

AIREBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT FORUM



1 May 2018 (updated version)

GUISELEY & RAWDON WARD Candidate Response To Questions on Development – Local Elections 2018

Questions were emailed to candidates at 8.30am, Saturday 28th April am, responses are in order of return.

ANDF CONTEXT - CURRENT LEEDS POLICY AND TERMS USED IN THE RESPONSES

LCC's Executive Board have agreed the following policies. **The Core Strategy** policy for the location of development is to use an appropriate balance of brownfield and greenfield land – see Spatial Policy 1 (SP1). The policy also indicates that a Green Belt review will direct development consistent with the overall LCC strategy; details are at SP 10 and include a review of the Green Belt around Guiseley/Yeadon/Rawdon.

At SP6, allocation of housing land, the LCC policy is for sustainable locations with a preference for i) brownfield and regeneration sites, ii) sites with least impact on Green Belt purpose. The plan to review the West Yorkshire Green Belt in the light of housing need was laid down in the **Regional Spatial Strategy of 2008**, (page 30), this was carried forward into the Leeds Core Strategy and approved in 2014 by LCC. Details of Leeds Core Strategy. <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/Local%20Plans/Adopted%20Core%20Strategy/Adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20Final%20Nov%202014.pdf>.

On housing targets, the **Localism Act of 2011** allowed Local Authorities to set their own target based on Objectively Assessed Needs and take into account local environmental conditions. In 2017 the Government released a standard methodology for doing this and indicated that LCC's housing target 2012 – 2028 should be **42,384**, against the **Leeds Site Allocation Plan (SAP)** target of **70,000**. At SP7 of the Core Strategy the policy is that Aireborough as a **Housing Market Characteristic Area** is allocated 3% of any housing target.

The current SAP based on the 70,000 target, was sent to the Inspector for examination on 23 March 2018 and will be tested in the Summer 2018. [https://www.leeds.gov.uk/your-council/planning/site-allocations-development-plan-document-\(ldf\)](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/your-council/planning/site-allocations-development-plan-document-(ldf)). The policy for Aireborough is to allocate 4 green belt sites for 475 houses to be built before 2023, and put 6 green belt sites into Broad Locations for potential use later in the plan. The housing target is under review and changes will be made sometime in 2019, latest thoughts are for a target of 50,000, 2012 – 2028, with an extension to 2033 of 3,247 houses per annum. See our website for more details.

Katherine Bavage, Mike Edwards, Cynthia Dowling – Liberal Democrats

1. If the party that you represent were to be in power or in a minority on Leeds City Council following local elections on 3 May 2018, what would your party's position be on the proposed housing developments on Green Belt sites in Aireborough?

LDs want to see the provision of housing rebalanced to benefit residents. Communities need affordable housing. A council owned housing company will build affordable homes on brownfield sites. We want Local neighbourhood forums to play a more active part in development, so that growth benefits neighbourhoods. The Leeds housing target remains too high and after 2022/2023 green field and green belt sites could become allocated for housing that is unaffordable to most, and removes green belt permanently to the detriment of communities. LDs will be fighting against allocation of green belt to meeting housing targets.

2. What would you personally, as an elected member, do about the proposed developments?

We would continue to strongly oppose development where there is poor evidence of actual need, as the Leeds Liberal Democrats have done throughout the Core Strategy process. We would also oppose any other inappropriate developments both through the Council and the Planning process.

3. What do you, as a council candidate, understand to be the main issue regarding development in Aireborough?

We know that Aireborough considers its share of the housing target to be unreasonable, when set against a backdrop of development spanning from 2000, where very many dwellings have been erected close to the A65 corridor. Aireborough feels it has “done” its share, and now needs the infrastructure to go with all the housing.

