



Case to support the protection of the Green Belt status of Rawdon Billing and associated land

***A submission to Leeds City Council to support its
forthcoming LDF Green Belt Review***

October 2012





Rawdon Billing Action Group (RBAG) is a community group which was established specifically to protect the green belt status of Rawdon Billing and associated green belt land. This report has been prepared by Ben Pretty of RBAG supported by the wider group, in consultation with the local community. The views expressed remain those of the author and RBAG and despite significant consultation with the community, cannot be representative of every individual. However, we are confident that we have captured the views of the majority and this report seeks to present these formally for consideration by the Council as part of the preparation of the Local Development Framework (Site Allocations Development Plan Document) and particularly the proposed Green Belt Review to underpin the evidence base for this. For more information on RBAG please visit www.rbag.co.uk or contact us at info@rbag.co.uk.

Executive Summary

The Green Belt designation of Rawdon Billing and its surrounding land should not be removed for the following reasons:

- The land continues to serve all five purposes of Green Belt land as defined within the NPPF
- Rawdon Billing and its surrounding land is a significant physical landmark within the Leeds District
- The land is in active economic use and is a major recreational asset in constant use for this purpose
- Rawdon Billing and surrounding land defines Rawdon as a settlement and provides it with a distinct USP. Rawdon's distinctiveness is at risk – it would become just another large housing estate if it lost this green asset
- The local infrastructure is not sufficient to cater for major new residential development, particularly given the current A65 congestion issues
- Rawdon is a sustainable village location in its own right, the village 'works' – why upset this balance?
- Rawdon has already sacrificed green land for development at the Airport and around Larkfield Dam
- There are other more appropriate, suitable and deliverable sites for residential development within Aireborough and the Leeds District which are not designated as Green Belt – many of which are brownfield sites
- There is significant local support for its Green Belt status to be retained.

Contents

1	Introduction and purpose of report	1
1.1	Rawdon and the Billing	1
1.2	The Rawdon Billing Action Group (RBAG)	2
1.3	Purpose of this report	4
2	Green Belt land and its role/function	5
2.1	Planning Policy and Green Belt	5
2.2	Extent of the Rawdon Billing and associated land Green Belt	5
3	Rawdon Billing and its Green Belt 'purpose'	7
3.1	Introduction	7
4	Critical role of Rawdon Billing as a green asset	17
4.1	Introduction	17
4.2	Physical role	17
4.3	Socio-economic role	17
4.4	Existence role	19
4.5	Property market role	19
5	Critical issues associated with loss of Green Belt Status	21
5.1	Introduction	21
5.2	Impact on local road network	21
5.3	Impact of Leeds-Bradford Airport	22
5.4	Lack of public transport connectivity	22
5.5	Impact on local service provision	23
5.6	Summary	23
6	Summary	24

Appendix I – Extracts from the Survey

Appendix II – Letters of Support from St Peter's School, Rawdon

1 Introduction and purpose of report

1.1 Rawdon and the Billing

Rawdon is a village within the metropolitan borough of Leeds, with an estimated population of c.7,500 people. It is located 11km (7 miles) to the North West of Leeds City Centre and is surrounded by the larger settlements of Horsforth and Yeadon. Forming part of Aireborough, Rawdon is steeped in history, having been first referenced in the Domesday Book. Nowadays it is a quiet and attractive village which is often viewed as one of the more affluent settlements surrounding Leeds City Centre. It was home to several mills at one stage but was, and still is, primarily a residential area. Key local assets include its educational provision, its historic built environment, its independent retail offer, the quality of its residential offer and perhaps most importantly its green environment and unspoilt views across the Aire Valley and Wharfedale. Rawdon Billing sits at the heart of the old village of Rawdon, above Town Street, and is a significant feature of the local and wider West Yorkshire physical landscape.

Rawdon Billing (often referred to as the 'Billing') is a tree-topped hill in Rawdon, reaching an elevation of 231m (758ft) at its highest point, signified by a trig point. It is predominantly in pastoral agricultural use but is widely accessible to all for recreational and amenity uses. 360 degree elevations can be had from its summit, with views reaching as far as York Minster, the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales. It is a much valued green asset which local residents view as being an integral part of the make-up of Rawdon and the wider Aireborough district. Critically, Rawdon Billing and its surrounding area is designated Green Belt land given its importance as a green asset within what is becoming an increasingly urbanised landscape across the Leeds District. It is understood that Leeds City Council (LCC) owns the tree topped parcel of the land on the summit and a parcel of land to the east of this towards Bayton Lane, but that the surrounding land is predominantly under the ownership of the Rawdon Trust. The Rawdon Trust land ownership is portrayed by the red line boundary on the plan in Figure 1 below (understood to be c.220 acres and possibly in the process of being disposed for development):



