

DAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Vicky Stock, 6 Grovemount, Davenham, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 8LY Tel 07443 579 057
Clerk email: clerk@davenhampc.org.uk

11 December 2014

Our Ref: comment. dpc.gl2.arw.v5a.ref:14/04524/FUL

The Development Planning Manager
Planning Service
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Wyvern House
The Drummer
Winsford Cheshire CW7 1AH

Dear Sirs,

**Re: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BY BLOOR HOMES NORTH WEST –
Land off Green Lane. DAVENHAM
Planning application ref: 14/04524/FUL**

Thank you for agreeing to extend the consultation period on the above application to Wednesday 3 December [with Paul Friston, Case Officer – 26.11. 2014].

Davenham Parish Council has reviewed the documentation associated with proposal 14/04524/FUL and strongly objects to this proposal for numerous reasons as outlined below.

1 CW&C Local Plan

We would first draw your attention to the policies in the CW&C Local Plan which has now gone through the 'Hearing' stage and our consideration that this application does not comply with the provisions of that Plan. .

We would draw your attention to the following specific sections of the Local Plan:

1.A ENV 2 Landscape *Protecting space between settlements to protect and maintain their character. Supporting the designation of local green space. Take full account of the development site, its relationship with its surroundings views into, over and out of the site. Recognise, retain and incorporate features of landscape quality into the design.*

The **ENV 2 Explanation** statement refers:

In **8.15** to -*making a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of landscape value and as such is encouraged by the Local Plan.*

In **8.16** it refers to *the designation of local green space will provide communities with the opportunity to safeguard green areas which are of significance to the local community.*

In **8.17** it states *Village design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans seek to define the character and local distinctiveness which will be protected and where possible, enhanced*
.....

In **8.18** it again refers to ... *the quality of local distinctiveness.... And identifying key gaps between settlements maintain and preserve their individual character.*

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In **8.19** it refers to *environment enhancement climatic resilience and wildlife.*
In **8.20** *Development proposals should take account of both the Green Infrastructure Framework and the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment*

1.B ENV 3 Green infrastructure. *the creation, enhancement, protection and management of a network of high quality multi-functional green infrastructure.*

The **ENV 3 Explanation** statement refers:

In **8.22** to - *the network of greenspaces, water bodies habitats that pass through, and link the settlements.....*

In **8.23** to - *The National Planning Framework [NPPF] sets out plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of bi-diversity and green infrastructure. supported by the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy.*

In **8.25** to: ... *groups of trees and hedgerows provides important habitats for wildlife.*

In **8.27** to - *The Green Infrastructure approach as well as the Council's 'Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan' add further detail at a local level.*

In **8.28** to - *plan provides an opportunity to create a strengthened Green Infrastructure network*

1.C SOC 6 Open space, sport and Recreation *Provide innovative solutions to improving the network of existing open spaces , increase accessibility to green corridors, and enhance biodiversity.*

The **SOC 6 Explanation** statement refers:

In **7.40** to:*enhancing links existing green corridors and networks. ... improving the quality of existing open spaces*

In **7.43** to: ... *natural and semi-natural open space... many of these form greenway links*

1.D STRAT 1 Sustainable development .. *seeking opportunities for habitat creation. Minimise loss of Greenfield land. Protect., enhance and improve the natural and historic environment.*

1.E STRAT 8 Rural Area *Development should not exceed the capacity of existing services and infrastructure unless required improvements can be made.*

1.F STRAT 10 Transport and accessibility *New development will be required to demonstrate that: Additional traffic can be accommodated safely and satisfactorily within the existing or proposed highway network.. Or making satisfactory arrangements ...before the development*

The **STRAT 10 Explanation** statement further details the factors, many of which could equally apply to the traffic problems in Davenham village centre.

Our conclusion is that this application does not comply with the clear policies of the CW&C Local Plan or our emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

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2 Highways

The proposed access to the site, via Green Avenue, is wholly inadequate to cater for an additional 52 houses. off a narrow road and accessed on an acute bend with poor visibility. The access to the site is at an acute blind bend via a narrow one way system along Green Lane, with existing unacceptable congestion through a recognized choke point in the village. Unfortunately the adverse effects of such a development have already been clearly shown by the development already being carried out by the same developer. The site is accessed via the adjacent development at the Meadows. Such developments lead to increased traffic congestion and associated economic damage to the village of Davenham.

There are a significant proportion of senior residents who live in this part of the village. Not only does this challenge access for any new residents and construction traffic, but more importantly it is highly likely to lead to restricted access for emergency vehicles required to attend calls to the proposed development.