4. What would you personally do as an elected member to improve the ‘quality of place’ in Aireborough?

What central LD policy includes is the desire for 100% coverage of the city by Neighbourhood Forums, so that communities play a more active part in development so that we can ensure growth enhances neighbourhoods. We'd be engaging regularly with ANDF, and all the many other Friends Groups and Community Organizations who work to improve the quality of life in the area.

Cllr Graham Latty – Conservative Party

1. If the party that you represent were to be in power or in a minority on Leeds City Council following local elections on 3 May 2018, what would your party's position be on the proposed housing developments on Green Belt sites in Aireborough?

I and my party are totally opposed to this sort of reckless development on green belt and/or greenfield until all other areas for development have been exhausted. With regard to the Site Allocations Plan, I believe it to be flawed in that the controlling councillors should have looked at Leeds as a whole rather than creating these housing market characteristic areas which remove any choice in places like ours where there is no brownfield of any size left undeveloped. Considering using a housing area comprising all Leeds could have allowed even the indescribably excessive 70,000 to be catered for without touching our green belt.

2. What would you personally, as an elected member, do about the proposed developments?

Decisions are made at executive level which means that the only way to change the direction of Leeds is to alter the balance of power. However, as an opposition member I am free to criticise and to lobby for change. I have more influence with the present government through our MP which I would not hesitate to use. That doesn't guarantee instant change but can sow the seeds. The change of heart we have seen recently in the suggestion that perhaps a lower number of houses might be possible, was brought about to some extent by the sheer weight of opposition. Councillors can help to promote that.

3. What do you, as a council candidate, understand to be the main issue regarding development in Aireborough?

The main issue in Aireborough is that our green belt is being stolen and we are being asked (told?) to accept houses far in excess of what we can cope with. We have already had more than 2000 houses built in Aireborough in the last 12/15 years without one inch of new road, without one **new** school, without more doctors, dentists, more capacity on public transport, in fact without any infrastructure improvements to help us to live with the expanded population. Developers say that people want to live here because it is such a lovely place. If they build many more houses it won't be.

4. What would you personally do as an elected member to improve the 'quality of place' in Aireborough?

- The obvious answer is to support ANDF and the efforts it is making to produce a plan for Aireborough which could provide a launch pad for the sort of development that we need in the area. The Government's idea of " *The right sort of houses in the right place* " is just what the Forum is pursuing.
- To try to design shared space into our roads, to foster all the wonderful community groups we have and to encourage more.
- Really, each one of us wants to live in a place where we feel at home, where our neighbour's share our values, where our children can grow up without being exposed to drugs and predators, being educated in good schools. The list is endless so, I think I will stop there.

Cllr Pat Latty – Conservative Party

I am completely against any loss of green belt, particularly to meet the current ridiculous housing target of 70,000. Since I moved to Aireborough in '79, 11 mills and factories plus a school, a gas board site, an electric board site, and an old sports field have disappeared, reducing local facilities to make room for housing. If that isn't enough then what is; where does it stop? And, there has been no improvement in the roads, schools or services and facilities that people need to live comfortably. Now, we have allotments and historic character sites threatened, as well much needed green belt sites.

The policy of the Leeds Conservative Group has been to oppose the current core strategy housing target as unachievable, particularly in Aireborough. Instead we favour a target based on objectively assessed housing needs for different types of people.

As to what I could do about it, I can only promise to support any plans to oppose this house building, and in particular the work that the Forum are doing to identify what is required.

Mark Rollinson – Green Party, Save Our Green Space

1. If the party that you represent were to be in power or in a minority on Leeds City Council following local elections on 3 May 2018, what would your party's position be on the proposed housing developments on Green Belt sites in Aireborough?

The Green Party strongly supports the protection of the Green Belt sites in Aireborough, to contain urban sprawl, to maintain the separation of settlements, and to complement the ecological and cultural value of natural habitats of local, regional, national or international importance. We are committed to protect land that is essential to the national and local community, such as floodplains, farmland and national parks. We have and would continue to oppose the councils' 70,000 new houses figure and promote 42,000, which would require no further Green Belt building.