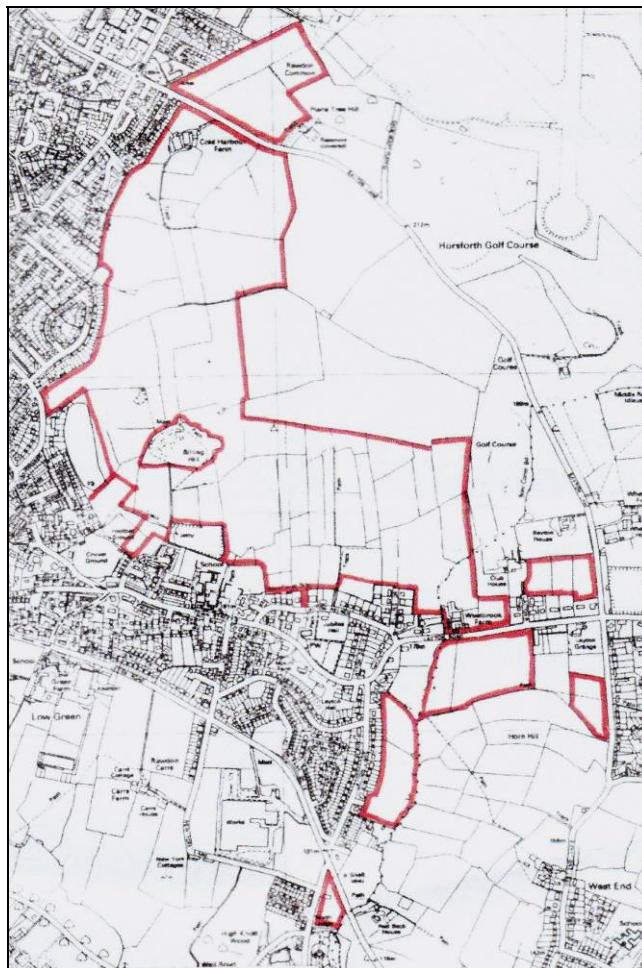


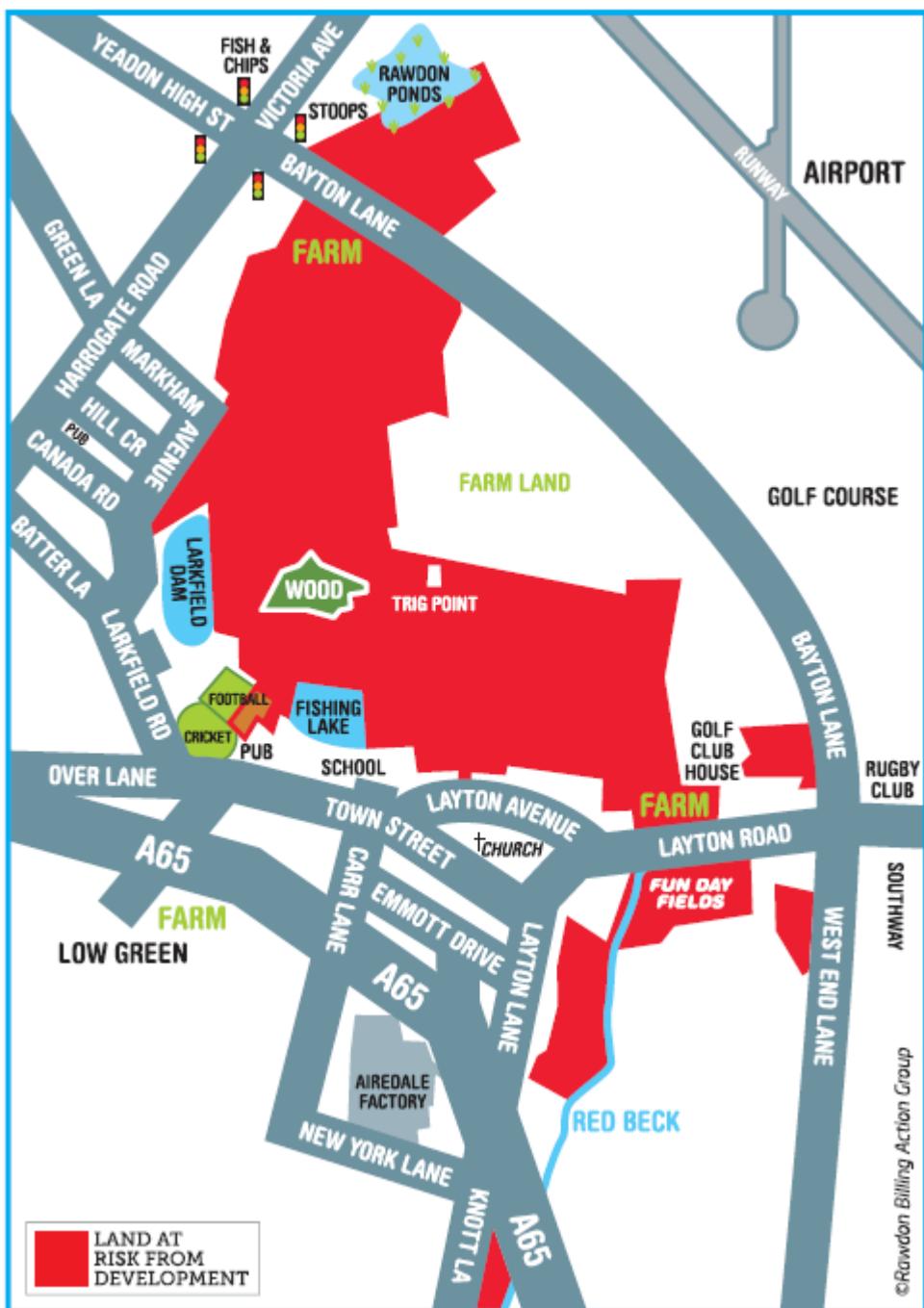
Figure 1: Plan of Rawdon Trust land ownership

1.2 The Rawdon Billing Action Group (RBAG)

As part of the preparation of the Local Development Framework, it is understood that Leeds City Council (LCC) will soon be undertaking a selective review of existing Green Belt allocations across the Leeds District to test whether their rationale for Green Belt allocation remains valid. This is in light of the need for LCC to prepare a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to provide site allocations and details to assist in the delivery of the spatial vision, objectives and policies of the LDF Core Strategy. Due to the overall scale of growth identified within the Core Strategy, a selective Green Belt review will be necessary to ensure that housing and employment targets can be achieved. The Site Allocations DPD 'Issues and Options' Report is due for publication in Autumn/Winter 2012 and thus it is understood that the Green Belt review will be undertaken prior to this to inform the process.

In response to this, the recent inclusion of the Rawdon Billing area within LCC's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update and the marketing of 220 acres of land for potential mixed use development opportunities by the landowner (the Rawdon Trust), the Rawdon Billing Action Group (RBAG) was formally established in March 2012.

RBAG is a community group, representative of the local Rawdon community, with an overarching aim to protect the Green Belt status of Rawdon Billing and associated land and to oppose any plans for its development. It is a group of committed local residents which is seeking to bring the Rawdon community together to protect the future of Rawdon Billing as a significant, much used and much valued green asset. RBAG does not have specific professional planning resource but is extremely keen to work alongside LCC and its planning team in its efforts to safeguard the Billing as Green Belt land. A plan defining the location of the area of land which we are seeking to protect the Green Belt status of is presented below (highlighted in red):





1.3 Purpose of this report

This report is intended to present a case to support the protection of the Green Belt status of Rawdon Billing and associated land. It assesses the role of the Billing and surrounding land in continuing to serve its Green Belt purpose against the criteria for Green Belt designation as identified with the recent National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is intended to catalyse a two-way dialogue process between RBAG and LCC to hopefully resolve the potential threat to the loss of the Green Belt designation on this land. RBAG would welcome any comments that LCC may have in respect of the content of this report.

2 Green Belt land and its role/function

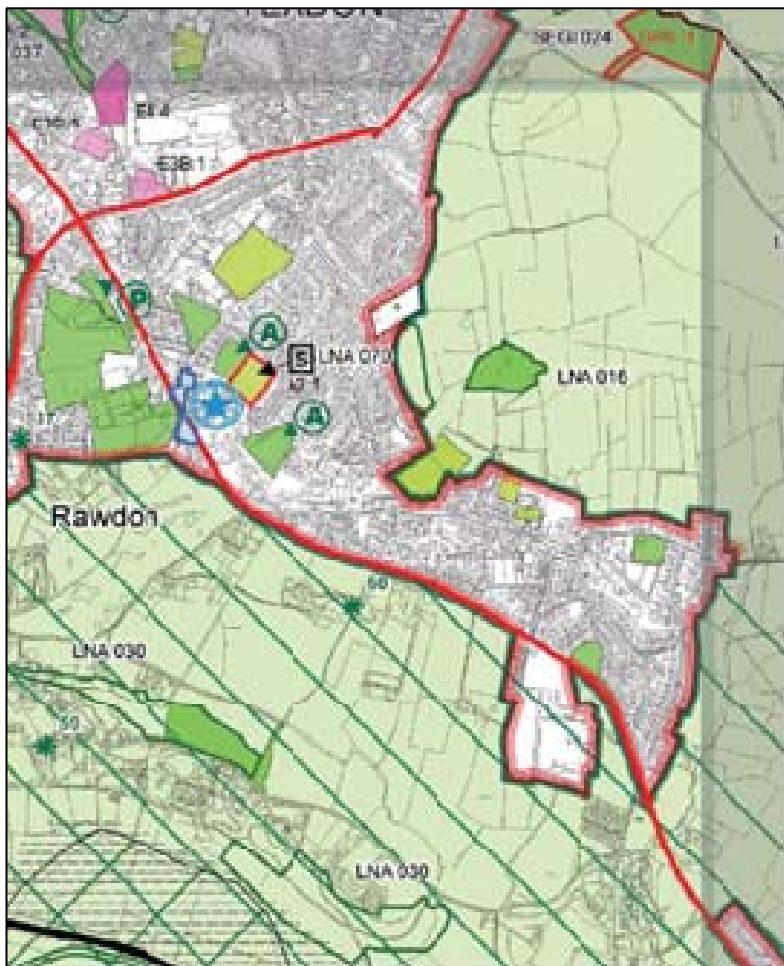
2.1 Planning Policy and Green Belt

A Green Belt is a statutory development plan designation. The Green Belt 'concept' was first formally proposed by the Greater London Regional Planning Committee in 1935 to prevent urban sprawl across London. The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 then allowed local authorities to include green belt proposals in their development plans. The Government's Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 2 document was first published in 1995 to advise local planning authorities on national Green Belt policy and its application within local planning policy frameworks. In March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced all previous national planning policy guidance. However, the five purposes of Green Belt designated land as set out within this national policy framework are no different to those set out within PPG2 and are presented below:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.2 Extent of the Rawdon Billing and associated land Green Belt

As per the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP), the Rawdon Green Belt boundary extends across the vast majority of the green space within the village. With the exception of a couple of small parcels of land, all of the Rawdon Billing and surrounding land currently falls within the boundary of the Green Belt, as presented below in Figure 2 in a plan extracted from the Leeds UDP Review 2006 (Map 14). This demonstrates the importance of this land in terms of its role in fulfilling the objectives of Green Belt designations.



N32 Green belt



3 Rawdon Billing and its Green Belt 'purpose'

3.1 Introduction

Rawdon Billing and its surrounding land was designated as Green Belt land (parts of it as recently as the 1980's) on the basis that it was considered to fulfil a critical role in preventing urban sprawl and the merging of settlements, as well as protecting the wider countryside from encroachment, safeguarding the historical character of Rawdon and promoting the regeneration of brownfield sites as a priority. These criteria have remained constant over the years and they are still referred to as the key criteria for Green Belt designation in the recent NPPF. This section seeks to explore the extent to which the Billing and surrounding land still serves its Green Belt 'purpose' and should therefore retain its Green Belt status in the context of these five key criteria.

