**Response from Hampsthwaite Parish Council to the**

**Planning Application for a**

**proposed residential development, of up to 46 dwellings**

**by Stonebridge Homes**

**at land off Brookfield Garth, Hampsthwaite, Harrogate, North Yorkshire**

**Reference No. 17/01597/OUTMAJ**

Hampsthwaite Parish Council object to this application and seek to demonstrate below, why the application should be refused.

We understand that over time the needs of society change, particularly the demand for housing. This does not mean that housing developments can be allowed to spring up on every vacant plot of land to meet the housing targets of local councils. Development should be planned to be sustainable, be sited where there is good access to employment, promote opportunities to travel on foot or bicycle, take into account the local environment and listen to the views of local people.

Hampsthwaite has over the past few years absorbed additional housing and the population of the village, in the 2011 census, was recorded as 1083. Since then there have been various small in-fill buildings. A major development of 56 houses (The Grange) on the land west of Brookfield Way is currently under construction. These houses have 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms and are currently being marketed at £526,995 - £709,995. We can assume that the occupancy rate of these houses will be at least 3 and up to 5 people per house. This will increase the population of the village by between 168 and 280 people by the next census. This means that the already planned additional housing has increased the size of the village of Hampsthwaite by between 15.5% and 26% this is a considerable amount.

**General objections**

The building of a further 46 homes, at the land off Brookfield Garth, again up to 5 bedrooms, will potentially increase the size of the village by a similar amount to The Grange development, meaning that with the two developments the size of the village will have increased by almost 50%. This cannot be allowed to happen. If it does, it shows a complete disregard of the views and concerns of local people.

Hampsthwaite Parish Council are concerned that the village, with a significant conservation area, situated in Nidderdale, is in danger of losing its character as a rural Dales village, something that the community holds dear.

If this proposed development, off Brookfield Garth is allowed to go ahead Hampsthwaite becomes one step nearer to being a suburb of Harrogate, particularly with the extensive housing development already taking place in Killinghall and along the A59 Skipton Road.

The village infrastructure cannot support any more new housing.

Hampsthwaite currently has traffic and parking problems. The centre of the village is small and there is already insufficient parking space to support the present population’s access to the School, Post Office, Doctors Surgery and the small Corner Shop. There is no public car park, nor the land to site one.

Access to doctors is via a ‘satellite’ of the main surgery in Harrogate. The surgery is held in a small converted cottage in the centre of the village. The surgery is only open on a part-time basis and offers a limited number of appointments which can be fully booked up two weeks in advance. Appointments and facilities at the main surgery in Harrogate can only be accessed by car travel as it is not on the local bus route.

There are major concerns with the sewerage and drainage infrastructure, which is already at critical point. The local pumping station frequently breaks down, some man-hole covers have been sealed shut to prevent them from blowing up with overflow. Tankers are often in the village pumping raw sewerage out of the station and transporting it through the village centre for disposal elsewhere. This is not acceptable. The problems are exacerbated following heavy rain when the sewers overflow into Cockhill Beck, and back up and overflow on to the housing development at St Thomas a Becket Walk.

The school is already over-subscribed, even without the new families predicted for The Grange development. The school was extended 6 years ago with a resulting loss of play area, there is not sufficient room to extend further within its present boundary.

The Parish Council lease the sports and recreation field, from North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) for the use of the village. This amenity could be lost if NYCC were unable to renew the lease as the field was required for further expansion of the school. It must be noted that this is the **only** publicly accessible general recreation space in the village. Loss of this would be wholly detrimental to the health and wellbeing of all who use this sports and recreational facility. There is no other land available within the village boundary to create a replacement. The NPPF states under promoting healthy communities “*to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: plan positively for the provision and use of shared space….meeting places, sports venues…………guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services…… Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities…..*

The Parish Council do not see any plans from HBC to create a permanent sports and recreational facility in the village of Hampsthwaite despite granting consent to the Grange Park development of 56 homes and the proposal of up to a further 46 homes at Brookfield Garth. Instead these developments put under threat our existing facilities.

There is a lack of employment opportunities, village residents travel to Harrogate, York, Leeds and further afield for work. This puts increasing pressure on the already very busy A59. The roads from Hampsthwaite to the A59, which is the main approach road to Harrogate from the west, are country roads in poor condition. They are unlit. There are no continuous footpaths or cycle paths to Harrogate. Public transport is inadequate and costly and is not an alternative for people travelling from the village for employment, education or leisure purposes. The bus service is limited, it does not run early enough in the morning, to get people to Harrogate to connect with onward links to Leeds, Knaresborough or York for employment. The last bus home is too early for long distance commuters to use the service to return home. The Parish Council understand that the bus service will be reduced further in October with the loss of the Sunday service and other proposed changes.

Because of the above reasons, people living in Hampsthwaite mostly travel everywhere by car. Many existing households, particularly where there are 17 – 25 year olds, have 3 or 4 cars, as they need to be able to access school, jobs and leisure activities in Harrogate and beyond as there is nothing for them in the village. From the size of houses proposed for the Brookfield Garth development it is expected that this pattern would continue.

**Site specific objections**

The proposal by Bowman Riley Architects states that the site off Brookfield Garth is a preferred housing allocation, reference HM7, in the Harrogate District Draft Local Plan. The Local Plan is still in draft form and as yet has not been agreed. Hampsthwaite Parish Council made objections to this land being included in the Local Plan and requested that the development limit of the village be drawn to the north of HM7 therefore excluding this site from the plan. We are still awaiting a response. In the recent past this same site was promoted for a development of just 16 houses and rejected by Harrogate Borough Council as too many, and that was before development of Grange Park.

The statement in the proposal, regarding vehicular access to the site via Brookfield Garth is misleading. It fails to identify that Brookfield Garth is only accessible via Brookfield.

Brookfield is accessible from two junctions Brookfield/Hollins Lane and Brookfield/Dale Close. Most of the traffic from the 102 homes on the existing Brookfield estate uses the Brookfield/Hollins Lane junction for access to Harrogate and the Brookfield/Dale Close junction for access to the village. A further 56 homes on The Grange site will now be using these junctions.

Egress from the estate at the most frequently used junction of Brookfield/Hollins Lane is particularly difficult as cars on Hollins Lane are travelling on a downhill length of road as they approach this junction. North Yorkshire Highways have acknowledged that visibility at this junction is sub-standard.

If this development at Brookfield Garth is granted permission the number of cars using this substandard junction will have doubled. This is a potential accident spot, there have been many near-misses.

The proposed development would take away open countryside, including a Public Footpath linking Rowden Lane with Hollins Lane. This footpath is of great communal value as it is accessed by many people on a regular basis for dog walking and leisure. It features in the memory of many village residents as a valued landscape with significant connection to footpaths on the south of the village. Replacing the public footpath with a hard surface path through a housing estate will not have the same amenity value as the existing path.

A recent survey, undertaken by the Parish Council, of resident’s views on further development in Hampsthwaite, resulted in 30 objection specific to this site at Brookfield Garth.

**In conclusion**

Hampsthwaite Parish Council re-confirm their objections to development at Brookfield Garth and trust the Harrogate Borough Council will note the strength of opposition to this application and make the right decision in refusing this planning application.

Hampsthwaite Parish Council

5th June 2017