

28 March 2014.

Comment on Local Plan for the Bradford District – Core Strategy Publication Draft.

I am writing in reference to the Local Plan for the Bradford District – Core Strategy Publication Draft (Regulation 18 & 19). I wish to raise several key concerns that I believe should be considered before the Core Strategy Publication Draft is accepted and implemented.

The publication draft focuses on the development plan for the Bradford District up until the year 2030 and covers housing and transport expansion along with economic and business growth. I believe there are several key areas where the draft is unsound and incompatible with the areas it proposes to develop in the Shipley constituency, and also misguided in satisfying the needs of those in the Bradford District as a whole.

Firstly, whilst the boundaries are indistinct, the publication draft suggests a predicted increase of 8000 houses in my constituency; many of which are suggested to be placed in rural areas and upon green belt land that should be protected. The Government's planning guidance is for Councils not to build on green belt unless in exceptional circumstances. The reasons given in the Core Strategy fall a long way short of the exceptional circumstances required to justify building on the green belt.

Please see the predicted housing increase throughout the Shipley constituency until 2030, as specified below:

3,200 homes - Shipley and Canal Road Corridor
1,250 homes – Shipley
1,400 homes - Bingley
450 homes – Baildon
200 homes – Cottingley
200 homes - Burley-in-Wharfedale
400 homes – Menston
350 homes – Cullingworth
350 homes – Denholme
100 homes – Harden
200 homes - Wilsden

I hold several key objections to such development plans based on the capability of supporting infrastructure to cope with the increase, and whether such

development models satisfy the demand that exists in the Bradford District for housing.

Many of the areas suggested for development are small to medium sized villages, which already suffer from stretched resources and congestion issues. To exacerbate these problems by increasing the number of houses in these areas will put a vital strain on all public resources. The necessary provisions to support such population increases are not currently set in place, and instead of providing a sound plan that shows how the housing increase can work positively to develop local infrastructure, the council seem to have chosen the development sizes at random, without much consideration to the local issues facing these areas, and whether they would be able to cope with the increases.

To give just one example of this would be the case of Baildon. The council has suggested a 450 house increase over the next 15 years in this area however such a huge increase is unsustainable. Baildon currently has one route for traffic travelling from the east towards Bradford (Otley Road or Baildon Road). At peak times this route becomes critical causing extreme congestion. An increase of 450 houses in the area without any congestion relief would make this route impossible to travel in a reasonable time. Such delays would therefore damage the local economy by putting off new businesses from coming to the area as well as putting an intolerable strain on existing local residents.

This model can be similarly applied to many other villages in my constituency, where the main roads currently suffer from extreme congestion at peak times and weekends, and therefore to introduce such large numbers of new housing into the area is irresponsible.

Before such housing increases are considered, Bradford council should work to ensure the funding and regeneration for the existing infrastructure in these areas. The Shipley Eastern Relief Road is something I see as essential to helping relieve congestion worries in my constituency, however the funding for this is still not secure and no development plans have been guaranteed. Indeed all the evidence shows that this scheme is dropping down the list of Council priority schemes.

Transport focus in the development plan has been on reducing the need to travel by car and instead attracting more journeys by foot, bicycle and through public transport. Whilst it is positive to see such focus on developing these resources, and I especially welcome the inclusion and support for horse-riding as an option of transportation, for many commuters during the week none of the above-mentioned modes are feasible options. The councils focus on bus and cycle lane priorities may instead exacerbate traffic concerns by reducing the number of