3.1.1 ***Green Belt Objective 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas***

As a major urban conurbation, the Leeds Metropolitan District has experienced rapid urbanisation over the past few decades and this appears set to continue. Sub-national population projections identify a sustained period of growth in Leeds going forward. Leeds City Centre serves as the key economic driver of the wider Metropolitan District and is expanding as both a commercial and residential location. The urban 'core' is expanding outwards and the process of urban sprawl is already well under way. Moving in a North-Westerly direction from the City Centre, the once 'stand-alone' settlements of Hyde Park, Burley and Kirkstall have already been absorbed as part of the City's 'concrete environment'. The City Council-managed parkland around Kirkstall Abbey is arguably the first significant expanse of green space reached upon heading in a NW orientation from the City Centre along the A65 corridor. Beyond this, one quickly reaches the built up environment of Horsforth and then Rawdon, where the Green Belt land at the heart of this report forms the first significant expanse of more rural green space.

The Rawdon Green Belt therefore serves a critical role in breaking up the constant sprawl of built urban development. Once one enters Rawdon heading outwards from the City Centre, along the A65 radial route, there is a clear sense that the 'concrete jungle' ends and that Rawdon becomes a more defined and characterised settlement in its own right. The Green Belt land is critical in this in ensuring that there is a definitive 'break point' in the mass of urban development. In the absence of the Green Belt land, the urban sprawl would be likely to continue through Rawdon and beyond to settlements such as Menston and Burley in Wharfedale, which fall within the Bradford Metropolitan District. In this sense, the Leeds District would be fully built out in a North-Westerly direction right through to its borders with the Bradford District. Urban sprawl would therefore be a major issue, particularly given that this segment of the District, along the A65 Corridor, arguably comprises a more significant degree of green open space than many others. The Rawdon Green Belt land is therefore critical in preventing the Leeds District from becoming one large built up housing estate as a consequence of unrestricted urban sprawl.

The plan below in Figure 3 illustrates the important role that the Rawdon Billing area plays in preventing the outwards sprawl of Leeds City Centre. The blue lines indicate the extent of built-up area extending outwards from the City in a NW direction. It is evident from the satellite image that the Rawdon Billing Green Belt area (circled approximately in green) is the first significant expanse of green open space reached when moving outwards from the City Centre. Its role in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of large built up development and associated ribbon development is therefore absolutely critical.

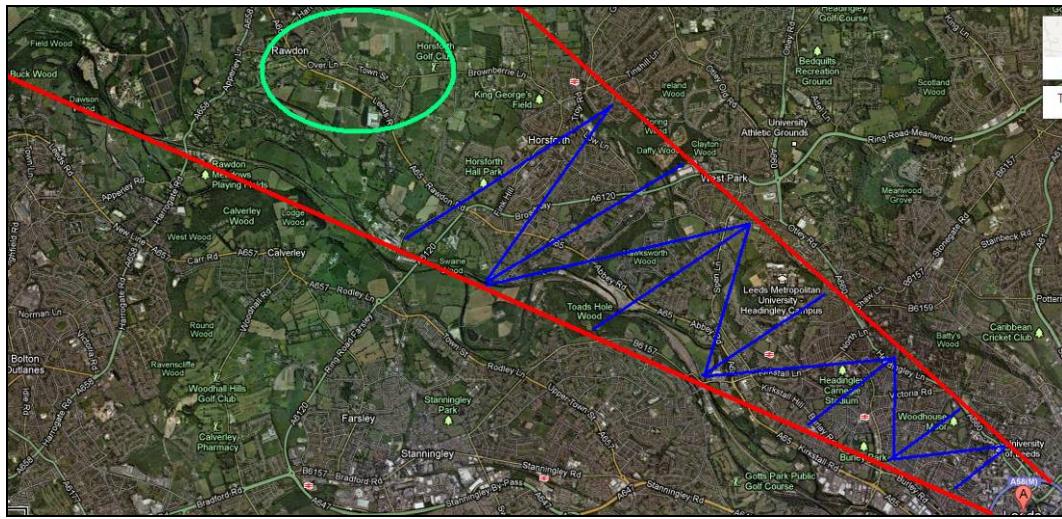


Figure 3: Satellite image depicting the extent of urban sprawl and the critical role of the Rawdon Green Belt in preventing further sprawl (Google Maps)

3.1.2 **Green Belt Objective 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another**

Despite being located within the former Aireborough District, as with Guiseley and Yeadon, Rawdon is very much a stand-alone settlement. Similarly, Horsforth is a settlement in its own right and all of these have their own individual historical roots and backgrounds which have resulted in the individual townscapes and village identities which are present today. There is an inherent risk that with continued processes of infill development and urban sprawl, these settlements will merge into one and their individual identities, landscapes and character areas will disappear. The plan below (figure 4) demonstrates spatially the clearly defined role that the Rawdon Billing and surrounding Green Belt land (circled approximately in green) has in ensuring that Rawdon, Yeadon and Horsforth do not become merged into one large settlement. It is evident that if its Green Belt status was lost, these historic and unique settlements would be merged into one. The Rawdon Billing Green Belt land is located right at the confluence of these three settlements and serves a major role in ensuring that these settlements are able to retain their own individual physical, economic and social characteristics. The Rawdon Billing Green Belt therefore continues to meet this critical objective of Green Belt land.

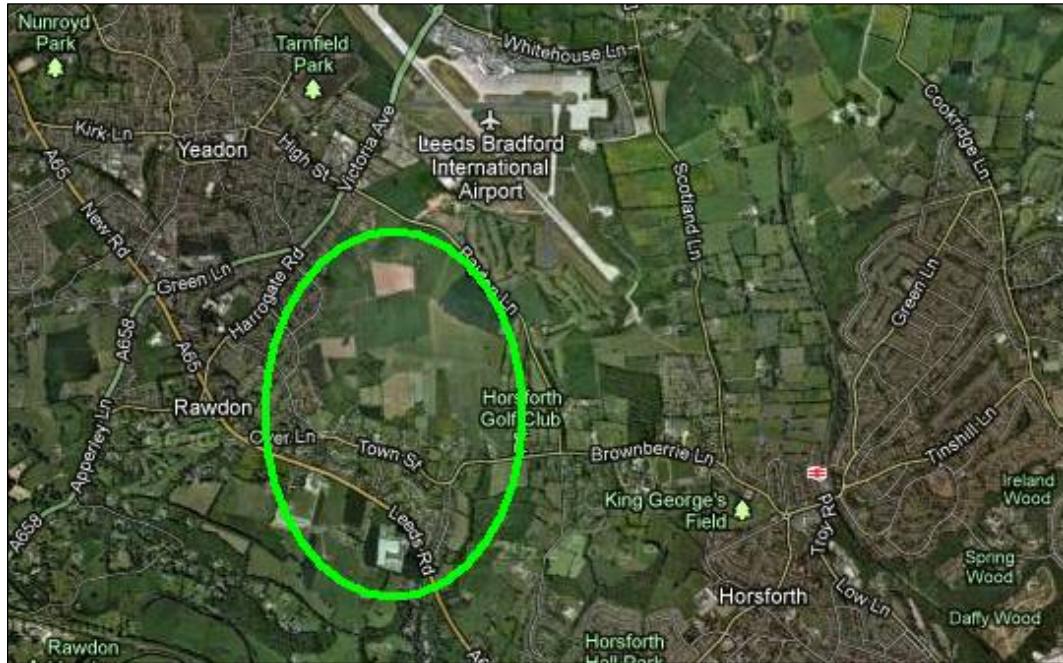


Figure 4: Role of the Green Belt in preventing neighbouring settlements from merging (Google Maps)

3.1.3 **Green Belt Objective 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

The Rawdon Billing and surrounding Green Belt land plays a critical role as a gateway to wider rural landscapes beyond. It could be reasonably stated that Rawdon is a semi-rural part of the Leeds District, but immediately north of Rawdon are what one might refer to as more rural parts, including areas beyond Leeds Bradford Airport, out to Carlton, Pool-in-Wharfedale and the Otley Chevin. The Rawdon Green Belt therefore serves an important purpose in preventing these rural areas from urban encroachment – it almost serves as a 'buffer zone' to ensure that the process of urban sprawl does not go on indefinitely. A satellite image to demonstrate this further is presented below in figure 5. This shows that heading in a northerly, north-easterly and north-westerly direction from the Rawdon Billing, there are significant expanses of green open countryside. The Green Belt designation currently plays an important role therefore in ensuring that large scale urban development does not gradually drift outwards in these directions, thereby safeguarding surrounding countryside.

