

DEPUTATION THREE – RESIDENTS OF ANGEL ROW, ROTHWELL

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

DR D FREEMAN: Good afternoon, my Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. My name is Dr Diane Freeman and I am here to represent Angel Row, Rothwell. With me are Wayne Jackson and Stephen Plumpton.

I would like to strongly object to the planned housing site on green belt in land in Robin Hood.

My first concern is the effect of the new buildings on the properties of Angel Row. This is a street of old terraced cottages built approximately in the 1890s whose gardens face directly on to the proposed site. Not only will the new buildings cause a significant depreciation in the value of the properties due to the loss of view and privacy, but it may also cause serious damage through flooding. These fields absorb thousands of gallons of rainwater each year and, if concreted over, where will the water go? There are many examples of housing developments where, when the area has experienced above average rainfall, it has caused great damage to the local area.

Angel Row properties all have cellars and if these were to flood, then it would have a serious impact. There is also the issue of drainage – there is no draining at the back of these properties. All water is carried away from the house by a drain-away pipe which drains into the field. Please consider the effect on the properties if this land was covered by houses.

I also have other concerns regarding the properties. For example, there is an access right at the back of the properties and my property extends past the fence at the bottom of my garden and I hope that the Planners are aware of this fact.

Secondly, I firmly believe that the development is not appropriate for the area. The proposal is for 373 houses. This is an excessive quantity which is not supportable. This is a semi-rural location and the amenities and infrastructure are set up for this. The local schools are at capacity and many people have already experienced severe difficulties in obtaining a place for their children. The roads cannot accept a significant rise in traffic. There are already traffic jams each morning and evening. The average house has 1.5 cars – this equates to an extra 560 cars on the roads. The Council has a duty to ensure that the local infrastructure can support any new housing, yet I have not see any evidence that this has been properly investigated. This area has already been severely affected by a huge development at the top of nearby Sharp Lane and we cannot accept any more.

Also, the land is designated green belt land, and for a good reason. Since I have lived in the area it has always been fully productive arable land. It supports a wide variety of wildlife, including bats and other protected species. Charities such as the RSPB and the RSPCA suggest a minimum of a two year (and preferably five year) survey to fully assess the extent of wildlife and impact of the housing

development on it. The land is also of historical importance, even being mentioned in the Domesday Book. We believe that there is also a covenant on the land which ensures that it is used for arable farming. We are currently researching this, but due to a lack of advertising about the development, we have not had sufficient time to fully investigate.

The land also plays a crucial role in giving the area its own identity. It serves to separate the areas of Robin Hood and Middleton, which would be virtually merged into one if the development went ahead. It is also the boundary between Leeds and Wakefield, with the LS26 postcode on one side and WF3 on the other.

In opposing this planned housing, we have been able to come up with many reasons why this site should not be used, yet I have not been provided with one reason why it should. Even if we accept new developments in the area, there are other, more appropriate, brown field sites available. Why build on green belt? There are also other areas where housing is being knocked down. As there are already houses present, the amenities and local infrastructure is already in place to support a development.

There is very strong opposition to the development in this area. We have an online petition which, despite being in its infancy, has already nearly 100 signatures. We feel that this development would ruin the area, is completely unsupportable and unsustainable and that there is other, more appropriate land available. We fully intend to pursue this objection and will continue to investigate both impact on wildlife and the covenant on the land.

Thank you for listening. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Lord Mayor, I move that this matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Let us call for the vote. (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED

Thank you, Diane, and your team for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. Thank you. (*Applause*)