disparity and deprivation, especially in the east and north of the Peninsula. The **BONUS** of this approach is that **Green Belt** is **NOT** needed for housing.

The Draft Local Plan includes **NIL Green Belt Release for Development: Hoorah!!**
BUT this DOESN'T mean we have WON or that Green Belt is safe. Shame!! Why?

Despite best efforts, we **FAILED** to persuade the Council to reduce **their** hugely-inflated 'Housing Need' figure which **they** recently admitted is **NOT** being forced upon them but directly threatens **Green Belt** and could play into the hands of Developers and Landowners. So, please, **PRESS** Councillors to **REDUCE** figures in the Local Plan.

WGSA's Prof David Gregg has for years provided Councillors and Officers with **true Facts and Figures**, supported by notable Population/Housing experts, including Prof Ludi Simpson whose Report **for** WMBC was suppressed. The **2021 Census** Results **MUST** be acted upon or the Local Plan may be rejected rather than 'modified' and developers will get **Green Belt**.

The **RISKS** of **NOT** reducing the hugely inflated "starting point" 'Housing Need' figure include:

- > **Plan Examiner** requires a '**Main Modification**' to release **Green Belt** for Housing if concerned about the unproven very high rates of 'brownfield' site availability and build.
- > **Pre-emption** by **Planning Appeal Inspector** approving **Green Belt** Development, like a Leverhulme Test Case, **after** a Council Refusal but **before** Plan Examiner scrutiny.
- > Failure to Pass annual 'Housing Delivery Test' **AFTER** Local Plan Adoption, leads to 'Sustainable Development' in **Green Belt** as penalty for NOT delivering silly numbers.

Commenting on or Objecting to Leverhulme Estates (LE) Applications:

We can't scrutinise 700+ technical Documents – none of us has the Time/Expertise. But we can and must stress a list of Points applying to ALL Schemes + Site-specific Issues – add your own. Preferably, do this by 10th August 2022, please.

The new Planning Website is a disaster but can be used as followed:

- Online LINK: <https://online.wirral.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=search>
- > Quick way to access all 7 LE Applications is to enter in the top LH search BOX, **OUT/22/0094** . Press **Search** button at bottom of page and all Applications are listed. Choose an Application and **view** or **download** details and/or comment by scrolling down to **Make a Representation OR**
- > Email your Comment/Objection to planningapplications@wirral.gov.uk Add Case Officer name.
- **NB:** Leverhulme are only seeking Approval of '**Access**' and **NOT** 'Appearance', 'Landscaping', 'Layout' or 'Scale': they're all '**reserved**'. **BUT, DO** comment on **all** matters that concern **YOU**, incl: Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, Scale, Wildlife, Views, Traffic, Flooding, Dangers, etc.

General List of Pointers for ALL Sites: *(all lists can be extended)*

1. The Application(s) conflict with the Council's Regulation 19 Submission Draft Local Plan 'Spatial Strategy' which excludes (as being unnecessary) any release or development of Green Belt;
2. The Application(s) conflict with the Framework (NPPF) and Government directives NOT to release ANY Green Belt for development until 'brownfield' and 'Previously Developed Land' opportunities are exhausted. Wirral has a nationally-significant extent and excess of suitable 'brownfield' sites;
3. New Housing in Green Belt is 'inappropriate' development unless there are 'Exceptional Circumstances' or 'Very Special Circumstances'. Exhaustive studies show such do NOT to apply to any of these Applications;
4. Proposals conflict with 4 of the 5 'Purposes of Green Belt' (to check Sprawl; prevent Merging communities; stop countryside Encroachment; and assist Urban Regeneration) and with special reasons why Wirral's Green Belt boundaries remain tightly drawn around existing urban areas;
5. Proposals would both individually and cumulatively conflict with the requirement to protect both the Permanence of Green Belt Boundaries once drawn and the 'Openness' of it;
6. Proposals would individually and cumulatively fail to meet National and Wirral Climate Change Mitigation Policies. There is no way that the Harm done to Ecology, Air Quality, Watercourses and countryside by developing farmland for new Housing can be fully mitigated let alone provide the mandated 'Biodiversity Net Gain', by tree-planting within already 'green' areas, which land management should do without building;
7. Proposals would individually and cumulatively conflict with National and Wirral Policies regarding the protection and improvement of 'Productive Farmland' in order to ensure future 'Food Security';
8. The Leverhulme Estates 'Vision' misrepresents Wirral's 'Housing Need'; also, what their Proposals would provide, the adverse Effects and even Lord Leverhulme's Legacy. His factories needed healthy workers at hand and so he built houses next to his Works, following the earlier example of improved worker productivity from decent housing by Thomas Brassey, Lord Cadbury and others. Main point is: '**Employment**' drives the need for Housing, **NOT** housing for profit's sake.
9. LE's contention that Wirral won't have a '5-Year Housing Supply' is desperate nonsense. Not only does the Draft Local Plan outline a considerable excess Supply against the (now-admitted) highly-inflated 'Housing Need' figure derived from the abandoned 'Standard Method' and banned 2014 ONS Data, the Supply rates even higher against the newer requirement to use up-to-date ONS and Wirral's own Local Administrative Data; and now, the 2021 much lower Population Data MUST be taken into account, pushing the 'Housing Need' much lower (below 4,400 in 16 Years). Further, even including the last 5 covid-affected Years, Wirral has delivered more new homes than the latest Data requires. The 10-year consistent 'Empty Homes back into Use' delivery alone gives 4,000 in 16 Years.

