

Press release form friends of *Ecological Owlthorpe*

Dear all,

It seems to me that we have a number of Government departments at loggerheads with each other. George Eustace MP the Environment Secretary, Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and Natural England have jointly committed to “nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency and stop downstream flooding”. Robert Jenrick, the Housing Secretary and the Government Inspectorate want to cover the country in concrete without any consideration for the environment and citizens living downstream.

My name is Michael Meredith. I originally objected to Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) on the 9th and 21st February 2020 Re: Planning Application 19/03143/FUL (I object to building on Owlthorpe). My main concern was and still is downstream flooding. Ochre floods out of the disused mine workings in Owlthorpe. Link to video: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/ochredyke.htm> this proves that in heavy rain conditions the drains cannot cope with the volume of water.

I applied to George Eustace MP Secretary of State for Environment, on 20th May 2020 requesting he called in this application because it did not comply with Government directive concerning upstream flood defences and climate change policy. I wanted to make sure that new housing developments did not take place in areas that would increase the potential of downstream flooding. My application followed government directive and was sent in time before Sheffield Planning Committee’s meeting on Tuesday 2nd June 2020. I have an acknowledgement of my communication but still have not received an answer to my request.

I watched George Eustace on the Sophy Ridge programme where he explained the government’s response to flooding: £4 billion is to be spent on upstream flood defences in Yorkshire. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbYXEDczL-U> Also on 23 January 2020, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and Natural England jointly committed to “nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency”, to which Ecological Owlthorpe has the potential to make an excellent contribution.

Holly Dutton and Helen Skinner say that Robert Jenrick MP has decided not to recover my appeal and has appointed an inspector to decide what happens to the building in Owlthorpe. I am at a loss to understand how government makes legislation and frontline politicians completely ignore the LAW. I am in dispute with Robert Jenrick MP. I have had a confirmation of my communication but still have had no response from him.

Before the enquiry I did ask Holly Dutton, Helen Skinner, George Eustace and Robert Jenrick the Question: is the enquiry just a rubber stamping exercise by the Government? Holly Dutton says it is not but I am not convinced.

I did however present evidence to the Public Enquiry. My evidence can be viewed at <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/publicinquiry.htm> My first question to the

Inspector was: how does Robert Jenrick's Algorithm work? For example: if a (LPA) want to build in a certain position does that tick one box? If a local MP supports that decision does that tick another and if there is a building company interested in building in a certain position does that activate the cutting through red tape to get house building at speed that Robert Jenrick MP says he wants?

Many local residents have complained that the decision made at the planning meeting 2nd June 2020 has been completely overlooked and that they were not informed of the Government appointed Inspectorate review. Surely this does not fulfil correct protocol. I complained to the Inspector and was allowed to review the meeting; this was arranged by Guy Williams Barrister for Sheffield City Council and Lucy Bond, Area Team Manager. Report EO-18 can be viewed in <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/publicinquiry.htm>.

The report EO-18 shows that a full ecology report should be undertaken and also a full traffic assessment should be undertaken before any more building takes places in Owlthorpe. These reports have not taken place, again showing total disregard for protocol. If the whole site was developed as one plot, the above surveys would be essential. However by developing the site piecemeal they have circumnavigated the legal requirement. Eventually the whole site will have been developed without the benefit of these crucial surveys being carried out. This is the conclusion supported by the Government Building Inspector.

Also <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/floodedmineworks.pdf> indicates that "if development proposals are being considered, technical advice relating to both the investigation of coal and former coal mines and their treatment should be obtained before beginning work on site." I have asked The Coal Authority if this have been carried out.

Kind Regards

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