

Planning Application 2021/1089

Land to the South East of Higham Common Road, Barnsley (Application 2).

Hybrid application for employment development comprising:- a) Full planning permission for: earthworks to create development platforms; strategic drainage ponds and associated drainage infrastructure; and location of strategic landscaping and ecological areas. b) Outline planning permission seeking approval over means of access and landscaping for employment use development (use classes E/B2/B8) and associated infrastructure works.

OVERVIEW

Throughout the Local Plan consultations in 2014 and 2016, together with the Local Plan Examination in Public, I have expressed long standing concerns about the lack of objectivity, transparency and governance relating to Site MU1 and its inclusion in the Local Plan.

Nothing which I have read in the supporting documentation accompanying this planning application and the accompanying planning application 2021/1090 has altered that view.

My long experience has taught me how to see through the veil of words which are used to justify a situation.

The Local Plan and these two planning applications are prime examples of this.

My overall objections to the destruction of 122 hectares of Green Belt to facilitate Site MU1 remain.

The background to the development, and in the minds of the local community the controversial sequence of events which led to this 122 hectare site being removed from the much cherished Green Belt, is already well documented and has been the subject of bitter resentment by the local community throughout the Local Plan consultation and Examination in Public procedures.

There is little point in repeating that argument here since the damage has already been done by the Council's decision and lack of integrity towards the local community's views and objections, in its adoption of the Local Plan in January 2019.

In this planning application, and the accompanying planning application 2021/1090 (referred to below as "*these two planning applications*"), we are now beginning to see the legacy and outcome of the fallacy of the Council's decision to remove 122 hectares of land from the Green Belt for Site MU1 and the long term effect that this will have in blighting the area for the next 15 years during the development period.

The issues and problems identified in the supporting documents for these two applications were all identified by objectors as problem areas in comments and objections made to, and

during, the Local Plan Consultation Draft 2014, the Local Plan Publication Draft 2016 and throughout the Examination In Public procedures.

Indeed, it goes further back than that to 2012/13 when my comments/objections to the Sheffield City Region Investment Fund (SCRIF) consultation (which included the proposed link road) included the following extract in relation to what is now known as Site MU1:-

“With all these many key outstanding and risk issues to consider/resolve such as topography, sustainability, developability, accessibility, environmental impact including services, access, transportation, residential amenity etc, it is difficult to understand why Site MU1 has been proposed.”

It should also be remembered that Site MU1 scored the lowest score of 90 in the Employment Site Criteria and Scoring paper (EB 39) within the selected sites matrix for Urban Barnsley, and that the score was less than some sites on the rejected sites list.

The decision to include Site MU1 in the Local Plan was therefore extraordinary to say the least, other than for political ambitions and aspirations of the Council fuelled by the promoters of the site.

It has previously been noted that the BWC website said that *“The proposals for the site have been influenced by a number of factors including existing planning policy allocations.....”*.

To the experienced eye, such comments may be considered by the local community to be a little economical with the truth.

In reality, it may also be considered by the local community to be the reverse, whereby the proposals for the site have influenced the Local Plan allocations.

It is already known, and again noted from the Pre-Application (Paragraph 3.8) section of the submitted Planning Statement, that the applicant has been in extensive detailed discussions with the Council over many years before the submission of these two planning applications.

The applicants have effectively written their own script over the last 8+years leading to the Council adopting the Local Plan and the subsequent Site MU1 Masterplan Framework.

It is noted that these two planning applications are accompanied by a long and detailed range of technical documents produced by consultants that consider specific issues and the overall impact of the proposal.

Unsurprisingly, all the documents seek to show evidence supporting the proposal and compliance with the adopted Local Plan and Masterplan framework.

It is quite remarkable how often (if not always) this is the case, including the well worn phrase of *“with mitigation measures”*.

This is not surprising, since the consultants' briefs were no doubt written with this objective in mind.

"Mitigation", "Mitigation", "Mitigation" appears to be the answer by the Council and the applicants to everything!

What is the total cost of "*mitigation measures*" and payable to, or by whom?

The excessive length and detail of the supporting documentation is complex and time consuming to consider. The majority of the supporting documentation is far too technical for any layman without access to professional input to appraise.

This only ensures that local residents will be unable to make any meaningful comment on the technical aspect of these two planning applications.

My initial concerns, in addition to my overall continued objections to the destruction of 122 hectares of Green Belt to facilitate Site MU1, include the complexity of these two planning applications and the time scale to give comment on the detail in the supporting documentation.

The Councils online Planning Explorer has not been helpful in this respect since the detailed plans are difficult to decipher because of their reduced size on Planning Explorer.

Some documents appear to have incomplete detail of scale, levels etc.

Some other documents would not open or take a long time to do so.

The Council has already acknowledged the challenge which the complexity and scale of the applications submitted present.

The submission of such detailed and complex supporting documentation should not be seen as a check list exercise providing developers with the licence to proceed.

