

Leeds Local Plan

A Planning Framework for Development (2024 - 2042)

Clifford Parish Council Comments

Potential Housing Sites (Outer North East)

It is Clifford Parish Council's intention here to address the specific sites which have been identified as potential housing development sites within their parish and give their opinion on each in turn. General comments relating to traffic generation, infrastructure concerns etc. within the parish and wider area, together with comments on nominated sites on the edge of the area, have been made in a joint letter from our Parish Council in conjunction with Boston Spa, Thorp Arch, Bramham and Walton Councils as they concern all those bodies. These comments are annexed to this submission [appendix 1].

The Sites

We intend to address each site in turn and then summarise them at the end of this paper.

Land of f Old Mill Lane Clifford. Site No. LPS00073

- This site has an estimated housing capacity of 41 in the proposal. It is currently in the Green Belt and policy for applications in Green Belt states that proposals should be refused unless there are "Very Special Circumstances" for granting them.
- 41 dwellings here would generate a substantial and significant amount of traffic on an already busy country lane with blind bends and no footpath. Using figures from the last Census, car ownership in LS23 is significantly higher than the UK average, with an average of 2.48 cars per household compared to the UK average of 1.4. This would mean that even a conservative estimate would give car numbers of 80, which would be using this potentially dangerous access/egress. The road is used not only by cars but a significant number of pedestrians and cyclists. The increased vehicular movements, together with the access/egress necessary for the housing proposed, would we contend, increase the likelihood of accidents and injury in the locality which should not be acceptable. We would argue that the

blind double bend on Old Mill Lane is a hazard and should be included in the site score (in Proximity to Hazards).

- The Site Assessment Result in the document states that the site is a PASS for not being a floodplain and also that it has a positive 2 score for Flood Risk (negative is bad positive good). Part of the site nearest Old Mill Lane is in fact not only the flood plain for Carr Beck it was in fact historically the millpond for Clifford Mill and is very marshy and unstable
- The site is not only partially covered in trees but also has some specimen and historically significant trees on it. These are subject to TPO's and must be retained. Clearance of the existing woodland fronting Old Mill Lane would also be a very significant loss of woodland in the Clifford Parish.
- The land not covered by woodland is agricultural land and development of it should be resisted for this reason.
- The site scores -10 on the Assessment. this is a poor score and the site should be rejected.

Land East of Chapel Lane, Clifford. Site No. LPS00436

- This site has an estimated housing capacity of 36 which sounds excessive for a quite small plot. It is zoned for housing development in the existing Leeds Development plan. It is a green field site in the village. Despite its current allocation the site scores -10 on the Site Assessment Result which is a poor score.
- Using the 2 cars per dwelling as above, (which is conservative for the postcode) there would be over 70 vehicles using the housing if it was built. There are parking and visibility problems already on Chapel Lane which would be exacerbated by the vastly increased vehicular movement numbers.
- The plot is currently agricultural land on the edge of the village. Development of it should be resisted for this reason alone.
- Access to the site may be limited, difficult or both as Chapel Lane is narrow and busy.
- It is not in the green belt but does form part of the green corridor between Clifford and Boston Spa and should be protected to ensure the separate identities of the villages.

- With a score of -10 this site should also be rejected as a potential housing site.

Land North of The Albion Public House, Boston Road, Clifford

- This site is in the proposals as a site for 33 new dwellings. It is currently in the Green Belt and policy for applications in Green Belt states that proposals should be refused unless there are “Very Special Circumstances” for granting them.
- It is also existing agricultural land and development of it should be resisted.
- It forms part of the green corridor between Clifford and Boston Spa and should be retained to protect the separate identities of the villages.
- 33 additional dwellings here would generate a substantial and significant amount of traffic on the busy road between Clifford and Boston Spa which is already a busy road with limited footpath provision. The increased vehicular movements, together with the access/egress necessary for the housing proposed, would we contend, increase the likelihood of accidents and injury in the locality which should not be acceptable.
- With another low score of -7 on the Site Assessment Results this site should also be rejected as a potential housing site in the proposed plan.

Land East of Bramham Road, Clifford. Site No. LPS00670

- This site is in the proposals as a site for 99 new dwellings. It is currently in the Green Belt and policy for applications in Green Belt states that proposals should be refused unless there are “Very Special Circumstances” for granting them.
- This site joins up with site LPS00073 above, which if both were allocated for housing would give a potential of 140 new dwellings accessing the site - 280 cars using the conservative estimate of 2 per household from the last census. The roads even without the problems of visibility etc.) simply couldn’t handle that amount of traffic.

