

## Tong and Fulneck Valley Association

### HOLME WOOD URBAN EXTENSION PROPOSALS

#### Summary of Representation options to the Planning Inspectorate

##### A: LEGAL

1. **Flawed Consultation Process – Tong and Holme Wood Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and Local Development Framework Core Strategy Further Engagement Draft (LDF FED).** These two were supposed to be available for public consultation that was run in parallel, whereas the NDP process began and was completed in advance of the LDF FED, indicating that the NDP was driving the policy of the LDF FED rather than being driven by it.
2. **Inaccurate and misleading designation of the 'Tong and Holme Wood Neighbourhood Development Plan'.** The Localism Bill sets out a clear framework for the formation of NDP's which the Tong and Holme Wood NDP fails to meet. No attempt was made by Bradford Council to reshape the Tong and Holme Wood Partnership Board so that it met the requirements of the Localism Bill in devising an NDP. The Draft Core Strategy refers frequently to the Tong and Holme Wood NDP in a way that assumes validity for it that should not be claimed.

##### B: DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

1. **Failure of the Core Strategy to show how the 'Duty to Co-operate' has been approached and fulfilled.** There appears to be no documentation in Bradford's draft that identifies those with whom it has co-operated, how this has been done, and what has been achieved through the process.
2. **Failure to Co-operate with Leeds MC.** There is no sign of any committed and sustained co-operation between Leeds and Bradford despite the sensitive geographical adjacency of the green belt protected land that separates them. Leeds Council's objection to both the Tong and Holme Wood NDP and to the Core Strategy LDF FED and Bradford's hostile response exposes a failure to achieve this. The Core Strategy fails to identify the process that has been followed to meet this requirement, either in the ongoing process of the formation of the Core Strategy or in the completion of its final form.
3. **Failure to co-operate with public bodies.** We can find no evidence of co-operation with health authorities and water companies despite the increased health care challenges that would ensue from the Urban Extension, and the increased flood risk that would be brought to Pudsey Beck and Troydale.

##### C: SOUNDNESS

- a) **Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements.**
  1. **Infrastructure Requirements;** There is no attempt in either the NDP or the Core Strategy to show how any of the infrastructure requirements of such a large new community for it to be sustainable would be met. The development would have significant impact upon both Leeds and Kirklees, but there is no sign of this being recognised or planned for.

**2. Effect on Holme Wood:** To describe the new development as a 'Holme Wood Urban Extension' is misleading. Holme Wood does not have the infrastructure capacity to 'own' or provide for a development of this scale. We believe that the main bulk of this new development will not assist Holme Wood to become a more socially and economically mixed community, and may well further damage its potential. In contrast TFVA would be in favour of plans to build 900 new homes within the current natural boundary of the estate.

**3. Transport and Traffic Concerns:**

- **Congestion** Bradford has been assessed as the third most congested city in the UK with regard to traffic, and traffic surveys have shown that Tong Street (A650) is the most congested road in Bradford. To build such a vast new housing development that will inevitably lead to further congestion on Tong Street is foolhardy.
- **Road Provision.** There is confusion about Bradford's intentions regarding road provision for the Urban Extension. There is conflicting evidence regarding a proposal to build a new highway link road from Westgate Hill to Thornbury, or to only provide the new community with an access road. If it were only an access road, the effect of traffic growth through Holme Wood would be unacceptable. If a link road were to be built there would be even further devastating major green belt loss, and serious ecological threat to the important ancient woodland of Black Carr Woods. Such a road would require agreement and support from neighbouring authorities
- **Rural Roads** The rural farm roads that lead to Tong or Tyersal are entirely unsuited to carrying the increases in traffic that would result from the Urban Extension, and further substantial traffic increases in Tong Lane through the Tong Conservation Area would be highly undesirable.

**b) Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.**

1. **Green Belt Priority** The loss of green belt protected land should not take place unless there is no alternative, yet we do not see any sign of this having been a priority with those who are making these proposals. Indeed the prior inclusion of this in the NDP indicates a lack of genuine commitment to green belt protection by Bradford Council.
2. **No Greenbelt Policy** We are not aware of Bradford Council having produced a Green Belt policy that has a cogent strategy for the redefining of greenbelt – nor are we aware of any negotiation taking place with neighbouring authorities to reach common agreement on this.

**c) Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.**

1. **Cross Boundary** There is no sign of any cross boundary agreement for the Urban Extension despite the substantial social and economic implications that such a development would have for Leeds and Kirklees.

2. **Time Scale** There is no clear time frame given for the Urban Extension, and there are conflicting statements made in Council documents that indicate confusion as to how and when land for the Urban Extension would be released.

d) **Consistent with national policy** – *the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.*

**Green Belt Protection** All of the land that we are concerned about currently enjoys Green belt Protection. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the same high level of protection to the Green Belt as in the previous Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and identifies five purposes served by the Green Belt. The Core Strategy does not reflect the importance of these – indeed they are not mentioned in the document; nor does it reflect any clear commitment for minimising green belt release.

Each of the Five purposes will be compromised by the proposed Urban Extension to Holme Wood:

### 1. Prevent Spread of Urban Sprawl

The Green Belt currently controls effectively the growth of urban sprawl both between Tong and Holme Wood, and between the Metropolitan Districts of Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees. In particular the boundary to the green belt provided by Westgate Hill Street, Holme Lane and Ned Lane is adequate and defensible. The proposed sites and boundaries identified on the SHLAA plan for the Urban Extension are arbitrary and largely indefensible.

### 2. Prevent merger of Neighbouring Towns

**Vital Lung:** The green belt provides a vital countryside lung between the neighbouring authorities. The threat of coalescence between Bradford and Leeds was a key reason for the objection to the NDP and FED by Leeds Council. The threat of such coalescence has increased in the current plan with the inclusion of site SE101.

### 3. Safeguard the countryside from encroachment

**Vital Countryside:** The current boundaries enable the preservation of important countryside opportunities in the Tong Valley for residents of Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees. TFVA is committed to working with others to see this enhanced in for future generations. Bradford's concept of a major new highway to be constructed between Westgate Hill and Thornbury would further destroy important countryside, and threaten the ancient woodland at Black Carr Woods.

### 4. Preserve the setting of Historic Towns

**Tong and Fulneck:** The ancient and historic communities of Tong and Fulneck and the recreational benefit that they offer to the substantial number of visitors who benefit from them require strong maintenance of the protection currently secured by the green belt land that surrounds them. Both are rightly identified as Conservation Areas, and both offer unique historical and cultural attraction within the largely urban life of West Yorkshire. Fulneck became the key settlement of the Moravian Community in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and has retained much of its unique character. Tong is included in the Domesday Book; Tong Hall is a Grade One listed Queen Anne building; Tong Church is also Grade One, has Saxon and Norman origins, and has original 18<sup>th</sup> century fittings and furnishings from its rebuild in 1727 by leading Methodist preacher, John Nelson. Tong Village has a wide range of other listed buildings and features.

## **5. Recycling of derelict and other urban land.**

The need to give priority to brown field and other derelict sites has been a consistent and universal message from a wide range of politicians and campaigners in Bradford. However the challenges that exist in tackling this can motivate housing developers to seek access to alternative countryside sites that are more attractive and profitable to develop. The need therefore to maintain protection for the Tong Valley is vital to ensure that the substantial areas of Bradford land that needs regeneration is given priority.