Individual Site Lists of Additional Issues:

- 1.0 OUT/22/00945 & 947 Raby Hall Road (2 Sites)**
- 1.1 Proposal would change the area from a quiet, rural character to a busy urban one;
 - 1.2 Proposal would locate Housing in close proximity to the M53 Motorway, exposing them to pollution from noise and poor Air Quality, particularly the airborne health-damaging PM2.5 Particulate Matter which is not reduced by electric vehicles;
 - 1.3 The current setting for the Autism Facility is ideal: quiet, fairly dark, rural. This would be destroyed by being surrounded by noisy housing with uncontrolled lighting.
- 2.0 OUT/22/00946 Land East of Glenwood Drive**
- 2.1 Proposal would MERGE the separate and distinct communities of Irby and Thingwall, contrary to the Framework (NPPF) and destroy the distinctive character of the area;
 - 2.2 Proposal would close the important Green and Wildlife Corridor across Wirral from Meols, past Greasby, between Irby and Thingwall, between Irby and Pensby and down to the Estuary;
 - 2.3 Proposal would close the open, wide and distant views across 7Km of farmland to the open Sea, enjoyed by all those who travel along Thingwall Road;
 - 2.4 Proposal would result in an artificially bright and noisy zone replacing existing 'dark' and 'quiet' farmland, lead to the further trampling of the Ancient Woodland of Harrock Wood, and the pollution of Arroe Brook by additional surge run-off contaminated with garden chemicals;
 - 2.5 The land is 'Productive Farmland' which is supposed to be protected by National and Wirral Local Policies reconfirmed only recently;
 - 2.6 Proposal would result in additional pressure on all Local Services and Infrastructure;
 - 2.7 Proposal shows homes, sporting and play areas located above the 'Western Link' 12-metre wide 'wayleave' above the buried twin 600 Kv DC cables running from Scotland to Wales, at a depth which would expose to danger those involved in construction including Self-Builders, later extensions and earthworks by residents or others;
 - 2.8 Remotely-located sports and play areas where safeguarding of youngsters would be a problem;
 - 2.9 Unspecified commercial ventures located far into the Site, surrounded by remaining farmland.
- 3.0 OUT/22/00941, 942 and 944 Gills Lane, Thorncroft & Barnston Road (3 Sites)**
- 3.1 Proposal would MERGE the separate and distinct communities of Pensby, Heswall and Barnston, contrary to the Framework (NPPF) and destroy the 'open' character of the area;
 - 3.2 Proposal would close the important Green and Wildlife Corridor across Gills Lane;
 - 3.3 Proposal would result is an artificially bright and noisy zone replacing existing 'dark' and 'quiet' farmland, and the pollution of Prenton Brook by additional surge run-off contaminated with garden chemicals – wildlife and character are 'at risk';
 - 3.4 Another catastrophic leak of the Cross Hill Reservoir could damage the new houses – insurance could be difficult;
 - 3.5 Proposed roadway changes would do little to mitigate but could increase the traffic dangers that already exist.
- 4.0 OUT/22/00943 Whitfield Lane, Milner Road & Barnston Road**
- 4.1 Proposal would encircle Whitfield Common and close the important Green and Wildlife Corridor between the Common, the Site and open 'productive' and attractive farmland;
 - 4.2 Proposal would result is an artificially bright and noisy zone replacing existing 'dark' and 'quiet' farmland, and pollution of the adjacent watercourse by additional surge run-off contaminated with garden chemicals;
 - 4.3 Proposed minor roadway changes would do little to mitigate but could increase traffic dangers that already exist with a sharp bend, the 'rat run', speed changes and busy and very adjacent T-junctions on Milner and Barnston Roads. Heswall Primary School would be more at risk, too.