



Local action groups welcome halt to house building plans.

Community action groups across Kirklees are celebrating the decision by Kirklees Council to delay any decisions on future house building plans until next year.

Richard Graham a spokesman for Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group commented, " We are delighted that Kirklees has listened to the wave of objections from residents to the options put forward in the LDF. When the options were communicated to a packed meeting of local residents, in our area, all four were rejected by a huge majority.

Kirklees Council seems to forget that the needs of the more rural communities in Kirklees are vastly different to those of the larger conurbations. The smaller towns and villages on the fringes of Kirklees risk getting swamped by a wave of commuters attracted by the green spaces and the quality of life they offer. Developers are ever eager to build in these areas, but they want to build large estates of detached homes rather than the small numbers of affordable houses needed to allow young people to stay in the villages, or the kind of retirement homes needed by the older members of our communities.

The number of houses Kirklees proposed to build in our area under option three would have changed our village into a town and destroyed large areas of attractive green land that surrounds the village. The result would have ruined the quality of life for all the people who live here. The other options were only a little better since they would have called for a near 30% increase in the size of our village.

Given that all the major industries have disappeared there is no prospect of the occupiers of all these new houses finding work in the area, they would simply join the thousands of other commuters travelling to Huddersfield, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester along our already inadequate road system.

We hope that in making future decisions the council will take these factors into account and work to preserve the small villages and the green areas surrounding them, for the enjoyment of future generations. It seems obvious to us that the houses should be build where they are needed, close to the sources of employment, not in the middle of the countryside where the infrastructure to support them doesn't exist.

We know we are not alone in holding these views as the growth of community action groups across Kirklees has shown. These groups have developed because many voters no longer trust their elected representatives to act in the interests of the communities they are supposed to represent. This is the second time Kirklees Council has had to defer a decision and reconsider its plans because it ignored the widespread opposition to the original proposals two years ago.

One of the good things to come out of this struggle is that the groups are now in contact with each other and there is a real commitment to work together to fight any future plans that threaten the areas we live in. We are in a far stronger position now than we were two years ago, and we certainly don't intend to drop our guard now that the decision has been delayed."

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