

**1, The Paddock
Doncaster Road
Whitley
North Yorkshire
DN14 0HZ**

20th February 2011

FAO Terry Heselton.
LDF Team
Selby District Council
Selby.

Dear Sir,

Consultation on Selby LDF – Primary Villages and Housing Distribution.

1. Primary Villages - Criteria

The council's criteria for defining Primary Villages is reasonable as long as it is recognised that most of those villages listed have only a limited range of services that are required for everyday living.

It should be recognised that most residents in primary villages need good public transport or private car to access services that can only be found in places such as Selby, York, Knottingley, Pontefract and Doncaster. Most of the villages in this area are dormitory villages with residents needing to travel by car or bus for employment, entertainment, banking and shopping. Housing development in these villages is unlikely to attract a wider range of services and this will simply result in an increase in the number of car journeys for commuting, entertainment, shopping etc.

Eggborough is in the primary village category but the range of services within the settlement is very limited - A post office, small convenience store, hairdresser, medical practice, pharmacy and a butchers shop. Whilst these services may partially meet the needs of a local residents, most will need to travel to major centres for a full range of services as well as banking facilities, dental care and petrol. Public transport is poor with a limited bus service and this is likely to get

worse as the public subsidy is withdrawn. The train service to Leeds/Goole is limited to two trains per day with fare escalation for passengers who travel to/from stations outside the West Yorkshire Metro area. This creates the situation where residents may often travel by car to Glasshoughton or Knottingley to catch more frequent trains and at the same time save several pounds on travel costs to Leeds. This is very bad for the local carbon footprint.

2. My objection to Whitley being included as a Primary Village.

In early 2010 Whitley was in the Secondary Village list and I think that most residents would agree with this because of the very poor facilities that exist in Whitley. I cannot understand how linking it to Eggborough will improve the situation since it is unlikely that inward investment by either the public or private sectors will occur in Whitley. The centre of Whitley is 2.4km from the main services in Eggborough and the M62 motorway, the Aire-Calder Navigation and the railway separate the settlements. These features act as a barrier to easy travel to Eggborough by foot or cycle and this problem is further exacerbated by the dangers of walking or cycling on the busy and dangerous A19 and J34 of the M62. In reality, most journeys from Whitley to Eggborough are made by private car and possibly bus, but an hourly bus service means that a return trip to there could be a lengthy outing.

I have listed below why it is inappropriate to consider large-scale housing developments in Whitley.

- ◆ **Lack of Mains Gas Supply.** Unlike Eggborough, Whitley has **no mains gas** and every household relies on fossil fuels for heating – coal, oil and LPG. Because market forces dictate the cost of these fuels (no OFGEM regulation for these fuels), it is likely that fuel poverty will become a major problem in Whitley. This lack of mains gas is likely to deter commercial/business investment in the village and in the current economic there will be little investment by public bodies. There is need for renewable energy supplies/generation to be encouraged and incorporated into existing and new building.

- ◆ **Shops Transport and Community Facilities.** Whitley has no shops or services. Whitley did have garage but this was car-sales only and this closed several years ago. There is a primary school, a pub and a small church, but no village hall or other community buildings that can be used by community groups. The hall in Eggborough was jointly managed by residents from both Whitley and Eggborough but several years ago Whitley opted out of involvement in the running and management of this hall. The reality is that Whitley residents rely mostly on private cars for their daily needs, recreation, entertainment and employment. It is becoming clear that as fuel and transport costs rise, Whitley is becoming an unsustainable settlement.
- ◆ **Recreational Open Space** – There are no large areas of ROS for adults but the parish council has now invested in a small field just off the A19 that might be used by families for small scale recreation, picnics and gatherings etc. but no public sports fields are available in Whitley.
- ◆ **Walking/Cycling to Eggborough** - The centre of Whitley is 2.4km from the centre of Eggborough whilst the southern part (Bovis & Barratt estates are located here) the distance is 3.2km. Walking to the centre of Eggborough from these two locations in Whitley will take 40 minutes and 55 minutes respectively.. The A19 is heavily used by HGVs, farm tractors, private cars and it is both narrow and dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. Speeding is a major problem through Whitley and over many years, efforts have been and still are being made to resolve this problem. The only continuous footpath along the A19 in Whitley is on the west side and in parts this can be less than 0.7 m wide. Because of this narrowness, it is unsuitable for walking, cycling, disability scooters and prams. There is no pedestrian crossing in Whitley on the A19 despite requests that have been made for provision via the housing developer contributions. Persimmon, Barratt and Bovis have all built estates of up to 50 houses since 2002. As I have already stated, most residents use cars to access services in the larger villages and nearby towns.

- ◆ **Public Transport.** - North south travel is by the Arriva Bus Company on the Selby/Doncaster service which at present is an hourly service Monday to Saturday and every two hours on Sundays. This service is being reviewed due to government subsidy cuts and it is likely that there will be no buses on this route after 19.00 hours. East west travel is limited to two trains per day from **Whitley Bridge** station on the Leeds –Goole line to Leeds at 7.29 and 19.12. with one train from Leeds at 17.16. Whitley Bridge station is a good 20-minute walk from the centre of Whitley but only 4 minutes by car. The X62 Stagecoach now runs six buses per day between Hull and Leeds but to catch the bus in Eggborough requires a 40-minute walk from parts of Whitley.

- ◆ **Housing Development** - Since 2002 there have been three estate developments, each of between forty and fifty houses with another development of forty-four houses due to start this month. In addition there has been in-filling type development and by the end of 2011 the housing stock will have rises from 240 in 2002 to about 420. Most of this development is ribbon development close to or on the A19 and this has led to a tremendous increase in the amount of traffic feeding onto the already busy A19 to access the M62 motorway. All previously developed/brownfield sites in the Whitley village envelope have now been used and if any further housing development takes place it will mean using agricultural land, greenbelt land outside the village envelope or “garden grabbing”. I cannot see how any large scale housing development will benefit Whitley and make it a sustainable settlement. Will additional houses bring employment, shops and other commercial services? I doubt this very much and we will just have more of the same – a larger dormitory village dependant on the private car for travel to nearby towns for employment and other services. Added to this, without mains gas being brought to Whitley, any future development is likely to give rise to larger numbers of households experiencing fuel poverty. The 2006 Whitley Parish Plan showed that of those that responded to the questionnaire 57% did not want any further development in the village.

- ◆ **Sustainability** – The criteria for assessing sustainability is that a settlement has a general store, medical services, a post office, community buildings, commercial services and employment opportunities, a school and good infrastructure i.e. mains gas, roads and public transport. All of these services should be within the settlement and be within a **twenty minutes walk** for most residents. Whitley has a pub, shared school and two employers but none of the other features and therefor must fail the criteria test for being a sustainable settlement.

Based on the above information and views will you please let me have a response to the following:

- ◆ **I hope that the above comments are relevant and helpful input to the LDF and core strategy consultation process and I think that serious consideration ought to be given to Whitley village reverting back to it's original status of a secondary village.**
- ◆ **If this status change is not appropriate will you please explain why not, why Whitley should be linked to Eggborough and why this linking took place at some point in 2010 at a very late stage in the Core Strategy consultation process**
- ◆ **Was Whitley parish council made aware of the linking with Eggborough in 2010 resulting in a change from secondary to primary village status and if not, why not?**

Yours sincerely,

Keith Leppingwell