As a consequence, does the Council have the necessary in-house expertise to deal with these applications in an objective even handed and transparent way, or will truly independent consultants be appointed to appraise these two planning applications?

It is clear from these two planning applications that the implications for the local community are only now beginning to be fully understood.

As a consequence they are now the subject of much greater concern.

COMMENTS

My comments below should be read in conjunction with my further comments under the respective supporting documentation headings later in this submission document.

There will be “cross-over” comments below which of necessity will relate to these two planning applications.

My first comment is related to the fact that the documentation refers to hybrid applications and that it is the intention that some issues in both applications should be dealt with together, with full planning permission being sought for certain elements of the site and outline planning permission for the remainder to be dealt with as “*reserved matters*”. This is confusing, with the supporting documentation complex and difficult to follow as a consequence.

This is also considered to be unacceptable having regard to the size and implications of the proposed development, particularly the employment phase.

In the plethora of documentation, are there any issues which should properly be included in these two planning applications, but for whatever reason have been excluded?

Some of the critical matters relating to the development should be identified and addressed at the outset before any work begins, such that comments can be made thereon and not left to be dealt with as “*reserved matters*” at the outline planning application stage.

The unwelcome and dubious tactics of submitting piece meal planning applications (already acceded to by the Council) is not helpful.

The incremental effect of these applications is leading to a totally unacceptable development, fuelled by subsidy from the public purse and the profit motive of developers.

The initial submission and approval of two earlier planning applications for the link road roundabouts is part of this concern.

From 122 Hectares of precious former Green Belt land, the proposals for Site MU1 can now be likened to houses and industrial units (sheds) “.....*threading their way out to embrace former villages in their treacherous tentacles until when the life was squeezed out of them, they became mere suburbs*”.

The Local Plan 2014 and 2016 consultations, together with the Examination in Public, did draw a lot of attention and objections to this development from the local community, including the resultant coalescence of the historic villages of Pogmoor, Gawber, Redbrook, Barugh Green and Higham.

These, together with the consultation on the Site MU1 Masterplan Framework and subsequent BWC consultation in May 2021, were deemed a waste of time by the self same communities and objectors because of what had gone on before.

Will the consultation on these two planning applications be any different?

The deadline for comments of 30/10/21 is far too short a timescale for the local community to understand, digest and comment on the full implications of these two planning applications and the wider effect on the area.

The consultation timescale should be extended accordingly for this, and the reasons mentioned in the following paragraphs.

The quality of the Barnsley West Consortium (BWC) consultation in May 2021 was not comprehensive or representative, since generally some members of the local community may not have the skills, IT capacity or knowledge to understand the BWC website and therefore by default saw it as an arduous task resulting in a reluctance to involve themselves, even though they may have had strong feelings about what is proposed.

This applied not only to the BWC consultation, but will now apply to this consultation having regard to all of the supporting complex technical papers submitted with the two planning applications, or to be submitted under "*reserved matters*" at some future date.

Incidentally, will the list of consultees be the same at the "*reserved matters*" stage?

The conclusion drawn from reading the Statement of Community Involvement which accompanies these two planning applications is that no notice has been taken of the consultation comments submitted by the community, despite the report suggesting that it has.

I have already referred to the consultants' supporting documentation being designed, as usual, to give the required "*with mitigation*" answers. This is particularly evident in one document where there are 13 instances of "*mitigate*" and 62 instances of "*mitigation*" in a 56 page document.

This example is but a sample, there are many more.

This can hardly be considered acceptable, since it does demonstrate the problems with the site.

Who will check that all of these mitigation measures have been implemented and working in years to come?

What is the total number of "*with mitigation*" answers for these two planning applications?

There is no legitimacy in such reports if they are merely desk top exercises or using algorithms, the principle of which times many have been brought into question because of inbuilt bias and loss of public trust.

This point was clearly demonstrated by the submitted Transport Statements for both of the earlier link road roundabout planning applications which said "*The proposed roundabout will not generate any new trips itself*", and that a sensitivity test had indicated that "*.....traffic*

associated with the wider MU1 development would be satisfactorily accommodated by the proposed layout”.

Such comments beggar belief.

The sad part was that the Council accepted this, when clearly the very purpose of the roundabouts is seeking to deal with the additional traffic which will be generated by Site MU1.

There needs to be greater transparency, acceptance and openness on such matters.

Despite all of the virtues and examples being highlighted by objectors on the benefit of retaining Site MU1 in the Green Belt and the resultant health and well being for the local community, together with the protection of the existing mature hedgerows, grassland, managed agricultural land and the protection of wildlife habitat etc, these were all dismissed by the Council and the appointed Planning Inspector.

The introduction of the Biodiversity and Geodiversity Policy B1O1 will do nothing to reverse this travesty in the instance of these two planning applications and their content.