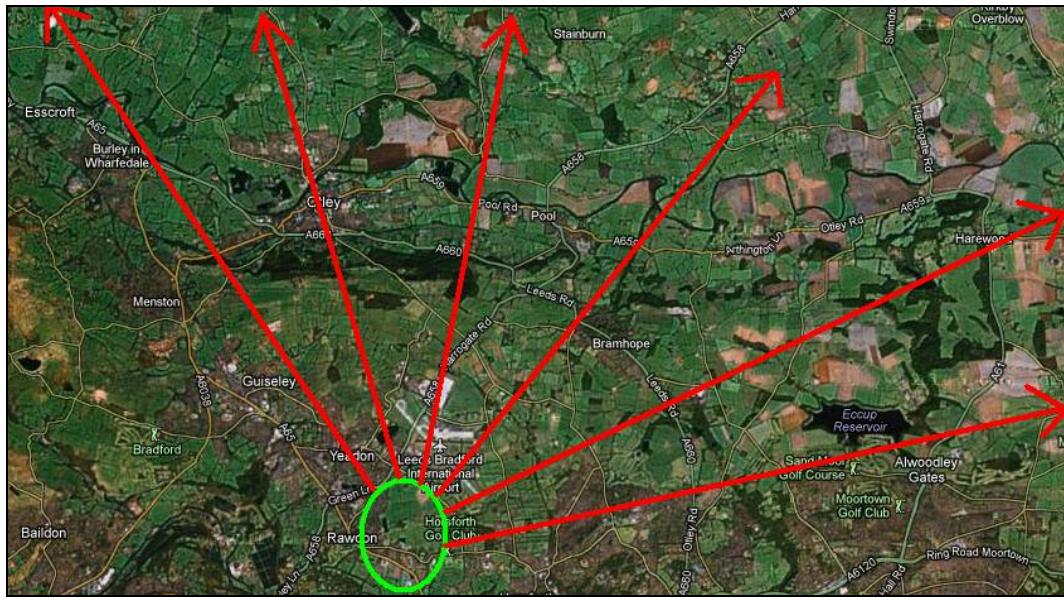


Figure 5: Role of Green Belt land in assisting in preventing encroachment into the 'countryside'

As well as protecting wider countryside landscapes and environments, Rawdon Billing and its surrounding land is a highly attractive and important physical feature of the Leeds landscape in its own right. It dominates the landscape across North West Leeds and can be seen from miles around. The rolling green fields, combined with the tree topped Billing Hill and water features provided through the Billing and Larkfield Dams make for a beautiful environment in its own right. The Billing offers extensive 360 degree, unspoilt views across the Aire Valley, Baildon Moor, Leeds City Centre, the Yorkshire Dales, the Peak District and beyond. The 'Rawdon Plateau' was identified within the Leeds Landscape Assessment (undertaken in 1994, but LCC website states that the findings still stand) as an important agricultural landscape for pastoral uses. A quote from William Cudworth, a renowned 19th Century local author and historian is presented below:

"Rawdon is singularly beautiful for situation.....backed by the wooded heights of the Billing and commanding a great stretch of country" (William Cudworth, 1876).

Some recent photographs which illustrate the natural beauty of Rawdon Billing and its immediate environs and the views to and from it are presented below in figure 6:



Figure 6: Views to and from the Rawdon Billing and surrounding Green Belt land

The Rawdon Billing area also has significant ecological value in its own right. It is home to Rawdon Ponds, an identified Site of Ecological Importance. A research report undertaken as part of this paper by West Yorkshire Ecology identifies that this 1.6ha ecologically important area is home to considerable amphibian interest with all five native amphibia breeding on the site, including good populations of great crested newt, a protected species. It states that "*Rawdon Ponds is one of the most important breeding sites for amphibians in West Yorkshire. Breeding records go back to the 1950's. The ponds also support a good range of aquatic and swamp communities including the regionally rare Oenanthe fistulosa and nationally scarce, Stratiotes aloides.*"

The Rawdon Billing area is home to a significant range of species of flora and fauna. It is in itself an ecosystem with significant nature conservation value. Some initial survey work has been undertaken by local wildlife enthusiasts as part of this exercise, to identify some examples of the rich and diverse species which prevail on the land around Rawdon Billing. The results of this are presented below:

Trees/hedgerows

Rawdon Billing and its immediate surrounding area are home to a wide variety of tree species. Initial tree surveys have identified the following species as being present, with some being over 50ft in height:

- Wych Elm
- Sycamore
- Willow
- Hawthorn
- Ash
- Cherry
- Oak

- Common Sallow
- Beech
- Silver Birch

Some of these trees are significant in size, with one particular mature Ash with a trunk diameter of in excess of 2 metres. In addition to these, the Billing area is also home to a range of mature and significant hedgerows, which provide habitats for a wide range of fauna.

Flora

The Billing area is also home to a wide range of flora, some of which are presented below including Hawthorn, Gorse, Lady's Smock, Cow parsley and Foxgloves.

Fauna

The following species can be seen on the Billing and surrounding land on a daily basis:

Fox	Common Newt	Curlew	Mistle Thrush
Stoat	Pheasant	Carriorn Crow	Song Thrush
Wood Mouse	Lapwing	Jackdaw	Robin
Mole	Red Kite	Wood Pigeon	Dunnock
Frog	Sparrow Hawk	Collared Dove	Chaffinch
Toad	Kestrel	Blackbird	Greenfinch
Great Tit	Blue Tit	Bullfinch	Goldfinch
Long-tailed Tit	Swallow	Black Cap	Peacock Butterfly
Coal Tit	House Martin	Wren	Red Admiral Butterfly
Painted Lady Butterfly	Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly	Meadow Brown Butterfly	Orange Tip Butterfly

Some of the above listed species are legally protected birds of prey and others are rare species, reflecting the ecological importance of the area.

3.1.4 *Green Belt Objective 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;*

Rawdon as a settlement was first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, with reference to c.700-800 acres of agricultural land. Various local historians have researched and documented key events since then and it is evident that Rawdon as it is today is an important historical settlement with many physical remnants of its historical past still remaining. The earliest evidence of human activity in Rawdon is a Bronze Age axe c2,600BC-700BC, found in the vicinity of Billing Hill. There are also reports of a gold torch being found in the surrounding area in 1780, probably dating back to the Iron Age (700BC-1st Century AD).

The core historical centre of Rawdon is focused around Town Street, which runs in parallel with the A65 below and Rawdon Billing above. Rawdon's Town Street today remains a reflection of its historical past, with many buildings standing testament to this. The streetscape is dominated by a mix of housing typologies, many of which are stone-built and date back to pre-Victorian eras. It comprises several key buildings of heritage significance, with St Peter's Church (dating back to 1647), Layton Hall and Rawdon Free School all being Grade II Listed. Other Grade II Listed buildings within close proximity to or with vistas across to the Billing include Layton Ghyll, Old Larkfield, Larkfield Cottage, Ivy Cottage and Woodleigh Hall. The wider village of Rawdon has many more listed buildings and also has four Conservation Areas, including Cragg Wood, Little London,

Little Moor and Low Green, brief outlines of which extracted from the Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plans are presented below:

- *Rawdon Little Moor* has an early 19th Century streetscape, made up of terraces and cottages to form a tightly built urban form. It is characterised by the triangular space of Little Moor Park itself. The Quaker influence in this area is especially important. The setting is tucked beneath the higher ground of Rawdon Billing. The oldest houses in the area are from the 17th Century and are Grade II listed. Today, the area has an independent retail offer that contributes positively to the area and enables Little Moor to compete as a welcome alternative to the nearby supermarkets. It creates its own unique identity through a mix of vibrant commercial activities.
- *Rawdon Little London* is made up of long rows of weavers' cottages to form a well defined tightly knit community, contrasted by the grand villas and large houses to the South of Micklefield Lane.
- *Rawdon Cragg Wood* covers a wealthy rural suburb of Victorian villas set in spacious wooded grounds developed in the second half of the 19th century. The site is largely situated on a steeply sloping heavily wooded valley side to the south side below the main village of Rawdon. The conservation area has been extended to cover some of the land being put forward for development by Rawdon Trust. The earliest evidence of human activity in this area are two stone axes found on the north side of Acacia Park Estate, thought to date back to the Neolithic Period (4000BC-2200BC). A number of Bronze Age finds have been recorded. The most significant is an upstanding carved gritstone rock. It is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Three wing flanged bronze axes were discovered in 1866.
- *Rawdon Low Green* is a small settlement showing evidence of occupation since the early 17th century. Three storey weaving cottages dominate the character of the settlement. It is located to the South of Rawdon village.