2. What would you personally, as an elected member, do about the proposed developments?

As an elected member I would vote against proposals requiring the destruction of our Green Belt. I would actively lobby those making the decisions to take action on the developers who are sitting on brownfield planning permissions which are the equivalent of 22,000 homes.

3. What do you, as a council candidate, understand to be the main issue regarding development in Aireborough?

I believe that the main issues around development are that the developers have been allowed to build houses for maximum returns and not what the community needed. Instead of good quality 2 to 3 bedroom council houses we have used the available brown field sites to build estates full of 4 to 5 bedroom homes. We are also suffering from a public transport system that that is being run for profit and not for people. What we need is an imaginative joined up transport policy which links all our homes to a well-run multi transport network.

4. What would you personally do as an elected member to improve the 'quality of place' in Aireborough?

As an elected member I would campaign against congestion and poor air quality. I believe this can be improved by demanding longer trains with more capacity. This would then allow for a local bus service to be created linking all corners of Aireborough to the main hubs of the Train station, airport, community centres and schools. I would promote green corridors to enable safe walking and cycling away from dangerous roads. I believe that our community groups and sports clubs do fantastic work and I would help fund and promote these to expand their services and reach more people. I would look to start a community homes trust, similar to the one in Headingley, which would enable the people of Aireborough to come together to provide real affordable housing for our future generations.

Kirsty McKay, Ian McCargo, Andrew Thomson– Labour and Co-operative Party

1. If the party that you represent were to be in power or in a minority on Leeds City Council following local elections on 3 May 2018, what would your party's position be on the proposed housing developments on Green Belt sites in Aireborough?

Leeds Labour believes in brownfield first. Unfortunately, the previous Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government got rid of Labour's brownfield first policy and handed huge power to developers. As a result, Green Belt has been lost all over the country, whichever party is in power locally. Even in the Prime Minister's own constituency, Green Belt is being lost and a Conservative councillor has resigned in protest.

As the controlling party on Leeds City council, Labour has been repeatedly criticised by other political parties for setting a housing target that is too high, but the reality is that **the Council is bound by government planning policies to set housing targets according to government rules** and judged by government inspectors. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England sums up the Government's approach to planning as follows: "... current processes mean the Government, through its planning inspectors, **is in practice simply taking a top-down approach to impose and enforce housing targets** [emphasis added], despite the stated intentions of ministers for a more localist system..."

The Conservative government are currently reviewing their National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposals appear to further reduce local councils' power over housing decisions. **Labour believes that a complete revision of the NPPF is required, restoring the brownfield first policy** and removing the powers developers have to push through unwanted development on the Green Belt, including the sites in Aireborough.

2. What would you personally, as an elected member, do about the proposed developments?

The electoral make-up of Leeds suggests that if we are elected as councillors, Labour would likely form the controlling group in the council. In such a scenario, we would be in a strong position to champion Aireborough's cause. We support the recent changes to the Site Allocation Plan, which have significantly reduced the number of Green Belt sites planned for development. **But we will go further than that and push for complete removal of Green Belt development sites in Aireborough.** This is not just about the impact on local green spaces; there are other important issues to take into consideration including flood risk, increased difficulty for emergency vehicles to access existing housing due to parking and congestion, pressure on our over-stretched infrastructure and many more. We would use all the powers at our disposal to maximise the benefit to the community of any development, including provision of affordable housing and **ensuring that developments meet the real requirements of the community**, not maximising the profits of landowners and developers.

3. What do you, as a council candidate, understand to be the main issue regarding development in Aireborough?

The main issue facing Aireborough will be to develop a vision for the future. As a community we know what we don't want, but we also need positive ideas of how we are going to make Aireborough an even better place to live while facing the challenges that lie ahead. We want to develop strong, enduring links with community groups such as Aireborough Neighbourhood Development Forum to ensure that this vision is developed by our community, for our community. Critical to this will be **addressing the housing affordability crisis many people are facing**, whether those who are priced out or those unable to move due to limited availability of suitable housing for later life. Equally important will be improving the infrastructure in Aireborough, which is under increasing pressure. Many people will be aware that we are already campaigning to improve bus services and increase capacity on the trains. We will also look at options to reduce traffic and congestion and improve road safety.