Further, the adjacent development, 'The Meadows' has proven that access for large delivery traffic during the construction phase is dangerous. The HSE have been called to the site over issues which a root cause analysis, can demonstrate to be access related. The delivery traffic to this site has not been able to safely access and egress the site due to the layout of Green Lane. This has resulted in illegal and hazardous traffic movements which can easily be avoided by declining the proposal. Any development in this area should at least require contractors to provide turning space for construction traffic within the site [i.e. all construction traffic to enter and leave in a forward direction] and wheel washing facilities.

On the wider highway issue, recent planning approvals in Davenham [36] Moulton [148] and other applications currently under consideration will already add considerably to the congestion in Davenham village centre, along Mount Pleasant Road, Hartford Road and Church Street.

When our village by-pass was completed some 20 years ago there was a dramatic reduction in through traffic but there has been a noticeable increase in traffic though the village in recent years. If the scale of development envisaged in the Local Plan materializes, it will undoubtedly increase the existing levels of congestion to intolerable levels. The adverse impact of this level of new development on the village core has not been properly addressed by CW&C, and now must be fully assessed before any further development is considered. It is difficult to see a solution, given the lack of off-road parking for residents, businesses or shoppers in the village centre. Failure to solve this problem could ultimately lead to the decline of the already limited local shops and other businesses in the village.

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3 Environmental

The site is on land protected in previous Local Plans as being land of Significant Local Environment Value.

We had understood that this status is maintained in the emerging CW&C Local Plan and has been accepted by the Local Plan Hearing Inspector. This has long been accepted as a necessary measure to protect the rural nature of the village. This particular piece of land is part of the green buffer between Davenham Village, the A556 Trunk Road and Kingsmead.

Given CW&C's current 5.64 year housing land supply there is now no need to override Local Plan policies or to sacrifice the long term community benefit. It is totally unacceptable to impose such significant and inappropriate development in this village, especially when it involves loss of important landscape the pressure on inadequate infrastructure. The present 5.64 year provision of development land and this provision is likely to be maintained for the life of the Local Plan together with a strong preference for development on Brownfield and in urban centres.

We also consider that wildlife issues are being too easily dismissed. We, as a nation, are seeing serious losses in wildlife numbers which in many cases are starting to have serious environmental consequences. The damaging loss to pollinators has been well publicized. We are too easily ignoring such issues in the rush to develop green fields when there is so much Brown Field and other underused land, still vacant in this area.

4 Facilities

There are few spare places among the local primary schools of Davenham, Moulton, Kingsmead or Hartford for the influx of children from such new housing developments. These schools are already at full capacity, with young local children becoming 'commuters' around the district. Having to ferry young children around the district to school is detrimental to both their social life, family life, and to the environment. There is very limited capability to provide additional accommodation at either the Davenham or Moulton village primary schools and we understand none is planned.

This application is one of several local applications recently submitted to CW&C for planning decisions. We understand that three have been withdrawn and two refused. These applications, together those developments already under construction would add up to around **400** new dwellings in Davenham and Moulton without any local provision of primary school places, or provision of any measures to alleviate growing traffic congestion.

Furthermore this figure is not far short of those identified in the CW&C 'SHLAA' and that was a potential allocation for the 20 year life of the Local Plan, not a 2 year period! These applications can only therefore be seen, at best, as premature.

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5 Neighbourhood Plan

We would point out that in preparing our Neighbourhood Plan we are looking at how the community can gain benefit from 'appropriate' new development. This is important to us in gaining community acceptance of well-designed and located, development. Such benefits would include [in addition the traffic, congestion issues and primary school places]:

- a) allocating land for village community facilities, [e.g. a village hall].
- b) retention and improvement of existing landscape and open spaces
- c) the creation of 'green lanes', wildlife corridors and landscaped buffers, as part of our rural footpath network and to soften the impact of new development.
- d) extensive environmental tree planting and,
- e) truly sustainable development.

An additional consideration is protection of the open spaces in the back-land of the village and on road frontages. For example the rejected application site in Church Street, along London Road, past the Grade 2 listed Davenham Hall and on Jack Lane. These spaces are important to the character and structure of the village and have been protected in all previous Local Plans.

None of the above seems to have been addressed in any of the recent and current Planning Applications.

