**PHASE 1 of LEVERHULMES “VISION” ….AND WIRRALS NIGHTMARE!**

**Guidance for Commenting on Leverhulme’s Green Belt Developments**

**HURRY! - Please register your objections by Thurs 13th January 2022**

A row of houses

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**OUR PRECIOUS GREEN BELTS COULD BE GONE FOREVER!**

**Leverhulme Estates** has identified around 140 acres of **Green Belt land for residential development** in **Pensby, Irby, Heswall, Greasby, Barnston and Raby Mere**. It has submitted early-stage proposals to Wirral Council in the form of “Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinions”, identifying the sites and outlining its intentions for each.

These are not full planning applications but are Leverhulmes seeking advice from the Council on what the scope of the Environmental Impact Asessment (EIA) should include. The EIA will then be submitted in support of the **Planning Application in 2022**. The reports also set out what studies Leverhulme’s propose to undertake to characterise the “baseline” environment of the site and surrounding area. In addition, the report defines the assessment methods to determine the likely environmental impacts of the proposed development.

For obvious reasons, it is in the interest of the Developer to keep the scope of the EIA to a minimum and exclude as many environmental issues as possible. Therefore, it is **really important that the public** not only **object** to their Scoping Opinion Reports **but also comment** on their Reports and identify any environmental issues that have been missed out by Leverhulmes, or which they propose to “Scope Out” of the EIA.

**IS OUR GREEN BELT SAFE?**

**DO NOT BE REASSURED BY RECENT MEDIA ARTICLES – THIS IS PLAYING INTO THE DEVELOPERS’ HANDS!**

You may have read reassuring articles in the local media recently that report that the Council have stated that the Local Plan will “not include Green Belt allocations” and they propose to build 12000 houses on Brownfield only. **But there is a REAL RISK!** Even if the Local Plan has no Green Belt in the ‘Preferred Option’, the Local Plan will be challenged by the Developers’ Consortium Teams.

The Local Plan Inspector will be reminded by the **Developer’s legal teams** that the Council always previously stressed the need for Green Belt release and there should, at the very least, be Reserve Sites which would be necessary to meet the 12,000 (overinflated and now discredited) “Housing Need” figure. They will remind the Local Plan Inspector that Wirral has never met such Delivery Targets from all its sites, never mind just from ‘Brownfield’ sites - where sufficient ownership and funding has not been secured.

Unfortunately, the likelihood remains that the Local Plan Examiner / Inspector will require a ‘Main Modification’ of, say, 10% Green Belt release to aid security of Housing Delivery. **Remember, ultimately it is the Local Plan Inspector, and NOT the Council, who will decide if Green Belt can be released.**

All this could be avoided by our Council acting like a growing number of others using a Housing Need figure calculated from the real Local Administrative Data. Experts agree this points to circa 4,000 and not 12,000 new ADDITIONAL Dwellings (which figure excludes all Replacements and Upgrades of thousands of ‘Substandard’ homes).

These Leverhulme Green Belt applications are being put in with the hope of **securing Green belt release** **BEFORE** the **Local Plan is finalised**. They **are throwing a lot of money at this** with the hope that they can **argue for Green Belt release** precisely because **we currently have no Local Plan in place**. Even if the Council refuse them Planning Permission they have the resources and money to **go to an appeal.**

The Fight must go on, sadly, and we need your help!

**How to register your objections and comments:**

1. Click on each of the links below (overleaf),
2. Click on the Blue Comments Box
3. Fill in your details and click “Objects” in the stance box – please note your address (but not your name) and your stance will be displayed on-line.

It would be really helpful (but not essential) if you could add comments in the comments box too.

Once you have submitted all your comments and info, press submit. **It takes just a few minutes.**

**Handy Hint**

It is often easier to **type out your comments in a Word document (or similar) and copy and paste** them into the comments box – this avoids time out errors and loosing your comments before submission. Yes we need you to sign the petitions but we **REALLY NEED YOU TO OBJECT AND COMMENT on** the submissions on the Council Planning Website using the links below.

More information about Leverhulmes proposals can be found by clicking on the links below, clicking the highlight box next to documents and clicking download documents.

