

Part B (1)

GREEN BELT + HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

The proposed development cannot be considered to be sound or legally compliant because it simply disregards the Green Belt which is also an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and of Special Scientific Interest. 800 new homes are planned for Ilkley over the life of the plan but this development is essentially on both Green Belt land and “Habitats Regulations Assessment land”.

Housing numbers have been reduced on account of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), but only by 38% in Ilkley whereas the combined reduction across the rest of Wharfedale is 56%. However, the whole of Ilkley comes within the 2.5km habitats protection zone designated under the HRA (Section 3 para 106). This does not make any sense and cannot in any way be considered to be legally compliant.

Building on the Green Belt is simply wrong (particularly when this land falls within a Habitat Protection zone) when there are alternative brownfield sites available. The Bradford district has a vast reserve of brownfield sites that could be developed to help regenerate the district. Developing on the green belt simply allows developers to make a quick easy buck without addressing the real needs of the district.

More than 25% of the District’s new homes will be built on green belt and yet for Ilkley this will be at least 55%: yet the National Planning Framework says that:

- “the government attaches great importance to green belts” (NPPF para 79)
- four of the specific purposes are “to prevent towns merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and; to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land” (NPPF para 80)
- “once established, green belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances” (NPPF para 83)

All of the above is clearly being brushed aside and ignored in the case of Ilkley. Why? The Strategy now detailed will destroy the individual nature of Ilkley and other nearby towns along the A65 corridor resulting in the establishment by stealth of a single A65 conurbation.