6 Traffic Issues

We consider that the additional traffic and congestion that would be created by the proposed development is an intrinsically harmful and unnecessary hazard to this community. This is especially so when other potential development is taken into account

7 Landscape Issues

In the emerging Davenham Neighbourhood Plan we envisage creating a greener village, creating wildlife corridors [approximately 10M wide] and green lanes as part of any new development. We contend that development with no discernible benefit to this community is unacceptable and not in accord with the Local Plan.

8 Design

From the site plan, it appears to be the usual dreary 'developer' layout. The big house in a convenient location, the smaller and 'affordable' largely relegated to the noisy by-pass interface. The design of the individual dwellings seems to be the standard developer units which have few references to Davenham. The 'existing dwellings' illustrated, we assume, to represent Davenham are merely older 'standard' type housing.

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We are concerned at the proximity of dwellings to the A556 [usually affordable housing] and the effect on the quality of life. We note the so called 'Acoustic Fence' and the proposal, not only to leave a landscape buffer of only 5M, but to leave this as garden land. We believe this should be at least 10M, be tree planted and transferred outside the site ownership. Any acoustic buffer fence should be behind the tree planting in order to obscure the 'urbanising' appearance of the solid fence in the road frontage and provide a secured wildlife zone.

Despite a clear message from our Neighbourhood Plan public consultations there appears to be only three single storey units to meet the needs of our older residents looking to downsize, all of which are in the affordable category. Out of the 36 'private' dwellings 66% are 4 and 5 bedroom whereas the demands locally from our public consultations place the bulk of the need to be 2 and 3 Bedroom properties.

9 Sustainability

The applicants Sustainability Statement quotes policy GS2 and seems mainly focused on the site location relevant to services. It does not demonstrate how the 'open space', 'landscaping', 'Site Layout' relates to real sustainability in terms of energy efficiency, use of solar energy or ground source heat generation. The only reference seems to be having habitable rooms facing south but without any reference to protecting these areas from heat gain in the summer.

Similarly, the site layout fails to locate buildings and roof pitches so as to at least allow for post construction adaption to efficient solar energy. It is not clear from the drawings whether the roofs will be constructed to allow for future use of the roof spaces, whether the hard standings will be water permeable or any provision will be made for grey water recycling. All these are basic considerations in creating really sustainable buildings.

10 SHLAA and Land Use

With the CW&C schedule of 'possible' development sites [the SHLAA], we were advised that this does not imply that development will be permitted. We note that SHLAA assessments takes no

account of the important social, community impact or the wider planning issues we refer to above and therefore cannot be seen as a 'green light' and is in effect merely a statement of sites with a willing seller and willing developer. This is yet another planning application for development not on only Greenfield land, but on land designated as land of Local Environmental Value.

A recent study of potential housing land available in the UK found that there was enough Underused or Surplus land to meet a 10 year supply of land for 2,000,000 new houses based on the HBF 'need' estimate. There is clearly no need to take away our open countryside or overstress our local communities beyond their infrastructure capacity.

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11 CONSULTATION

The developer's only contact with the community seems to be a leaflet inviting comments and one meeting with the Parish Council based on the original scheme. We understand that the leaflet only went to residents in the immediate vicinity not to the many people in the village who are also significantly affected by this scale and location of development. Hardly as interactive as an exhibition of their proposals as most other developers have done. It would surely be better if CW&C actually set the level of community consultation required, especially as we are in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

At the Parish Council meeting with the developer we expressed our concerns about the proposal particularly with regard to the layout, access, housing mix and the adverse impact on the community. Only minor amendments have been incorporated which do not alter our deep concern over the proposal.

Aspects of this application are clearly not in accord with the emerging CW&C Local Plan [currently past it Hearing Stage] or the relevant retained parts of the Vale Royal Local plan. *[see section 1 above]*

We object strongly to this Planning application for the above reasons and would request that all our comments and those from residents are fully taken fully into account in considering this application and included in your report to be submitted to the CW&C planning committee members. We would also request that you keep this Parish Council fully informed of progress on the processing of this application and the date when the application would be going before the planning committee.

Perhaps you could also consider holding your Planning Meeting at Wyvern House, a more accessible venue for this community who have already voiced their collective disquiet to the Parish Council concerning this application and who would wish to attend the planning meeting.

Yours faithfully,

Vicky Stock
Clerk to the Parish Council
For and on behalf of Davenham Parish Council

Copies to: CEO CW&C Council, Paul Friston, Case Officer,
Local ward members CW&C Council: Cllrs Elton Watson, Gaynor Sinar and Helen Weltman

Please note for your records, the new name and contact details for the Clerk to the Council