



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**LONDON SW1A 0AA**

Mr Joe Jenkinson  
Head of Planning and Building Control  
Barnsley MBC  
Westgate Plaza  
PO Box 604  
Barnsley  
S70 9FE

Dear Joe,

12<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Re: Planning Application 2020/0274 for housing off Wellhouse Lane / Halifax Road in Penistone**

I have been contacted by a number of my constituents with concerns around the proposed development which I outline below.

It has also come to my attention that residents on Halifax Road and the 'Lakes' estate did not receive written notification of the planning application, despite living very close to the development and the proposed access. I understand that one resident found out about the plans from their postman and subsequently contacted BMBC and have now been added to the list of those notified. However, these residents are concerned that they have not had enough time to research and comment on the proposals and I understand that the online portal has now closed. Therefore, I would be grateful if you would allow written submissions received by post over the coming days.

I note that this site is earmarked for housing both by the Local Plan and the democratically adopted Penistone NDP, and I am pleased that 30% of the houses are to be affordable homes, and that these will be pepper-potted through the site in accordance with the NDP.

My principle concerns, and those of my constituents, are as follows:

1. The application is for 459 houses but the indicative capacity in the Local Plan is for 414 houses. Whilst I understand the need to make best use of the site, it is very important to avoid over development and I would welcome an amendment to the plans to reflect this.
2. I have serious concerns about the proposed access on to the A629 (Halifax Road). As you will know, the A629 is a very busy and fast road with vehicles travelling at or above the national speed limit. For traffic exiting the new development onto Halifax Road, the visibility would be very poor and, as a result, this junction could be both dangerous and a source of congestion. A reduction in the speed limit from the Hoylandswaine roundabout would enable a much safer access to the development.

3. The application provides for a further access to Wellhouse Lane. I have concerns over the safety of the rail bridge given the greater level of traffic on Wellhouse Lane - including HGVs - during and after construction. At the bridge, Wellhouse Lane is narrow with a difficult bend and the introduction of traffic lights should be considered.
4. The Penistone NDP states that new housing developments of more than 10 properties should include an appropriate mix of bungalows, starter homes and smaller homes (one and two bedroom) as determined by the most contemporary housing needs and market assessments available. The development as currently planned does not offer this mix; what research has been undertaken to show that the proposal meets local housing needs?
5. The provision of play space in the plans is very welcome but it would be improved with the addition of some play equipment for children.
6. I am concerned about the future of the neighbouring Westhorpe Works (Clayton Penistone Group) where Railway Fog Signal Detonators are **manufactured**. Claytons are the only UK manufacturer of this product, which is a safety device that every single train in the UK and Ireland and all track maintenance teams must carry. I understand that for health and safety reasons, there is a 125m exclusion zone required around the Clayton site and yet the closest property in the planned development is situated just 50m from the factory. It is very important that safety is maintained but also that Claytons, a sizeable local employer, is able to continue trading. I believe that a reduction in housing numbers (Point 1) may be able to achieve the required exclusion distance.
7. I welcome the proposed Section 106 obligations totalling £3.4 million. The proposed development would significantly increase the pressure on school places in the local primary schools and Penistone Grammar School and it is right £2.6 million is therefore allocated for local schools. I also welcome the proposed £470 000 for improvements to existing open public space and recreation facilities and the £321 000 for improvements to local transport facilities including Penistone railway station. There is a need for better public transport throughout Penistone and the surrounding area, and the Wellhouse Lane development is clearly beyond walking distance to the town centre. Given the number of houses proposed, there is likely to be an increase in traffic to and from the town and additional bus services will be needed to prevent congestion. I would welcome plans to deliver this in conjunction with SCR and SYPTE.
8. There have been concerns from local residents that the character of the proposed homes is not in keeping with properties in the immediate vicinity.
9. At its narrowest, Wellhouse Lane is just 5.5m in width and there is no pavement for those wishing to walk the length of Wellhouse lane. Given the likely increase in pedestrian traffic as a result of the new development, this needs to be addressed.
10. I understand that traffic surveys have been carried out at the junctions at both ends of Wellhouse Lane and modelled for the year 2030. However, existing residents feel that these junctions are already at capacity and are therefore inconsistent with the findings of the 2018 traffic survey. These junctions are often busiest at the start and end time of local schools, yet the peak hour used for assessment is outside of these times.



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11. Wellhouse Lane is a nesting site for the protected Golden Plover and the preliminary plan of the development allows for a small grass area in the centre of this vast development which would most certainly deter them from nesting. What assessments have been done on the potential impact of the development on biodiversity and how can this impact be mitigated?
  
12. I am concerned about the impact the development will have on the drainage. There is already an excess of surface water which runs off the land, often resulting in water running down the road causing flooding at lower lying land. Recently houses on Wellhouse Lane suffered flooding from the water running of the land, and the impact of concreting over natural drainage is bound to make this situation more likely. What drainage works will be undertaken to reduce the risk of flooding to properties?

I would very much welcome a response to these concerns as soon as is practicable. However, I imagine that BMBC Planning Officers are under some considerable pressure at the moment given the COVID-19 situation and are no doubt facing challenges around new ways of working. As such, I do appreciate that there may be some delay.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Cates".

Miriam Cates  
Member of Parliament for Penistone & Stocksbridge