

## Conservative Group

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My Ref

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Date

Mr. M Coughlan  
27 Woodhall Crescent  
Copley  
Halifax  
HX3 0UN

17<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Dear Mr. Coughlan

### Sowerby Bridge- Copley Valley Transformational Project

Thank you for your letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> March and I will answer your questions as honestly, as always, as I can.

1. Becoming Deputy Mayor in December 2010 has neither increased nor decreased the powers that I, as a single Councillor, have. In the Cabinet system under which the Council now operates the main powers lie with the Cabinet, subject to scrutiny by panels of other Members.
2. I have studied the plans carefully and have met with Genr8 and Curtin & Co to discuss these plans. Some parts of the plans cannot be argued against, whilst other aspects still need to be looked at more closely particularly traffic and education.
3. Yes, I am concerned about traffic levels especially up and down Copley Lane. There needs to be a lot more clarity and discussion about possible increases on top of the current heavy traffic levels at certain times. Residents of Skircoat are already concerned about traffic issues and any new proposals have to try and allay their concerns.
4. The change of Government has partially altered my 'Big Brother' statement of 2010. The plans by the former Government for an extra 26,000 homes in Calderdale under the Local Development Plan was a tremendous figure to consider. The Localism Bill still yet to be made law, allows Councils more ways to look at the housing issue and no fixed figure is included in the draft. No longer being part of the ruling group I cannot state how they will look at the new situation. Overall they will still have to stand by directives from Central Government, so in the context of my statement of 'Big Brother' to a large degree it still stands.

5. My individual influence is still relatively small. The Sowerby Bridge/Copley Valley Project Board has met only twice since my re-election in 2009, the last time being about 12 months ago. My discussions have been directly with Genr8 and Officers of the Council. In the last municipal year I was on the former Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Panel and was more involved in discussions in the Town Hall. This past twelve months I was moved to Children's Services. My discussions have always centred on flooding, traffic, education and other essential services.
6. No I did not put in a personal objection to the Planning Application 10/01576/FUL. Why not? When I had studied the documentation I felt that the application on its own would not be detrimental to the people of Copley. I may be wrong to come to this opinion and certainly this will certainly be the view of the majority of members of the Copley Valley Environment Protection Group.
7. The Copley Valley in 2021? An area which is beautiful, that is un-contaminated, that is less likely to flood, that people can walk safely, that wildlife and fauna are to be enjoyed. That the concerns of residents of Copley have been allayed.

The plans have been submitted for the whole scheme and I shall be putting my concerns to the plans re: flooding, education and traffic. I do know that the applicant has a right to appeal if the plans are rejected and I also believe that in most cases they have answers to the concerns being put by individuals at the present time. I am not a defeatist, I try to be a realist, and I believe that we have to get the best we can in all these issues as I genuinely cannot see the Planning Committee being in a position to reject the proposals outright if they are recommended for approval. Should the Committee go against the recommendation almost certainly this would be overturned – at great expense – by the Inspectorate in Bristol. There are very few recommendations altered by Committee and I know from personal experience when one was a few months ago, the Inspectorate granted permission much to my disdain.

Kindest regards

John Hardy  
Councillor, Skircoat Ward