Rawdon is a historically important settlement within the conurbation of Leeds. First mentioned in the Domesday Book, it was once closely linked to the globally successful local textile industry and its current day built environment reflects this. It has managed to retain its historical 'look and feel' and this remains a key driver of its attractiveness as a predominantly residential location today. Rawdon Billing, as such a prominent physical feature within the village landscape, is a critical part of the setting and special character of Rawdon. Much of the available literature on Rawdon's history refers to the Billing or Billing Hill and it clearly has been and critically still is a significant part of the village and village life. Several key listed buildings enjoy unspoilt views across to the Billing and associated farmland, not least the historically important St Peter's Church. Town Street, which runs in parallel to the base of the Billing, is the core of what is known today as 'Old Rawdon'. In the absence of the green and tranquil environment that is provided by the Billing, there is no doubt that the character and setting of this key historical area would be harmed.

3.1.5 *Green Belt Objective 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

In 1998, the National Land Use Database was set up and it highlighted that 58,000 hectares of brownfield land was unused or potentially available for development in

England at that time. Recent government objectives have initiated a move towards the redevelopment of brownfield land ahead of greenfield sites (e.g. the government target of 60% of new housing being developed on brownfield sites by 2008) to relieve the pressure on the countryside and green belt areas. This call for prioritising the redevelopment of brownfield sites was also confirmed in the recently published NPPF, which replaces all previous national planning policy guidance. This makes it clear that relevant policies such as those protecting greenbelt, cannot be overridden by presumption and guarantees robust protection for our natural environment. The policy focus therefore retains a presumption in favour of development on brownfield sites.

Leeds District has a significant amount of brownfield land, given its large urban area and former industrial past. This has resulted in a large number of now derelict brownfield sites, many of which still comprise remnants of the former textile-related activities which Leeds was once globally renowned for. The most recent (September 2011) Leeds City Council Housing Monitor Report identifies that Leeds has "**substantial reserves of brownfield land**" and states that in recent years a very high proportion of development in the District has occurred on brownfield land – over 80% of development has been brownfield in every quarter since March 2002 and more recently the proportion has exceeded 90%. A 2011 Leeds Housing Report states that a very high proportion (94%) of gross new dwellings between 2006/07 to 2010/11 have been completed on previously developed land and that "**the Council continues to attach considerable importance to maintaining these high rates of brownfield development, which will remain a prime objective within the new Core Strategy and Local Development Framework**"¹.

The September 2011 Housing Monitor Report identifies that as at March 2011, there was capacity for an additional 28,000 new dwellings across the Leeds District through either allocated developments or windfall supply. 21,000 of these already have either outline or detailed planning permission and only 1,600 of these were under construction. Of the capacity of 28,000 dwellings, 20,000 were on brownfield sites. This data is presented in the table below in figure 7 (taken from the Monitor Report) and suggests that **there is already capacity for a further c.20,000 new dwellings in the Leeds District on brownfield sites**. Surely these should be prioritised ahead of removing Green Belt designations to deliver the required level of housing?

Table 2: Outstanding capacity at 31 March 2011

Site	Planning Permission			Development Status		Previous Use		Total
	None	Outline	Detailed	Under con	Not yet started	B'field	G'field	
H4 city centre	0	3003	3336	121	6218	6339	0	6339
H4 rest of MUA	0	5483	5389	995	9877	10635	237	10872
H4 outside MUA	0	8	807	203	572	767	48	815
Total	0	8494	9532	1319	16667	17741	285	18026
H3-1	294	149	2220	337	2326	2083	580	2663
H3-2	1058	540	89	0	1689	11	1676	1687
H3-3	5225	474	244	7	2575	0	5943	5943
Total	6577	1163	2553	344	6590	2094	8199	10293
Total land	6577	9657	12085	1663	23257	19835	8484	28319

Figure 7: Residential dwelling capacity in Leeds (September 2011 Housing Monitor Report)

¹ <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/LEH%202011%20Housing.pdf>

There are a plethora of brownfield sites across the City which could lend themselves to being redeveloped to accommodate new residential development to ensure that there is sufficient supply to meet both current and projected future needs. The Leeds City Council SHLAA (Updated 2011) lists a number of brownfield sites across the City which could have potential to be redeveloped for residential use. Some examples of these are outlined below:

- Kirkstall Road, Yorkshire Chemicals Plc
Gross Area - 5.932 ha
Capacity - 200 dwellings
- Black Bull Street - Yorkshire Chemicals Plc (The Works)
Gross Area - 3.313 ha
Capacity - 707 dwellings
- Clarence Road, former Hydro Works
Gross Area - 2.957 ha
Capacity - 623 dwellings
- Sweet Street West (land south of) Holbeck
Gross Area - 3.08
Capacity – 830 dwellings

A number of brownfield sites have also been identified in the SHLAA along the A65 corridor; some of which fall within Aireborough, for example:

- Abbey Road, Leeds 5 - Kirkstall Forge
Gross Area - 17.01 ha
Capacity - 1,385 dwellings
- Springfield Road, Guiseley - Springhead Mills
Gross Area - 1.874 ha
Capacity - 67 dwellings
- Green Lane, Yeadon – Land to the rear of Naylor Jennings Mill
Gross Area – 4.24 ha
Capacity – 126 dwellings
- Calverley Lane, Horsforth – Clariant site
Gross Area – 0.492
Capacity – 512 dwellings

A further site, although not mentioned in the current SHLAA has also been identified at Low Hall Road, Horsforth/Rawdon (Riverside Mills). Outline planning consent has been granted on 18 acres of former industrial premises for a development comprising 150 dwellings.

There are also a range of strategic development schemes being promoted across the Leeds District and supported by Leeds City Council, all of which promote some form of large-scale residential development on largely brownfield sites. Some examples of these are presented below:

- Aire Valley** - contains over 400 hectares of development land, a lot of which is brownfield. Fully developed, the area could support up to 40,000 new jobs and 12,000 new homes.

- **Holbeck Urban Village** – on the southern edge of the City Centre, this former industrial area is being regenerated and has been a success to date with the likes of the Round Foundry Media Centre etc surrounded by a high quality city living offer. However, there remains a significant expanse of brownfield sites which are yet to be developed.
- **East and South East Leeds (EASEL)** – a £1.3bn regeneration initiative targeting deprived neighbourhoods in East Leeds. Potential for a significant number of new homes on brownfield land.

3.1.6 **Summary**

The land around Rawdon Billing is continuing to serve the same Green Belt purpose as it did when it was first allocated as Green Belt land. Arguably, its purpose and role as Green Belt land has intensified given the significant urbanisation of the Leeds District over the past few decades. The gradual outwards urban sprawl of Leeds and Bradford City Centres and the significant number of new residential developments that have been delivered in the Rawdon-Horsforth-Yeadon area have meant that the role of the Green Belt is now more important than ever. Infill developments have contributed to a loss of identity of traditional settlements as they merge with others and valuable greenfield land has already been lost in favour of residential development across the local area.

