

Poynton Town Council

Further representations: planning application 17/6471M Hazelbadge Road, Poynton

Planning permission is being sought for full planning permission for 146 houses as set out in application 17/6471M and registered by the Borough Council in January 2018. The Borough Council undertook further consultation on application 17/6471M until 13 February 2019. This consultation followed receipt of further and additional information from the applicants as to the content of the application in November 2018. The application is now listed for a decision by the Borough Council's Strategic Planning Board at its meeting on 27 March 2019.

In response to this further consultation, more than 150 local residents have registered their objections to the proposed development, this being in addition to the original response which also raised a lot of objections from the local community. The Town Council made its response dated 4 February 2018 at which time there were no highway or transport comments from the Borough Council's Highways service regarding either the impact of the development on the local road network or the safety issues raised due to the location of the primary school in immediate proximity to the development.

The Town Council has now viewed all the comments received during the second public consultation period and wishes to make the following comments in advance of the Strategic Planning Board meeting. The Town Council requests that these comments be included in the Planning Officer's report to the Board or reported verbally to the Board meeting.

The further comments of the Town Council on planning application 17/6471M are as follows:

1 Support is given to the many comments and expressions of concern from local residents and parents of children attending the primary school about the highway and personal safety issues arising from the scale and siting of this development.

2 The Borough Council's Urban Design officer set out in her response of 4 February 2019 many concerns as to the design and layout. She has correctly assessed the proposed development against the relevant planning policies at national and Borough level. These include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Cheshire East adopted Local Plan 2017, Saved policy of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and the Borough Council's own Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017. The assessment concludes that many design matters are inappropriate for this site which include: context and scale, materials and type of housing, housing mix, density. It is concluded in the Design report that the development cannot be supported in design terms because it does not accord with the Design policy SE1 of the Local Plan, does not accord with the key sections of the NPPF and does not meet the requirements of the Borough Council's own recent Design Guide. Poynton Town Council supports this assessment and endorses the conclusions reached.

3 Cheshire East Public Right of Way team continues to object to the development as the applicants have to date failed to commence the process for the diversion of appropriate footpaths. The public footpaths in the Poynton area are one of its strongest assets as has been confirmed by the Poynton Neighbourhood Plan work. Whilst this may be a matter of due process and timing, it is symptomatic of a lack of concern from the developer about the potential impact of the development on the abilities of the surrounding communities to enjoy the benefits of the footpaths in this area.

4 With regard to the most recent consultation reply from the Environment Agency (dated 11 February 2019), the Town Council is both very concerned and disappointed at the conclusions reached by the Agency with regard to the high risk of contamination referred to in their report. In particular, we are very concerned about the reference to putting an “unreasonable burden on the developer” raised in the Agency response. With respect, mitigation of this development is essential, it is not an option nor is it a matter which in our view can be dealt with later or by planning condition. We would refer to section 178 of the NPPF 2019 which states that planning decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability or contamination, as is the case here. The section goes on to confirm that adequate site investigation information is available to inform assessments and is prepared by a competent person. The Borough Council is requested to ensure that investigative works to enable this development to progress are undertaken by the developer and their advisors and prior to the grant of any planning permission.

5 The first and only comments on the planning application made by the Highway authority are dated 18 February 2019, some 5 days after the last date for submitting comments and more than one year since this planning application was registered with the Borough Council. The conclusions from the report of the Highway authority are that no highways objections are raised and planning conditions are recommended. The report is a technical Highways report which does not assess the extent to which the development complies or otherwise with national planning (and transport) policies set out in the NPPF or policies set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan. The NPPF for example at the section headed Considering Development Proposals (within the Sustainable Transport part of the NPPF) sets out in paragraphs 108-111 guidelines for assessing development proposals. Highway safety matters are referred to several times within the national planning guidance but is not referred to at all in the Highways report for this application. The conclusions reached in the Highways report are not ones which the Town Council or any parties making representations on this application would recognise. Site specific principles of development are set out for this site in Local Plan policy LPS 48 which include highways and transport matters; no assessment is provided as to how these requirements are satisfied by the development proposed. Overall, the Highway authority approach is very limited and fails to assess the impact of the development on the local community as national planning policy requires.

6 The Headteacher of the adjacent primary school has written an undated letter addressed to the applicants setting out what the school would want. This letter is listed on the application section of the Borough Council website but the letter may pre-date the planning application. From the material in the public domain, it is not clear to what extent the requests made in that letter have or are being responded to by the developer. The Town Council endorses the concerns expressed by the Headteacher in the published letter and would request that if planning permission is granted for the development being proposed, the council should seek to meet the Headteacher’s requests through an appropriate planning agreement or condition.

John Knight