- The difficulties of the access at Old Mill Lane are covered above. Any access/egress onto Bramham Road will be onto a curved road with a hill, both of which create limited visibility and therefore danger. Highway concerns alone should stop this site being allocated for housing.
- The road is on the route to Bramham School (which is in Clifford Parish) for large numbers of children. The increased traffic could pose a danger to their safety.
- Bramham Road is the bus route from Harrogate to Leeds.
- The site is a greenfield agricultural area - factors which need to be considered.
- No mention is made in the site assessment of heritage assets, but there would need to be some consideration given to both the ancient wall at the entrance to the village. The former baptismal well on Bramham Road will also need to be taken into account.
- There are a number of large and ancient trees on this site which are subject to TPO's which must be retained. Indeed they are more important now that a large number of them were felled in a storm a few years ago.
- The score of -6 on the Site Assessment Result is poor and should be reason enough to reject this site.
- The strain on all of the infrastructure in the region (Doctors, Roads, Shops, Parking, Schools etc.) should also be a reason to say no to development of this site.

Factors common to all sites.

- Three of the four sites are in the Green Belt and should be turned down simply there are no "Very Special Circumstances" for their zoning for housing in the plan.
- All sites are green field sites with negative scores on the Site Assessment Report contained in the Leeds Local Plan Consultation Document. Clearly all

have their problems and should be rejected in favour of other better scoring sites in the Leeds Plan.

- The green areas between the villages of Bramham, Clifford and Boston Spas must be maintained to ensure that the three villages all keep their individual identity. All of the sites, if developed, would erode that green corridor.
- The infrastructure in Clifford village is already stretched. There is a parking problem already throughout the village which would be exacerbated by increased housing on any of these sites. the road system is basically unable to deal with the proposed extra traffic which would be generated.
- The number of car journeys will be increased as the population is increased, producing more congestion and more pollution in the area.
- There are 2 bus services in Clifford Village, the 7 between Harrogate and Leeds and the 174 between Wetherby and Wakefield. The 7 runs once an hour, is notoriously unreliable, finishes early most evenings and is often full when it does turn up. There is clearly no spare capacity for extra usage on that bus service for proposed new residents. The 174 runs every 2 hours and finishes even earlier, so it is unlikely to help with increased passenger numbers.
- The doctor's surgeries at Boston Spa and Bramham are already oversubscribed, so unless a new surgery is proposed as part of the development and funded by the developer further problems will occur in the health service for the area.
- Parking for shoppers in both Boston Spa and Wetherby is already under strain. Further car numbers will only add to this problem
- All of the local schools are crowded and unlikely to be capable of taking up the extra pupil numbers which will be generated

In Summary

It is our opinion that the potential housing sites in Clifford Parish, which have been proposed by their owners for inclusion in the Leeds Local Plan for the period from 2024 to 2042 in Clifford, as discussed above, fall short on many criteria for suitability for development. We feel that other higher scoring sites must be available and should be allocated in the plan.

Appendix 1

Local Plan Consultation 2025

Representatives from the Parish Councils of Boston Spa, Thorp Arch, Walton, Clifford and Bramham

met on the 7th August to review the new sites submitted for consideration in the Leeds Local Plan. There is a clear level of concern from all parishes that the any resulting development from the sites submitted would have a cumulative knock-on effect on all the villages and their residents. There are already significant issues with traffic and congestion across all five villages. The majority of the streets were not designed in the day of motorised transport and on-street parking is the norm. This has resulted in serious congestion, speeding and road safety issues. The nearest train station is over 8 miles, and the nearest accessible train station via public transport in Garforth is 11 miles away and 43 minutes on the bus, and the one bus service (the number 7) which serves all the parishes runs only once per hour during off-peak periods. It should be noted that the villages of Walton and Bramham have no schools. Children from these villages attend primary schools in Boston Spa, Thorp Arch or ~~Bramham~~ Clifford and so many children must be taken by car.

The areas of Thorp Arch Bridge and Boston Spa village centre are particularly congested, especially at peak times. Thorp Arch trading estate is home to a number of businesses and large organisations which include the British Library. Wealstun Prison and the Leeds United Training Ground are at the top end of Thorp Arch. All of these bring significant travellers by car from destinations which are much further afield. Thorp Arch itself has just seen the completion of 145 residential properties on the Chartford and Lovell Homes estates which has increased traffic to the area.

Whilst over the North Yorkshire boundary, the village of Newton Kyme (2 miles away) saw 141 new homes built in 2015. This has brought more traffic through the village as residents use Boston Spa as a direct route to the A1. The current North Yorkshire Local Plan also identifies a potential 19 hectares of land in Newton Kyme for future development through its Call for Sites, which will continue to close the gap between Boston Spa, Thorp Arch, Walton and Newton Kyme.

Whilst all of the Wetherby Parishes are in agreement that reasonable and sympathetic development should be expected in the villages over time, the infrastructure and road network simply cannot support any significant increase in housing. The new Swinnow Park development in Wetherby (which is less than 5 miles away from Boston Spa) will see an increase of about 1,000 houses, this will invariably lead to increased traffic and calls on the local infrastructure. The above 1000 homes should satisfactorily fulfil the Leeds Housing target and the demand for new housing in the local area.