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Matt Dunkley-Roberts
Customer Team Officer
The Planning Inspectorate

Date: 11th August 2021

Dear Matt Dunkley-Roberts,

Thank you for your email, I have a few more questions under the freedom of information ACT 2000? But first of all I think it would be helpful if I explained my response to comments made in your email dated 27th July 2021.

Response to comment: “In terms of the flooding issue that you raise, to my reading of the decision, this was not one of the main issues before the Inspector in the appeal. However, I note that the Inspector addresses the matter in paragraph 66 of the decision, stating that “a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted by the appellant...”, and that this confirmed the site to be a low risk flood risk, and that the proposed drainage system would adequately control.”

With regard to the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy submitted by the appellant.

<http://www.dlppanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.29%20-%20App%20submission%2023.8.19%20-%20Flood%20Risk%20Assessment%20-%20P2741%20FRA%20Avant%20Homes%20Mosborough.pdf>

I have studied the Flood Risk Assessment supplied by Avie Consulting Ltd Leeds, LS14 6FD which is a very detailed document but in my opinion is inadequate and is bound to fail in heavy rain conditions. My own flood risk assessment is made with the full knowledge and understanding of the area, so I question whether or not the inspector bothered to read my assessment. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-05Floodriskassesment.pdf> However during the site visit I was able to show the inspector many facts about Owlthorpe <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-19SitevisitWednesday20thJanuary2021.pdf> including water retention <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Water.mp4> . “If you needed any more proof that the suds system would fail it came during a site visit to the proposed development area. As we passed by the spot where the suds system would be, the path had turned into a river that we all had to paddle through. This was not a rainy day but surface water was pouring off the land. Members of (OAG) are witnesses to this fact. The Building Inspector, Howard Baxter of Sheffield (LPA) and Avant Homes representatives seemed oblivious to this fact.”

Regarding the flooding at Fishlake, a local resident affected by the flooding, Mrs. J. Palmer, emailed her statement to the following recipients and myself holly.dutton@planninginspectorate.gov.uk , ed.miliband.mp@parliament.uk , clive.betts.mp@parliament.uk , jenrickr@parliament.uk , george.eustice.mp@parliament.uk. At the inquiry I made a formal request to the inspector that he made sure all attendees to the inquiry had a copy. Highlighted in yellow are the main points:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-03thisistheaccountofoneofthevictimsoffloodinginfishlake.pdf>

HRH Prince Charles and Boris Johnson visits.

The press.

It not being an exaggeration to say that it is a miracle nobody lost their life.

Last year, as you will be aware, our village suffered devastating flooding in November 2019. Having studied geography, ecology and agriculture at the Universities of Nottingham, Oxford and Lincoln respectively, I am familiar with environmental issues including flood risk, catchment based solutions and climate change. When Coordinating remedial works, carrying out flood samples for Uni. of Lincoln (cadmium deposits found buying a house in Fishlake in March 2019 we therefore paid close attention to the EA's long term flood risk across the landscape) assessment for Fishlake - which at the time was very low risk - prior to our home purchase in March 2019.

Coordinating remedial works, carrying out flood samples for Uni. of Lincoln (cadmium deposits found across the landscape)

The science is clear and we must plan for a future with more extreme weather. As somebody who is only in my early 30s and with two young children, this can feel quite frightening. I feel that we really must consider the carrying capacity of our catchments and look to nature-based solutions.

We need to look upstream at nature based solutions to slow the flow.

I hope that you can consider the impact of this development on the livelihoods and wellbeing of lowland communities and their landscapes.

Prior to the inquiry I explained to Holly Dutton on a number of occasions that **downstream flooding is of National Importance** and should be first examined by the Secretary of State for Environment and his department, not the Secretary of State for Housing. Holly Dutton was adamant that the Inspector would be able to take all my concerns into account. Downstream flooding should take priority over housing developments, **the inspector completely ignored all the evidence I supplied with regard to flooding.**

In my opinion there is a considerable amount of evidence of bias in favour of the appellant by your staff and the Inspector, which I will document for the attention of The Parliamentary Ombudsman.