4. What would you personally do as an elected member to improve the 'quality of place' in Aireborough?

There are many things we are excited about doing to improve Aireborough. We would look to get a Local Plan in place and will support ANDF as they look to do this, even encouraging this to be speeded up if it all possible. Although Aireborough is a relatively prosperous area, many people face problems which are largely hidden. Therefore, we would build links with the many active groups which contribute to community life, and also **support new projects such as the Jo Cox initiative, the local food bank and a revived Aireborough Neighbourhood Watch**. As Cooperative Party members, we will encourage local, people-powered projects to revive our high streets.

Bob Buxton – The Yorkshire Party

1. If the party that you represent were to be in power or in a minority on Leeds City Council following local elections on 3 May 2018, what would your party's position be on the proposed housing developments on Green Belt sites in Aireborough?

I would vote to remove all Greenbelt from the Site Allocation Plan (including those held in reserve as Broad Locations). Otherwise, Aireborough will be merged with urban sprawl.

2. What would you personally, as an elected member, do about the proposed developments?

There are 94 Brownfield sites around Leeds rated as suitable for development, enough for 25,000 homes, so I would vote to develop some of these sites instead of Greenbelt, and include cheaper housing, retirement homes and council houses.

3. What do you, as a council candidate, understand to be the main issue regarding development in Aireborough?

As well as protecting Greenbelt (which is the biggest issue for me), I would support better infrastructure to support new and existing housing - transport, GPs, schools, dentists. Too often it's promised but not delivered. In addition to my previous points, there are many areas with poor drainage (which loss of Greenbelt will make worse), so waterways need to be better maintained and floodplains, such as Ings Field, must not be built on (it is also Greenbelt and would merge Guiseley and Menston).

4. What would you personally do as an elected member to improve the 'quality of place' in Aireborough?

I would support better infrastructure to support new and existing housing - transport, GPs, schools, dentists. Too often it's promised but not delivered. Waterways and floodplains need to be better maintained. I also propose an Expert-Led Transport Review for Leeds, in which experts can develop and cost proposals from public consultations. We are the largest city in the EU without a mass transit system and have appalling air pollution and congestion. The Airport Road is a white elephant which will only waste the transport budget and prevent proper transport improvements.

Cllr Paul Wadsworth – Conservative Party

1. If the party that you represent were to be in power or in a minority on Leeds City Council following local elections on 3 May 2018, what would your party's position be on the proposed housing developments on Green Belt sites in Aireborough?

Like my colleagues on the Conservative Group I am opposed to the needless destruction of green belt proposed by the controlling group of Leeds City Council. I would use my best efforts to try to alter the direction of the Core Strategy so that development could be directed elsewhere.

2. What would you personally, as an elected member, do about the proposed developments?

I would continue my efforts to take every opportunity to fight first the allocation of green belt and then the actual proposals to build as and when they came along.

3. What do you, as a council candidate, understand to be the main issue regarding development in Aireborough?

Aireborough has seen a great deal of development already, in fact we have accepted more than 2500 houses in the last 15 or so years and to expect us to absorb even 1400 let alone 2300 would be an impossible task. Also there has been no improvement to the infrastructure, no roads, no schools and no improved services.

4. What would you personally do as an elected member to improve the 'quality of place' in Aireborough?

Quality of place would be ruined by any more development on the scale proposed. The only possible way to stop this would be to reverse the proposals to build this many houses. It would also be important to offer support to the Forum and to the growing Aireborough Friends groups and to ensure that the council services did not offer any less than the best.