



Housing plans are ‘a threat to children’s health and happiness’ 11 SEP

KEELE, STAFFORDSHIRE September 22 2020 – Plans to build more than 1,000 houses on Green Belt land have been branded ‘anti-science’ and ‘anti-children’ by a community action group.

Save Our Green Space, who are campaigning to stop developers building on countryside that is currently used by local families for walking and recreation, says that the plans by Newcastle Borough Council are a threat to local children’s health and happiness.

The green space includes the former golf course that separates the mining village of Silverdale from the university village of Keele – an area used extensively by walkers and families, many with young children.

Plans to build houses on this site are included in the TIP, the council’s Town Investment Plan, a document which the group says shoots itself in the foot.

“Scientists recently published research showing that children who grow up in areas with little greenery are at risk of scoring lower on IQ tests”, said group spokesman John Wright: “This builds on previous research showing that children who grow up in areas with less greenery experience more cognitive problems than those who grow up in greener areas.

“The TIP described the communities in Knutton, Cross Heath, Chesterton and Silverdale as areas that ‘suffer from high levels of deprivation, affecting health and wellbeing outcomes for children and adults within these areas’ – a direct quote from the council document.

“Its solution to help these children, then, is to concrete over the green space on their doorstep and build 1,200 houses on it. If this was a film script Hollywood would throw it out as being frankly absurd”.

Group member Kathy Gatensbury recently met local MP Aaron Bell to emphasise the threat to human physical and mental health posed by the plan along with the threat to wildlife including hedgehogs and bats which have been part of the site ecosystem for hundreds of years.

“This plan basically involves extending Newcastle town westwards to obliterate insect and animal habitats, destroy village life and concrete over 200 acres of green space. We are looking at the creation of a new town of some 5,500 people”, said Ms Gatensbury.

“Local people are just waking up to the scale of this development and we are receiving amazing support from the villages. Frankly, it's a non-starter and the council need to go back to their consultants and start again”.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Please note, this site is already in the Green Belt. Unveiling the Government's new housing policy on August 1st, 2020, Secretary of State for Housing Robert Jenrick MP said the plans would be a once-in-a-generation reform that lays the foundation for a better future.

“Protected land will be just that - our Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and rich heritage – will be protected as the places, views and landscapes we cherish most and passed on to the next generation as set out in our manifesto”.

The Save Our Green Space action group has been formed by local people with the aim of preserving the space:

- ③ As a community asset for future generations
- ③ To promote physical and mental wellbeing for local people
- ③ To keep it in the Green Belt (where it is now)

2. The scientific research on children, greenery and lost IQ is here:

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-children-greenery-areas-iq.html>