The nation watched TV with horror at seeing the devastation caused by downstream flooding in Fishlake This is why my request was made to the Secretary of State for Environment. Downstream flooding, I feel, is of national and international concern.

Extracts from comments I made to Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) submitted date: Fri 21 Feb 2020

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-01OriginalObjection21stFeb2020.pdf>

Flooding: "My heart goes out when I see the faces of the victims of flooding as the emergency services work to evacuate them." "Before the 2019 General election I attended a husting at Rainbow Forge Primary School where all the candidates wishing to become the MP for Sheffield South East agreed that we need to plant more trees in Owlthorpe to stop Climate Change and prevent downstream flooding."

Over time, deforestation took place in Owlthorpe to create the golf course, the erection of electric pylons and the building of many of the new housing estates. The area is too hilly and cannot sustain further development. More building in Owlthorpe will increase the flood risk which is far too dangerous to citizens living downstream.

Sheffield is well known for its hills, and is prone to flooding and I presented evidence of this to the inspector at the inquiry. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-17ListoffloodsinSheffield.pdf> Historically, citizens of Sheffield have died in flooding events, please read.

We also now see how flooding in Europe has taken the lives of 200. This flooding is caused by Deforestation and carbon emissions. (Both elements are present in Owlthorpe.) My request to have the application was made in line with government directive. Flooding should take precedence over house building. If not, the consequences might be catastrophic. Who will bear the responsibility?

I am at a loss to understand why your staff and the Inspector did not understand that my first and foremost objection is about downstream flooding.

Please read the following report:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-20roundtableeventregardinghousingsupply.pdf>

Attendees to the housing supply round table meeting:

Inspector O S Woodwards

Richard Sagar, Barrister for Avant Homes

Guy Williams, Barrister for Sheffield City Council

Roland Bolton, Strategic Planning Research Unit

Mrs Stephens, Sheffield City Council

Mrs Hull, Sheffield City Council

Michael Meredith, Ecological Owlthorpe

Mr Woods, legal representative of OAG, was invited by the inspector, but declined to attend.

After reading the following Government Statements, I thought the inspector would be interested in a proposal I made at the housing supply meeting at the inquiry: I have an interest in architecture as my father was a Draftsman/Estimator and I do support the construction of new properties. My only concern is that they are constructed in areas that do not increase flood risk down stream.

In this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbYXEDczL-U> Sophie Ridge interview George Eustace MP Secretary of State for the Environment explains the government's response to UK floods. An extra £4 Billion is to be spent on flood defences. In Yorkshire, up stream nature based solutions are to be supported.

Published 23rd January 2020 Government Press Release:

"Environment Bodies set joint vision to tackle climate change. Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, and Natural England outline a shared vision to use up-stream nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency."

Published 6 August 2020: Announced by Robert Jenrick MP the Secretary of State for Housing:

“Valued green spaces protected for future generations, with more building on Brownfield land.”

I suggested to the Inspector that Avant Homes should move their project to the disused Aerodrome at Norton which is a Brownfield site by definition boasting many derelict building in need of redevelopment. I explained that the MOD may be responsible for removing asbestos from the site. Reported in Sheffield Star March 29th 2021: Demolition finally gets underway at former air base buildings have now been removed, so there is no reason why Avant Homes cannot remove their project to the Aerodrome at Norton.

I thought this would be a win win situation for all concerned and would conform with the statement announced by Robert Jenrick MP the Secretary of State for Housing. When I requested that the Inspector should suggest this to the Secretary of State the inspector said “speaking to the Secretary of State is above his pay grade”. This is very concerning as the Inspector is supposed to be appointed by the Secretary of State. Guy Williams Barrister acting for Sheffield CC thanked me for trying to get funding from two separate

government funds. Unofficial feedback from the Labour held Sheffield CC to my suggestion was very negative with comments such as “We are not going to except handouts from the Tory Government.” It seems to me that Sheffield CC would rather cut of their noses off to spite their faces rather than accepting funds from central government.

