

NEWS RELEASE

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EAST OF OTLEY ACTION GROUP FUNDRAISE FOR LEGAL ADVICE

A community campaign led by the East of Otley Action Group is gathering pace with a fundraising target of £3000 set to pay for legal advice on the planned Otley East development.

The East of Otley Action Group has been created in response to the plan to build 550 new homes and a relief road on accessible greenspace on the outskirts of Otley. The group includes Otley 2030, Otley Community Land Trust, Wildlife Friendly Otley, Otley Nature Network, Wharfedale Naturalists and Cambridge Estate Residents, as well as other local community, faith, and business groups.

The group have decided to take initial legal advice and need to raise funds immediately in order to present the strongest case to influence the current consultation and the planning application, which will be submitted by the Otley East consortium at the end of February 2021.

Martin Gaskin, a member of the East of Otley Action Group said: "There is an opportunity and requirement for an exemplar development, and this is not reflected in the plans. Our community campaign will organise working groups and liaise directly with the consortium's consultants responsible for different elements of the development. The intention is to work through in detail the site masterplan and address conflicts as early as possible."

"We need to do everything we can to get the planners and builders to include measures for more sustainable and affordable housing and to help mitigate the inevitable destruction of wildlife and loss of habitats. The plan was first conceived many years ago and long before Leeds's own declared aim of achieving carbon zero emissions by 2030. Times have changed."

The group are also liaising with Town and City Ward Councillors and Otley MP, Alex Sobel, helping to ensure a coordinated community effort that achieves their aim of an exemplar development, in line with the Neighbourhood Plan.

"There are strong feelings in Otley against the development, and some in support of it" continued Mr Gaskin, "but we believe that the consensus is that IF the development is to go ahead, it needs to honour the Otley Neighbourhood Plan and 'Do the right thing!' by our community, nature and the planet. This represents the largest local development for decades and is of huge importance to all members of the Otley community."

The East of Otley Action Group maintain that the sustainable future of the Otley and its wider community depends on this development being pursued in the right way and are urging residents to support them with online donations.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/east-of-otley-development-community-legal-advice>