The Rawdon Billing Green Belt is one of the first major expanses of green space that is reached upon travelling outwards from Leeds City Centre in a North Westerly orientation along the A65 Corridor, despite being 7 miles away. It is therefore critical in preventing this process of urban sprawl from absorbing further green space. It serves a critical role in preventing the merging together of Rawdon, Yeadon and Horsforth, three important and historical settlements in their own right. If its Green Belt status was lost, the likely residential development that would result on the site would most certainly result in the merger of these and therefore the loss of key character settlements. The land serves a key role as a gateway site to the wider ‘countryside’ and in therefore preventing encroachment on to this. It is also important ‘countryside’ in its own right, being home to wide range of flora and fauna as well as representing a major feature of the physical landscape, visible from miles around. There are a significant number of major and readily available brownfield sites across the Leeds District which should be prioritised for development ahead of removing Green Belt designations, particularly on sites such as this which are in active economic use (see Section 4). Since the credit crunch of 2007 and the subsequent lack of property development due to bank lending/occupier demand issues, brownfield site redevelopment activity has been minimal and the case for promoting development on brownfield land has never been stronger than now. Retaining the Green Belt status of major sites such as Rawdon Billing would encourage the redevelopment of these derelict and underutilised brownfield sites as a priority.

4 Critical role of Rawdon Billing as a green asset

4.1 Introduction

The previous section has identified how the Billing and surrounding land continues to serve its Green Belt purpose as per the official definition of 'Green Belt' land from the NPPF. However, there are a range of other key factors which support the case for the continued designation of its Green Belt status which fall outside of the NPPF guidance but which are considered critical considerations in the decision making process, as presented in this section.

4.2 Physical role

The commanding physical dominance of Rawdon Billing within the Leeds and Bradford landscape cannot be underestimated. It can be seen from miles around and is a landmark in its own right. It has a trig point at its summit and is an integral part of Leeds' green environment, a significant amount of which has already been lost to new development. The Billing and immediate surrounding area are what defines Rawdon as a settlement and have done for centuries. It rises to a height of 231m and allows 360 degree panoramic views from the summit as far as York Minster and the Peak District.

Following the development and expansion of Leeds Bradford International Airport into a major regional airport, the importance of the role of Rawdon Billing and its surrounding Green Belt land has increased, as it now serves as a critical 'green' physical barrier between the peaceful residential area of Rawdon and the airport operations. The expansion of the airport has already absorbed a significant quantum of Rawdon and Yeadon's natural rural environment, but Rawdon Billing and the surrounding land continue to provide a green buffer zone which assists to minimise the physical encroachment of the airport. However, if this area was to be developed, then Rawdon would be left with nothing at all from a rural green space perspective.

4.3 Socio-economic role

Existing economic activity



The vast majority of the spatial extent of the Rawdon Billing and surrounding area Green Belt land is in active economic use for agricultural purposes. It is farmed by three farm businesses which depend on this significant expanse of land for the purposes of their farming operations and therefore their livelihoods. The land is used for both cattle and sheep grazing as well as to support the growth of livestock fodder. For one particular farmer, this land represents the full extent of his farm land and if it was to be developed then this particular farmer would no longer be able to continue his farming operations.

In total, it is considered that the land supports in the region of circa 5 FTE employees in relation to its agricultural use.

Other economic uses on or around the land include a commercial fly-fishing operation on Billing Dam, which is open for both annual memberships and day tickets. This is operational during the spring/summer/autumn months and therefore supports 0.75 FTE employees, given its seasonal opening.

Recreational uses

Unlike a significant proportion of Green Belt designated land across the Leeds District, the Rawdon Billing and surrounding land is actively used for recreational purposes at all times of the day by a wide range of people. It is extremely well utilised and for decades has been used both by residents of Rawdon and also those from further afield, who drive to the area to enjoy its natural beauty and opportunities for recreation. Some examples of daily recreational users on the land include dog-walkers, ramblers, runners and ornithologists.



The Brownlee brothers, both of which are international triathletes gaining Gold and Bronze medals in the recent 2012 Olympics, regularly use the public footpaths for training purposes and have provided the following response in relation to a question posed to them regarding the potential loss of the Billing's Green Belt status:

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Richard Downey <richard@profsports.com>
Date: Mon, Jun 18, 2012 at 7:12 AM
Subject: RE: The Billing, Rawdon near Leeds
To: Helen Tomlin <helentomlin8@gmail.com>

Helen

Alistair and Jonathan both feel very strongly about this !
I had an immediate response from them:



We train on Rawdon Billing all the time ! It's not only a wonderful open upland oasis surrounded by suburbia which is a pleasure to run around, but it's a genuine land mark be seen from miles around. It's development would be disastrous for the local community and for those who can see this iconic hill in the surrounding area.

Please let me know if there is anything else the brothers can do.

Regards
Richard

Richard Downey
Professional Sports Group

The land is also used for more obscure recreational uses including by falconers for training their birds of prey and at certain times of the year, St Peter's Church in Rawdon holds religious events on the land.

It is used extensively as an area for people to take part in physical activity and the health benefits attributable to the green space are therefore considered significant. There are numerous public footpaths and public rights of way across the land and this enables users to enjoy the benefits of the land without disturbing the surrounding agricultural activity.

Other recreational users of the land include the Rawdon Model Boat Club, which operates from a purpose-built facility on Larkfield Dam (there is also a coarse fishing operation on this body of water). This is a volunteer-run operation which has an

extensive list of members making use of the natural water asset. Rawdon Football Club also has its home base on a site within the Green Belt boundary.

Educational uses

The Rawdon Billing and associated land is used regularly for educational purposes, particularly by St Peters Primary School, which borders the Green Belt boundary. The school regularly uses the land for the purposes of enabling its pupils to explore the natural environment and to learn about wildlife ecosystems and habitats, to supplement indoor teaching methods in accordance with the National Curriculum. The school also stages outdoor picnics on the land during the summer months.



Pupils from Rawdon St Peters having an outdoor science lesson on the Billing:

4.4 Existence role

Rawdon Billing and its surrounding Green Belt land is an integral part of community life within Rawdon and its neighbouring settlements. It provides Rawdon with a sense of identity and a 'unique selling point' over other settlements and this is something which local residents and also those from outside Rawdon who use the land, are extremely proud of. It has a significant level of 'existence' value. There are people who do not necessarily frequent the land on a regular basis for a whole range of reasons, but who have categorically stated that if the green environment that it provides was to be lost, then they would genuinely miss it. The very fact that it exists in such a prominent and unspoilt position and has done for centuries, is enough to have an extremely positive impact upon the day-to-day lives of so many people.

4.5 Property market role

As initial findings from survey work undertaken with local residents has identified, the green environment provided by Rawdon Billing and its surrounding fields was one of the primary reasons for many people choosing to reside in Rawdon. The open green space is viewed by many in the same way as OfSTED rated 'Excellent' educational provision and rail station access is from a property market perspective. Homes are marketed and sold in the local area based upon their proximity to the Billing and surrounding Green Belt land and some extracts from local homes currently being marketed through residential property agents with specific reference to the Green Belt land are outlined below:

"with views over the Billing"

"open countryside with pleasant walks is also on hand"

"boasting fantastic views"

"close to all local amenities, schools and walks for the Billing"

"the property is close to open fields"



“with views to the rear and some superb local walks into the local countryside”.

The Rawdon Billing Green Belt therefore plays a critical role in providing the attractive residential setting which characterises Rawdon as a settlement and ensures that its property prices remain above average for the District and that it remains a highly desirable location in which to live.

5 Critical issues associated with loss of Green Belt Status

5.1 Introduction

One of the main considerations in any proposed development is the effect that increased traffic generated by the development would have on the local road network and the transport links available to the development. This section presents some of the existing critical road infrastructure issues and the extent to which the loss of the Green Belt and assumed residential development as a consequence of this could further worsen this position.

5.2 Impact on local road network

The main access roads surrounding Rawdon Billing and its associated Green Belt Land are the A658 Harrogate Road, A65, Bayton Lane, Layton Road and Layton Lane. Bayton Lane is a narrow single carriageway road, little more than a country lane, sandwiched between Horsforth Golf Club and Rawdon Billing. It links Layton Road with the A658 Harrogate Road and carries a large amount of airport traffic to and from the A65. Layton Lane is a steep, relatively narrow, single carriageway road that is bordered on both sides by residential housing and links Layton Road with A65. Residential parking takes place on the road on both sides and often results in traffic only being able to move in a single direction at any given time.