I suggested that Sheffield (LPA) had caused a shortage in social housing by neglecting it whilst concentrating on student accommodation. I asked what was happening to Park Hill flats which were built as social housing. Residents fondly called it ‘streets in the skies’. Although some of it has been re-developed, Roland Bolton, Strategic Planning Research explained the rest is to be made into student accommodation. I rest my case.

Please look at this BBC video. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=467326297599930>

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-21OverviewofEcologicalOwlthorpeAppeal.pdf>

Response to your comment: “In terms of if the Planning Inspectorate was misled by the Council’s decision notice, it is unclear how this would be the case.”

Please read the extract from the reasons for refusal below for clarification, as you can see it speaks for itself: “I’ve enclosed the Sheffield LPA’s refusal reasons.”

<http://www.dlppanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.37%20-%20Decision%20notice%20June%202020.pdf>

Page 4: “**NOTES Appeals to the Secretary of State** If you are aggrieved by the decision of your Local Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the **Secretary of State for the Environment** under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.” (Not the Secretary of State for Housing?)

This is one of the legal documents I have been complaining about as it does not truly reflect the Planning and Highways Committee Meeting 2nd June 2020. After the vote was taken against building in Owlthorpe, Colin Walker Interim Head changed the legal content of this document by having traffic impact removed he said: “**I think there is a significant risk if you throw Highways impact into this as a reason for refusal and that risk is that you effectively neutralise the site in residential terms.**” Extract from my report

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-18ReviewofPlanningMeeting.pdf> “Helen Johnson’s SCC

Highways impact assessment was completely castigated by many local Cllr’s saying it was totally inadequate. Cllr Peter Garbutt, Cllr Dianne Hurst, Cllr Chris Rosling-Josephs and Cllr Rodger Davidson all voiced their concerns. Cllr Chris Rosling-Josephs explained that traffic in the area is horrendous, especially around Crystal Peaks but also in the surrounding area and that a full independent traffic assessment needs be taken before the council considers any more developments in the area.” The co2 emissions from queuing traffic is dangerously high and detrimental to the health and wellbeing of residents of Owlthorpe.

Be aware that Colin Walker no longer works for Sheffield City Council. If the document had reflected the meeting on the 2nd June 2020 Avant Homes would not have been able to take their Case to the Secretary of State. Is the inspectorate happy with the fact that Colin Walker misled The Secretary of State? Also the refusal document sent to local residents by Howard Baxter is not the same document. The refusal document sent to local residents is only two pages and misleads local residents into thinking Sheffield City Council and Howard Baxter are both supportive of local resident. I am asking the Parliamentary ombudsman to investigate why there are two versions of the same document.

I was allowed to review meeting 2nd June 2020 which was arranged by Guy Williams Barrister for Sheffield City Council and Lucy Bond, Area Team Manager (City Centre & East Team) Development Management City Growth Department. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-18ReviewofPlanningMeeting.pdf>

Video copies of the meeting have been made available to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for review. I can supply you with a copy if you wish.

It seems to me that staff in MP Robert Jenerick's Housing department and staff in the inspectorate use Sheffield City Councils (LPA) refusal document when it suits them and reference it. However they dismiss it and refuse to investigate further if it seems prejudicial to the appellant. I am also asking the parliamentary ombudsman to investigate.

Below is correspondence from the Head of Planning regarding my complaint to the Ombudsman.

'Michael Johnson
Head of Planning
Sheffield City Council

Dear Mr Meredith,

I am wiring to thank you for sending the below correspondence and to confirm we will respond fully with any Ombudsman enquiry that is forthcoming.

Kind regards

Michael.'

My Caseworker at Parliamentary Ombudsman Services explains: There is no requirement, statutory or otherwise for a Member of Parliament to refer a case to the Ombudsman. A constituent may, however, approach another Member, if their MP decides not to forward the complaint. There is no requirement in the legislation that it is the constituency MP who makes the referral. I have followed all Legislation and correct procedures with regard to my formal complaint, but have had no response from my MP Clive Betts. If MP Clive Betts decides not to refer my case, as the caseworker explains, all I have to do is simply request that another MPs will. There are 650 MPs and I am sure that there are many MPs that want to support upstream nature based solutions to stop downstream flooding especially as climate change is worsening.