1. Land East of Dale View Close, North of Gills lane Pensby – upto 100 houses SCR/21/02385

<https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_WIRRA_DCAPR_112773>

1. Land East of Thorncroft Drive, North of Gills Lane, Pensby. – upto 15 houses –

SCR/21/02381

<https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_WIRRA_DCAPR_112769>

1. Land west of Barnston Road, North Of Gills Lane – upto 160 houses

SCR/21/02379 <https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_WIRRA_DCAPR_112767>

1. Land at Milner Road and Barnston Rd, Heswall – upto 100 houses SCR/21/02377

https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=\_WIRRA\_DCAPR\_112765

1. Land East of Glenwood Drive, Irby – upto 310 houses SCR/21/02384

<https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_WIRRA_DCAPR_112772>

1. Land East of Raby hall, North of Raby Hall Rd, Raby Mere – 85 houses - SCR/21/02383

<https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_WIRRA_DCAPR_112771>

1. Land West of Raby Hall, North of Raby Hall Rd – 40 houses - SCR/21/02386

<https://planning.wirral.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=_WIRRA_DCAPR_112774>

If you are unable to submit your comments via the Planning website you can email them directly to:

Head of Regeneration and Place, Alan Evans: [alanevans@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:alanevans@wirral.gov.uk)

Applications, Joanne Storey: [joannestorey@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:joannestorey@wirral.gov.uk)

Don’t forget to include the site reference number and **clearly state that you are objecting.**

If you prefer to submit your objections and comments in writing you can send them to:

Mr M Shingler, Case Officer, Wirral Council Planning Department, PO Box 290, Brighton Street, Wallasey, CH27 9FQ.

**WHAT CAN YOU SAY IN YOUR COMMENTS?**

You can write as much or as little as you wish. Here are our suggestions on what you could comment on:

**Population and Human Health (during and after Construction)**

Leverhulmes propose to use the outdated 2011 population census data, Specific impacts on human health (for instance in relation to landscape and visual impacts, noise, air quality, and construction traffic), Local GP surgeries, School capacities

**Transport and Access (during and after Construction)**

Leverhulmes state the “area is well served by the existing highway structure”, increases in traffic (during and after construction) some of the baseline traffic surveys were undertaken during times of Covid 19 – even when not in full lock down traffic has been significantly reduced and traffic patterns affected) , air pollution, dust & dirt. Accidents and road safety issues, public transport.

**Landscape and Visual Impact (during and after Construction)**

The affect on publicly accessible views (the report appendices contain maps indicating view point locations – do you know of other public viewpoints which should be considered?), footpaths, permissive paths, bridal ways etc, recreational value, scenic beauty etc

**Cultural Heritage**

Archeological , historical and cultural landscape issues in and around the sites. Conservation area, listed buildings etc Do you know of any archeological remains anywhere on the site or the immediate area? Leverhulmes have stated “any direct effects upon the types of potential non-designated buried archeological remains anticipated would not be considered significant” – do you know otherwise?

**Ecology**

What SBIs (Sites of Biological Importance) LWS (Local Wildlife Sites) are in the area – have these been included? What ponds are in the area – hydrological studies will be required to ensure changes to the water table during and after construction do not drain the ponds. Hedgerows, great crested newts, bats, wintering birds, badgers etc Other species such as water voles, farmland and breeding birds have been scoped out. Do you know of any species which should be surveyed? Tree and Hedgerow removal. Increased recreational pressure on wildlife in nearby designated sites. Increased predation from cats / dogs, water quality and pollution issues during construction.

**Noise**

Noise surveys were undertaken during Covid 19 lock down. Noise effects during construction and traffic post construction.

**Air Quality**,

Impacts on Air Quality during and post construction, traffic pollution, dust etc

**Agriculture / Land**

The permanent loss of agricultural land whilst the need to produce our own food is more important than ever (Brexit / Covid / Climate Change). The effect on tenant farmers , unemployment, loss of locally produced food.

**Flood Risk and Drainage**

Worryingly, Leverhulmes propose not to include Flood Risk / Drainage in their EIA. What do you know about flood risk issues on the land currently, what affects will the developments have on the river downstream (Arrowe Brook, River Dibbin, Prenton brook) – do you know of issues with these rivers already? What effects will there be on ponds in the areas. Are there surface water drainage issues, issues regarding the local sewerage network?

**Climate Change**.

Also worryingly, Leverhulmes propose not to “scope in” Climate Change to the EIA

**Lighting**

Leverhulmes propose not to “Scope in” lighting to their EIAs as they state there will not be significant effects from the developments. However, these are all currently releatively dark areas and lighting will have significant impacts on invertebrates, bats etc.

Thank you for your support and don’t forget to object by Thursday 13th January

Please also consider donating to the Wirral Green Space Alliance Legal Fighting Fund, so that we can challenge the Developers at the Local Plan Inspection:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/savewirralsgreenbelt>

For more information and updates **follow us on Facebook** – “Defend Wirral’s Green Spaces”

**SAVE THE GREEN BELT ONCE IT’S GONE IT’S GONE FOREVER!**