A number of traffic studies have been undertaken on the A65 to record the traffic flow, at least two of which include the A65 Transport Assessment May 2005² and A65/A660 Traffic Flow February 2007³. The 2005 Study identifies that the A65 is recorded as the 4th busiest radial route into Leeds, with 45,000 vehicles all day on a weekday in a 2 way flow. However, the other radial routes that are busier than the A65 are all dual carriageways and the A65 is a single carriageway road. These studies, together with other traffic studies undertaken across other parts of Leeds show that although all transport corridors into Leeds suffer congestion, ***the A65 and A660 are substantially more congested than other radial routes into the city centre. In particular, the A65 has been identified as one of the worst affected transport corridors in Leeds for having poor accessibility and poor journey times to Leeds City Centre***⁴.

The A65 Transport Assessments May 2005 and Feb 2007 findings are that the A65 is already at capacity, with 1,950 vehicles per hour at the cordon in bound to Leeds at peak flow times between 0700-0900. This is without the inclusion of traffic that will be generated by developments along the A65 corridor in close vicinity to Rawdon Billing that have already gained planning approval, including the Kirkstall Forge Development, the BHS/Alders Development and the Clariant Site Development at Rodley/Horsforth. These developments have estimated an additional 3,310 2 way peak hour trips being undertaken. If a further major development were to be added that fed onto the A65, this would clearly cause significant congestion problems to a road system already considered to be at capacity.

Problem junctions where congestion is high were also noted in the close proximity of Rawdon, with the A6120/A65 Outer Ring Road roundabout showing long queues at peak

² A65 Transport Assessment – May 2005

³ A65 Traffic Flows – Feb 2007

⁴ "Investing in Public Transport – A framework for Leeds" – March 2009; Leeds City Council & Metro

times coming off all roads leading onto the roundabout. In particular, this was highlighted as being the highest ranked individual site for concern in the 2005 study. The A65 Micklefield Lane/Harrogate Road traffic lights were also identified as a significant congestion point, thought largely due to airport traffic turning left or right onto the A65. Bayton Lane was identified in the 2005 Transport Assessment as being a problem due to the high number of speed related accidents being recorded. In the March 2009 "Investing in public transport – A framework for Leeds" document (by Metro & Leeds City Council), ***the A65 is still identified as one of the worst affected road corridors for congestion.*** The studies also highlight the fact that the demand for travel is increasing. The average car ownership level in West Yorkshire increased by 20% over the 10 year period from 1991-2001. This trend is in addition to the forecast growth in households which will impact upwards on car ownership levels in the future.

Earlier this year, Wharfedale and Airedale Review Development (WARD) Yorkshire commissioned Met Engineering to undertake a study into the A65 and its traffic flows. This identified that that the A65 (Leeds to Ilkley) and A658 (Harrogate/airport road) are already over capacity. Some of the causes of this were identified as the large numbers of new dwellings since 1995 in the area and the major expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport. The report concluded that 'the A65 is simply unfit for the volume of traffic now using it on weekdays and at weekends, and any further increase in traffic will see further reductions in traffic flow speeds, higher levels of congestion and more rat-running through residential areas.'

5.3 Impact of Leeds-Bradford Airport

In 2011, Leeds Bradford Airport was considered to be the 16th largest airport in the UK in terms of passenger throughput, with approx. 3 million passengers. Public Service buses are identified as meeting 4% of trips made to the airport, with minibuses and coaches meeting a further demand of 12%. The remaining 84% of trips are made by car (A65 Traffic Assessment, May 2005). Forecasts for passenger numbers in the 2005-2016 Leeds-Bradford Airport Masterplan are 5.1 million by 2016 and 8.2 million by 2030. These projections alone will worsen conditions on the A65 and surrounding roads and this does not take account of any potential residential development site situated close to the airport at Rawdon Billing.

5.4 Lack of public transport connectivity

5.4.1 Rail Links

The nearest rail links to Rawdon Billing and its surrounding green belt are Horsforth and Guiseley train stations. Horsforth train station is approximately 1.8 miles from Rawdon Town Street and Guiseley train station is approximately 2.8 miles from Rawdon Town Street. The majority of people based in Rawdon that would use the train stations in either Horsforth or Guiseley would therefore have to use a car or bus to get to the train station. The use of cars before catching the train obviously adds to road usage, particularly if the Guiseley train station is used since this would entail using the already congested A65. However, the roads to Horsforth train station from Rawdon are narrow residential roads that are busy at peak times, with significant congestion occurring at the roundabout with Station Road/Brownberrie Lane at peak times.

A further problem with both train stations is the ability for a rail user to park their vehicle having arrived by car. Horsforth car park has very limited car parking space with already many passengers having to park considerable walking distances down Low Lane in order

to find a car parking space. The densely arranged residential and commercial properties in the area of Horsforth train station would appear to make expansion of the train station car parking facilities unlikely, such that lack of car parking facilities will remain an ongoing problem in the future. Guiseley train station car park, although larger than Horsforth train station car park, has a similar problem, with local residential streets being used to support the car parking facilities of the train station.

The bus journey from Victoria Avenue/Bayton Lane to either Horsforth or Guiseley train station takes, on average, approx. 13-20 minutes. This is before the commute time and waiting times of the train are taken into account. This potential commute travel time to get from Rawdon to Leeds or Bradford is therefore significantly longer than the commute time from other local communities to Leeds or Bradford.

Notwithstanding the above, the Harrogate Line (on which Horsforth train station is located) and the Airedale/Wharfedale Lines (Skipton/Illkley) (on which Guiseley train station is located) are considered two of the worst rail corridors into Leeds city centre for crowded rail services and inadequate parking facilities at the stations (A65 Traffic Flows Report, Feb 2007).

5.4.2 **Bus Links**

Since most buses travelling from Rawdon to Leeds city centre use the A65, the congestion problems associated with road use on A65, obviously have a knock on effect on bus journey times. This makes bus travel from Rawdon to Leeds City Centre unattractive. Services from Rawdon to Bradford are not much better. The A65 bus corridor has been identified as one of the worst affected corridors across Leeds, in particular with the routes highlighted as being crowded with unreliable bus services (A65 Traffic Flows Report, Feb 2007).

5.5 **Impact on local service provision**

Discussions with the local primary schools (Rawdon St Peters, Rawdon Littlemoor and Rufford Park) have confirmed that they are already at capacity and that based on proposed intake levels for the forthcoming academic year, are all oversubscribed. There was a clear message that if further residential development was to proceed in the area that there would be a significant requirement for capital investment to support the major expansion of existing schools or even the development of new schools to cater for this.

5.6 **Summary**

It is clearly apparent from the transport studies undertaken on the roads and rail links surrounding the Rawdon Billing and its associated Green Belt land that any significant new development in this locality would put significant strain on the transport links that are already considered to be at capacity by the different transport authorities in Leeds. The infrastructure that is currently in place is not sufficient to cater for significant new residential development and critically the A65 is already one of the most congested routes to and from Leeds City Centre. If the Green Belt status of the land in question was removed, it would be likely to come forward for residential development at some point in the future, most likely orientated towards family/executive housing. A large proportion of these dwellers are most likely to commute into Leeds or Bradford for work purposes and this would make the congestion worse. Funding for new rail stations has been approved at Apperley Bridge and Kirkstall Forge but these are unlikely to benefit Rawdon residents given their distances from the settlement. On this basis, large scale residential development in Rawdon would not represent sustainable development.

6 Summary

The Green Belt designation of Rawdon Billing and its surrounding land should not be removed for the following reasons:

- The land continues to serve all five purposes of Green Belt land as defined within the NPPF
- Rawdon Billing and its surrounding land is a significant physical landmark within the Leeds District
- The land is in active economic use and is a major recreational asset in constant use for this purpose
- Rawdon Billing and surrounding land defines Rawdon as a settlement and provides it with a distinct USP. Rawdon's distinctiveness is at risk – it would become just another large housing estate if it lost this green asset
- The local infrastructure is not sufficient to cater for major new residential development, particularly given the current A65 congestion issues
- Rawdon is a sustainable village location in its own right, the village 'works' – why upset this balance?
- Rawdon has already sacrificed green land for development at the Airport and around Larkfield Dam
- There are other more appropriate, suitable and deliverable sites for residential development within Aireborough and the Leeds District which are not designated as Green Belt – many of which are brownfield sites
- There is significant local support for its Green Belt status to be retained (see pictures below):





Appendix I

Extracts from the Survey findings

[A survey was distributed amongst Rawdon residents asking them their views on the Rawdon Billing and associated land and to comment on what they used it for, how often they frequented it and any comments they have in relation to the removal of its Green Belt Status. Over 300 responses were received and a random selection of extracts from these are presented overleaf]



Comments from Rawdon residents

'I need the Billing for exercise and mental health-the green space helps keep me calm'

'If the Billing is developed it would destroy Rawdon Village...I would certainly move away.'