Thank you so much for confirming in your last communication that both correspondences from: Michael Meredith Sent: 26 May 2020 20:21 To: george.eustice.mp@parliament.uk Subject: Planning Application also Holly Dutton, Helen Skinner and Robert Jenrick MP Secretary of State for Housing.

As my Caseworker at Parliamentary Ombudsman Services explains all MPs have to abide by "The Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament" <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/parliamentary-commissioner-for-standards/complaints-and-investigations> I am examining if by ignoring my recorded correspondences both Secretaries of State broke the Code of Conduct.

Please could you answer the following questions under the freedom of information ACT 2000?

Question 1: Could you supply me with a copy of the Letter sent from my MP Clive Betts to MP Robert Jenerick Secretary of State for Housing as stated in last communication: "(but not asking for recovery – see his letter enclosed). I don't think this would need to be recovered but grateful for your views"?

Question 2: Could you supply me with a copy of the inspectors report with regard to the site visit? The site visit is mentioned in Appeal Decision Inquiry Held on 12-15, 19, and 21 January 2021 **Site visit made on 20**

January 2021 by O S Woodward BA(Hons.) MA MRTPI an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
Decision date: 2 March 2021. I am requesting that the Parliamentary Ombudsman make comparisons between
the inspectors report and my report: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-19SitevisitWednesday20thJanuary2021.pdf> .

Question 3: “We have a recovery request for an appeal in Sheffield for erection of 74 no. dwellings. It is a very small development, and MP isn’t requesting recovery.”

Please be aware MP Clive Betts and Sheffield CC (LPA) want to build 500 dwellings in Owlthorpe but because they could not get planning permission they have split the site into a number of smaller sites C, D, E and F. The other sites will be developed at a later stage, your inspector is aware of this fact as it became clear on the site visit. The **Question**, is MP Robert Jenrick the Secretary of States for Housing and staff in his department happy to have been misled by MP Clive Betts, Sheffield City Council (LPA) and the Inspector? I am asking for the parliamentary ombudsman to investigate.

Question 4: With regards to Coal Mining report Ref: <http://www.dlpplanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.27%20-%20App%20submission%2023.8.19%20-%20Coal%20Mining%20Report%20-%20Mining%20Report%208718.pdf> submitted to the inquiry. I have exchanged a number of correspondences with the Coal authority under the freedom of information ACT 2000 which can be viewed here:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/letters.htm> please view this letter:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EmailCoalBoard2.pdf> Did the inspector investigate the mines under Owlthorpe which are in a state of flooding? In the site visit I showed the inspector the capped off mine shaft which is situated approx: 50 meters from the west boundary of site E. I have been attempting to find out who is responsible for flooded mine workings in Owlthorpe, all government departments seem to pass the book on this one. However, remember that deposits of Ochre were found down stream.

Question 5: I had prepared this web-site <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/index.html> to use in the inquiry but screen sharing was not available for me. I would like to know why. Screen sharing was made available to the appellant and Roland Bolton Strategic Planning Research Unit and both used their web-sites to show evidence. Guy Williams Barrister for Sheffield City Council made the observation that when Mr Woods (OAG) and Dr Rivers wanted to use their websites screen sharing was not available to them. Guy Williams wanted to make sure it worked for members of Sheffield City Council who wished to present evidence by this means. The inspector made screen sharing available for Sheffield City Council. The time slot for me to give evidence was moved to the last day. I would like to know why. When I wanted to use screen sharing the inspector did not allow me to. Let me be clear, it is only the host that allows screen sharing. The appellant did not want my evidence to be shared. I protested that local residents and the press were viewing the inquiry. I was left to read one or two documents that I had supplied. When I emailed the last few documents as requested by the inspector, Holly Dutton returned them saying it was too late without forwarding to the inspector. In Appeal Decision made by O S Woodward BA(Hons.) MA MRTPI date: 2 March 2021 Ref: (5) “Short extension of time following the close of the inquiry for the parties to deal with the revised s106 Planning Obligation.” It seems to me that your staff acted in a biased way in favour of the appellant by ignoring my evidence. I am requesting that the parliamentary ombudsman also investigates this.

