

Press Release. Skelmanthorpe community action group.

Skelmanthorpe residents fears about Kirklees development plans for the Denby Dale, Skelmanthorpe and Clayton West area appear to be fully justified, following information supplied by the planning department at the public meeting on Thursday 13 July.

Residents were already alarmed that option E in the Local Development Framework, put forward by Kirklees for discussion, called for over 13000 house to be build, mainly on green field sites. At the meeting the planning representative confirmed that this proposal would fundamentally change the area forever, as the plan calls not only for houses to be build in the green belt but industrial estates to supply employment, schools, shops and a new road network to support it all.

Richard Graham of Skelmanthorpe community action group commented: " In effect the proposals call for the development of a new town, turning our area from a predominantly rural environment to an urban one. Everything that makes this area such an attractive place to live in would be destroyed.

It is obvious from people's reactions at the meeting that there is huge opposition to these plans, and residents are determined to put up a fight to save the countryside for future generations.

Everyone in Skelmanthorpe should take a careful look at the consultation document supplied by the council. It's not just option E we should be worried about. The planning department have put forward a minimum number of houses for our area of 2000. This is the minimum that will be built no matter which option is put forward, and represents a 25% increase in houses in our area.

However, option B calls for 4000 homes to be built, which is a 50% increase. Imagine what that will mean for traffic on the roads, pressure on parking spaces and on essential services. There is a risk that in voicing opposition to option E, people lose sight of the very real threat to our quality of life from these other options."

Skelmanthorpe community action group has already distributed leaflets throughout the village calling on the community to show the planning department the degree of opposition to their plans. The group is scheduling a meeting 7.30 pm on 16 August at St Aidan's Church Skelmanthorpe to organise further opposition.

Skelmanthorpe resident Chris Ward added further comments: " It is obvious from conversations we have been having with residents that very few people are fully aware of the extent of these new building proposals. It's only when they realise there are only 1700 houses in Skelmanthorpe, and only 8000 in the entire area that the full impact of the proposal to build an additional 13 000 houses becomes apparent.

Equally, very few people understand the proposals also call for extensive industrial development on the green belt land. This makes the damage to the landscape even

worse. We only need to look at what has happened at Grange Moor, or even closer to home, the new development on Station Road to get a glimpse of the future. I think it's a future very few people want.

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