



KIRKBY AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Forward Planning Team  
Ashfield District Council  
Urban Road  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield  
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27 March 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Ashfield Local Plan 2023 – 2040: Additional Housing Site Allocations Consultation**

I write to submit the following comments on behalf of the Kirkby Area Residents' Association (KARA).

KARA is pleased to see that the additional allocations being put forward do not include the major Mowlands site to which KARA has previously objected so strongly. KARA notes that the additional allocations now proposed are relatively small and medium sized development sites that infill and consolidate the Kirkby/Sutton/Skegby urban area, rather than a major urban extension into the countryside. KARA considers this to be a sound development strategy.

### Former Wyvern Club site, Lane End, Kirkby

However, KARA has serious concerns regarding the proposal to develop the former Wyvern Club as a site for twelve dwellings. This site is identified in the Kirkby Town Centre Masterplan as a Station Gateway site suitable for a mixed use development providing additional car parking, improved public realm, an enhanced access to the railway station, and a more welcoming arrival to the town. KARA supports this vision, none of which will be achieved if the site is given over to a residential development of twelve units. The Council's consultation suggests that residential development is in accordance with the Masterplan, which is incorrect and misleading.

The Kirkby Railway Station is very well-situated in relation to the town centre and primary bus routes but has some serious shortcomings. In particular, it is located out of site in a cutting and is inaccessible for people in wheelchairs and difficult to access for people pushing children in prams. It has no provision for taxis or secure parking for cycles, and has very limited and awkward car parking space. There is no associated safe pedestrian crossing over the busy B6020 nor any integrated bus stops.

The Former Wyvern Club site has the potential to greatly improve the railway station, as envisaged in the Town Centre Masterplan. There is a change in level between the higher-level station car park and the lower-level Wyvern Club site. If the railway station and Wyvern Club site were integrated, some of the higher land could be cut away to give level access to the southbound platform. A bridge from the remaining higher-level car-park could give access to a lift on the northbound platform to give full accessibility for wheelchairs, buggies, etc. Additionally, integration with the Wyvern site could provide a much improved entrance to the station, a greatly improved level of car-parking for the station, together with secure cycle parking, a taxi rank, and an off-road bus stop for eastbound buses.

An off-road bus stop for westbound buses needs to be provided on the site on the opposite (south) side of the B6020. The Kirkby Town Centre Masterplan similarly identifies this site (which is the subject of a current proposal for a McDonald's drive-thru restaurant) as having potential to enhance the railway station. A bus stop on this side of the road linked to a controlled pedestrian crossing would help create an integrated transport hub. Loss of the twelve dwellings now proposed for the Wyvern Club site could be more than compensated for by residential development of the site currently proposed for a McDonald's. A well-designed rising terrace of dwellings could provide a dramatic townscape feature, which would be much more appropriate than the current bulky and garish McDonald's proposal. The site on the south side of the B6020, being at a lower level than the road, also has the potential to accommodate fill from cutting away part of the higher-level station car-park to provide level access.

Enhancement of the railway station in this way would fit well with the proposed green walking and cycling route towards Kirkby Woodhouse, Nuncargate and Annesley Woodhouse and Portland Park along the route of the historic horse-drawn railway line (Local Plan Strategic Policy S10 and Proposals Map, Kirkby-in-Ashfield Inset).

Residential development of the Wyvern Club site for twelve dwellings would necessitate a bulky built form that would further hide the railway station and would remove any potential for future station improvement. Furthermore, if the Council was to proceed with allocation of the Wyvern Club site for residential development as proposed, it would be inconsistent with proposed Local Plan Policy S11 which cross-refers to the Kirkby Town Centre Masterplan. Such inconsistency in the Local Plan would be a nonsense.

### An alternative site for McDonald's

The site on the south side of the B6020 is particularly unsuitable for the proposed McDonald's development due to the traffic congestion that would be caused. McDonald's have confirmed that its proposed development does not rely on passing trade. Therefore, it would be sensible for the Council to redirect McDonald's to an alternative site, such as the site of the former factory shop fronting the existing piazza on Ellis Street, where it would bring much needed vitality to the piazza. Another possible alternative location would be the Patco site on Lowmoor Road.

### Kirkby Cross Area

In relation to the Kirkby Cross Area, KARA is pleased to note that the Kirkby Town Board has included an enhancement scheme for Kirkby Cross in its Funding Proposals (ref. H1(4)). This is much needed due to the presence of the two former filling stations and the boarded up former Waggon & Horses Public House, which degrade Kirkby's premier heritage asset. The former public house is recognised in the Council's published character appraisal as a key building adding to the character of the Kirkby Cross Conservation Area. The building could easily be brought back into use or possibly converted to a new use. The two garage sites offer potential for sensitively designed residential development. This together with redesign of the external space could transform the setting of Kirkby Cross and at the same time provide valuable additional housing to supplement the current initiative to find additional housing sites. Such housing would have to be built in accordance with a sensitively conceived site-specific design code to ensure appropriate enhancement.

In order to further preserve and enhance the Kirkby Cross area, KARA considers that the Kirkby Cross Conservation Area should be extended further westwards along Cowpasture Lane. This suggestion was made in KARA's response to the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation dated 17 January 2024 but is not aware of any action to this end. Cowpasture Lane is an attractive, narrow and unsurfaced historic lane which forms a well-used pedestrian route into and out of the Kirkby Cross area. It is an important part of the historic Kirkby Cross area and it should be protected.

KARA trusts that the above comments will be taken into account in finalising the Local Plan.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Slack', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Slack  
Chairman