'It would be a huge loss to the community, changing the environment forever. The Billing is a landmark and focus for exercise and walking, and I would hate it to be damaged.'

'I have big concerns about road traffic and the impact of development on village infrastructure.'

'We use the Billing to walk and talk with friends, have picnics with the children and go sledging when it is snowy.'

'The Billing and surrounding land has been used for generations of local residents and should be conserved forever with a blanket bar on development.'

'In recent years the run off of water from the Billing has caused flooding in Markham Avenue, and beyond, notably on 12th June 2004 and June 25th 2007. The A658 Harrogate Road was closed for a while, by the police, and at least one property as far as Green Lane was affected. Any development is very likely to increase the run off, as there will be a smaller area of land to soak up the rain, and the existing water table could be seriously disrupted.'

'Quality of life in Rawdon is already diminished through increased traffic and over-population. Keeping our green spaces is essential-especially the Billing, which is a very special landmark.'

'The green fields and trees of the Billing are treasured by a much wider community than the local Rawdoners. From the top, the views are outstanding, and conversely, the fields and wooded summit can be seen from miles around. Apart from any effect that building would have aesthetically, the ecology of the area would be ruined.'

'This would be a travesty as the Billing is the hub of the Rawdon community. It's also a beautiful place to spend time and has lots of wildlife and animal habitats. I've lived in Rawdon for 12 years and have walked my dog there nearly every day. My daughter has also grown up looking out over the Billing and loves watching the foxes and other wildlife.'

'The possibility of the Billing being sold for housing development runs counter to the underlying reason for Green Belt land. It seems to make no environmental sense at all and would only lead to greater congestion/frustration for all concerned. I suspect the people selling the land will not be buying a house there themselves!'

'The Billing being sold will change a beautiful village into another meaningless town. It will no longer be a lovely little village.'

'This area must be kept natural. We need room to breathe.' One of the joys of a Billing walk is taking a bit of extra time to spot the wildlife.'

'There is so much history on the Billing and it would be a shame to lose it. The quarries on the Billing date from mediaeval times to the beginning of the 20th century (the mediaeval ones are the shallow ones); the remains of the mediaeval open field can be seen on land to the east of the Billing. The Billing and surrounding land is on the Horsforth coal seam and is full of bell pits, many of which are unmarked and unknown until they suddenly open up revealing thirty foot holes, as happened about thirty years ago in the field between Knott Lane and the A65.'



Appendix II

Letters of support from the Headteacher and pupils of St Peters School, Rawdon



Rawdon St. Peter's

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Unlocking every child's potential.

Rawdon St. Peter's CofE Primary School
Town Street
Rawdon
Leeds
LS19 6PP

Telephone 0113 2504201
email office@rawdonstpeters.org
www.rawdonstpeters.org

Headteacher Caroline Sibson

Rawdon Billing Action Group
FAO Briony Spandler

28 June 2012

Dear Mrs Spandler

As per my recent email, I wish to support your campaign to keep Rawdon Billing and surrounding countryside within green belt status.

The children at Rawdon St Peter's School use the Billing for a range of educational and recreational activities and love to explore and investigate the area.

Our younger pupils use it often to explore the local area, wildlife habitats and to observe seasonal changes as part of the curriculum. This is fantastic for us as we can access the Billing without having to cross roads or get on a bus!

Some of our pupils' most memorable celebrations have taken place on the Billing, for example, the Millennium picnic and the Royal Wedding Celebrations when pupils picnicked, played games, danced and sang.

Good luck with your campaign.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Sibson
Headteacher



Stephen Lawrence
EDUCATION FOUNDATION



Dear sir/madam

I am writing to tell you my concerns about the billing potentially turning into brown belt land.

In my opinion I think the billing should not be turned into brown belt and should remain green belt land, because if it turns into brown belt land people could potentially build on this beauty spot.

The reasons for me thinking this are, firstly it would stop local residents using it for running, walking and sledging at their leisure which would mean people would have to go further a field to go for walks and other leisurely things like running and sledging.

Also if building did go ahead on the billing it would disrupt local residents of going about their daily business because of all the horrendous noise and may also distract school children from their work.

Another reason is the infrastructure (e.g traffic, pipes and energy.) would not be able to cope with so many people and this would also affect the local schools as so many people would not be able to fit into the small schools.

As well as this it would also effect the environment in a bad way as more houses means more energy being used. This means animals will lose their habitats meaning that they will not survive as long.

Another reason this is a bad idea is because road congestions on the already busy roads of Rawdon would become worse. This will lead to lots more accidents and more people will get harmed.

These facts show that it would be devastating to build on the billing and would cause many problems.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing about the proposed housing estate to replace the Rawdon Billing.

Personally, I feel that the Rawdon Billing should remain Green Belt land and should under no circumstances be developed on.

Firstly, the environment would be effected. If plans went ahead it would be demolishing a beautiful expanse of land, home to much wildlife. Destroying habitats will reduce the amount of species we can see locally. Another environmental issue is the carbon footprint; the houses that could be built will need power, water and most will have cars, which need either unleaded petrol or diesel. All this creates CO2



emissions and other greenhouse gasses which create holes in the ozone layer and a bigger carbon footprint.

Also, the impact on the surrounding areas would be devastating. The road would be congested with cars and other transport, even if you built more. The increased population would mean more cars which would also create more accidents consequently it would become unsafe for children to cross roads.

In addition to that, if it goes ahead, the farmers on the Billing would have nowhere for their livestock to graze. The consequence would be that the local pubs and shops would have to travel to get the meat they sell to customers.

Moreover, the local, family-owned businesses could go either way - they could get a flood of new customers, or they could go bust (if shops are built, people might go to the new ones instead).

Finally, the recreational uses of the Billing will all disappear. Many children and adults use the Billing for dog-walking, playing and in winter sledging. This will have a massive impact on the local area as local citizens will have to drive places, as a result this would create CO₂ consequently more pollution will be made. As well as having an environmental impact it will also have an impact on children and their parents because sledging and other activities will no longer be able to be on a local beauty spot therefore children will not be able to have fun doing activities on a daily basis.

To sum up building on the billing would create environmental and public issues. For these reasons I strongly believe that building on a billing is a bad idea.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to express our concerns about the issue of potentially developing on, what is currently greenbelt land, the billing. It is in our opinion that we should not build on the billing, it is a horrific murder to the heart of our village that has been there for thousands of years and we hope thousands more!

Building on the billing would take away a key point of our town and disturb our quaint lives.

The reasons for us thinking this are, firstly, if you build on the billing it will create much more pollution because there will be many more cars on the small roads of Rawdon. This will create heavy traffic on the roads of Yeadon, Horsforth, Guiseley and Rawdon, as well as adding to the large number of accidents already caused on the congested roads.

Another reason we are against this is that if they build more shops it will affect local businesses that have been inputting to our community for many years and we hope many more to come.



In addition to this many peoples daily activities will have to change due to the building of the village on the hill spoiling land that is currently used for dog walking, exercising, training etc.

We hope you take into consideration our thoughts about not developing on the billing.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My personal opinion is that the billing should not be built upon, and these are my reasons why.

Firstly the construction process from the bulldozerers building the estate would cause school and office interruptions. Also when the road is built there will be more cars and more noise so even more distractions.

Secondly all the horrific fumes from the deadly bulldozers and cars will cause even more pollution and you will have to build more power/water stations and even a new school which henceforth cause damage to the already crumbling infrastructure plus even more pollution!

Another reason is that the majestic billing is wonderful, children have so much fun sledging and playing out and walking their dogs, if the billing becomes brown-belt land you would be taking away a big part of Rawdon. Who would want to take away such beautiful land?

Also, you will be littering the outstanding billing with polluting buildings that are not needed.

In conclusion I think you'd agree that the billing is special to everyone in their own way and that building on it would strip Rawdon of its beauty and well being.

Yours Sincerely,