All documents I supplied to the inquiry including, the last few, can be viewed here: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/publicinquiry.htm> : letters can be viewed here <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/letters.htm> and press releases here: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/pressreleases.htm> .

<https://yorkshirebylines.co.uk/author/michaelmeredith> My working life has included both manufacturing and retail industries, concluding with a career in education, where I placed technical students in the labs at universities and schools. Amongst their duties my students taught lectures how to use video conferencing equipment. Many lectures now use distance learning with great success. Also video conferencing equipment

was installed in board rooms in industry so that the MD could attend board room meetings from abroad. Part of my job was to assess my students as they taught lecturers.

To get a better understanding of where I am coming from, please read my editorial in Yorkshire By-Lines: <https://yorkshirebylines.co.uk/working-with-nature-sheffield-campaign-calls-for-protection-of-upstream-environments>

Press release 12 January 2021, Sky to sponsor the COP26 summit in Glasgow The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow on 1 – 12 November 2021. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-16COP26-GOV.UK.pdf> I provided this evidence to the inspector at the inquiry. I wanted to find out what the government was bringing to the conference? Many countries from around the world will be showing how they have used solar technology in the building industry and coordinated this with charging points for electric cars. For example reported in Forbes:

Almost 60% of new cars in Norway during March 2019 were entirely electric-powered. Norway looks to stop sales of fossil fuelled cars by 2025. In my opinion the UK is playing catch-up.

Question 5: Hansard: Government Legislation, NetZero Emissions Target. Could you please give information as to how this impacts the Building Inspectorate? For example has any training been given to inspectors explaining how to incorporate this into new building projects? **Are there any new regulation for inspectors and building companies to follow? If not should the Secretary of State for Housing introduce some?**

Question 6: Hansard: Government Legislation, The government has made provision for excess electricity from properties with solar tiles and storage batteries, to sell back to the national grid. To meet Government Legislation shouldn't it be compulsory for all new builds to have this technology?

Climate Change: UN report issues profound warning to mankind

https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2021/08/IPCC_WGI-AR6-Press-Release_en.pdf#:~:text=9%20August%202021%20Climate%20change%20widespread%2C%20rapid%2C%20and,Panel%20on%20Climate%20Change%20%28IPCC%29%20Report%2C%20released%20today

Question 7: Is the inspectorate interested in working with Sheffield University students studying landscape and architecture under the guidance of [Dr Nicola Dempsey](#) ?

To comply with Government legislation and directive, a further consideration is the need for new, environmentally friendly technology to be integrated into any new housing development plans. These should, for example, ensure that houses have south facing aspects to capture the benefits of solar technology, with storage batteries capable of taking advantage of new government legislation that says properties with excess electricity can sell back to the national grid. High-speed charging points must be incorporated for both electric cars and bicycles, with perhaps a car scrappage deal for residents moving into new housing and even possibly a ban on combustion engines from new housing estates.”

“I requested that Dr Nicola Dempsey’s students produce plans explaining how a project may look if houses were constructed off the building line with a south facing aspect and what impact this would have on the landscape. Dr Nicola Dempsey is happy to produce such work as it would be a valuable exercise for her students. It would be more valuable if the work was produced for stakeholders. Students working with professionals and line managers would give students a taste of reality within the working environment. Working in such an environment would make it much easier for Dr Nicola Dempsey to evaluate her students’ potential.” Please consider this.

On a point of law, please remember the Parliamentary Ombudsman has the powers to summons documents, e-mails and websites in order to make a special report to Parliament about an organisation's failure to carry out Government legislation and Directive with regard to Government policies, including new Climate Change policies, and must abide by the Parliamentary Ombudsman's recommendations.

All evidence has been supplied to the parliamentary ombudsman who will have his own questions for staff in your department as well as others.

I look forward to your response

Kind Regards

Michael Meredith

Copy of this correspondence has been sent to all concerned parties.