The damage has already been done by the proposal to build a new link road carrying many additional thousands of vehicle movements per day, the building of 1,760 houses with new estate roads and large scale industrial sheds all of which will destroy the existing mature hedgerows, grassland, managed agricultural land, wildlife habitat etc, and without doubt will result in additional air, noise and light pollution.

It should also be noted that whilst these two planning applications refer to 1,760 houses, the actual number for the whole of Site MU1 will be 1,900 houses by including the separate planning application 2020/0977.

The proposed wildlife corridors as a replacement for the existing 122 hectares of habitat are seen as little value since they will be in the middle of what will become by the Council’s own definition, an urban area.

In the meantime because of the large scale of the development proposals, the required site levelling, earthworks and timescale, all of the existing wildlife will have dispersed or been destroyed.

Over the four seasons the wild life spotted locally in the Site MU1 area from Pogmoor, Gawber, Higham, Redbrook and Barugh Green includes Sparrow Hawks, Kestrels, Buzzards, Red Kites, Tawny Owls, Lapwings, Nesting Sky Larks, Foxes, Weasels, Field Voles, Hedgehogs, Bats, Pheasants, Partridges, Goldfinches, Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Flocks of Long Tailed Tits, Mistle Thrushes, Butterflies etc. etc.

This does not augur well for any wildlife that in the unlikely event may remain, and the subsequent disturbance which it will suffer in an unprotected environment. Sadly neither the BWC, nor the Council, appear to be expressing any remorse for this.

As mentioned above, the site plan clearly shows the destruction and removal of the existing mature hedgerows and trees, with the exception of “*most of the 2 areas of gully woodland*”.

It appears that a scorched earth policy is being adopted in preparing the site for development.

The Council’s Design of Housing Development SPD at Policy D1, at paragraphs 15.1 and 15.2 is quite clear on the expectations on the retention of mature hedgerows.

The inevitable disruption and disturbance all this will cause for the area and the local community, and the 15 year timescale involved, is truly horrendous.

While the Masterplan indicates that Hermit Lane would no longer be a road, none of the other detailed matters referred to above were made clear when the Local Plan proposals were published and adopted. Nor did the May 2021 consultation exercise by the Barnsley West Consortium mention them either.

It is equally doubtful that the elected councillors were aware or understood this, when effectively rubber stamping the adoption of the Local Plan and the Site MU1 Masterplan proposals.

The closure and loss of Hermit Lane is regrettable.

The existing traffic which currently uses Hermit Lane will have to travel considerably further.

This will place additional traffic on an already congested road network.

Whilst it is noted that the plan does show open green space in this area, it all appears to be in areas which are existing green spaces and in all probability unable to be built on because of ground conditions.

There is no net additional benefit of green spaces therefore as implied in the documentation.

The proposals also include the provision of a new school, sited it would appear from the illustrative Masterplan, next to the proposed link road with all of its additional residential traffic, HGVs and induced traffic flows and all of the problems and pollution that this will bring.

The Parliamentary Audit Committee has at an earlier date already warned that new schools, hospitals and care homes must not be built next to air pollution hotspots in order to help reduce the tens of thousands of deaths currently being caused by nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate pollution every year in the UK.

This concern has been re-iterated in a recent coroner’s report, which included reference to the effect of traffic on air pollution near schools and the risk to school children.

Whilst the Planning Statement “boasts” about Sterling Capitol’s experience and success rate, the Capitol Park development (which was also formerly Green Belt land) is a classic example where for 10+ years the majority of the site lay barren with the private sector failing to pick up the challenge until the public sector stepped in with incentives.

The same could be said about the support arising from the proposed SCRIF public sector funding of the proposed Claycliffe Link Road in terms of the overall viability of the Site MU1 scheme, with or without this public sector input.

There is no viability information (financial or otherwise) provided on which to comment upon, including the implications of varying levels of affordable housing on the viability of the whole scheme.

Past experience suggests that developers will seek to negotiate some of these, together with other Council Local Plan policy measures, out of the investment appraisals in order to protect the market return on their investment.

The site layout plan only shows a southern and northern entrance to the main area of Site MU1 using the proposed Claycliffe Link Road. In addition to the additional traffic emanating from the site, there will be additional induced traffic using the Link Road to other areas in the north and south of Barnsley, including HGVs from Claycliffe Business Park and beyond.

Induced traffic means that the predicted congestion benefits of a new road are often quickly eroded. Traffic levels on bypassed roads can also rise faster than expected due to induced traffic, all of which means the hoped-for benefits of a new road can evaporate very quickly.

As expected, it is noted that the "sheds" shown on the site plan layout will be marketed as suitable for warehouse, distribution and logistics type uses.

As a consequence, HGV's and other induced vehicle movements will have a tortuous route to access J37 of the M1, or indeed J38 of the M1.

There will also be additional traffic, noise and light pollution experienced by the existing residents in the houses at the top of Higham Common Road adjacent to the Higham roundabout. Despite the strong concerns expressed by objectors, none of this was brought out in the roundabout planning application (s) referred to above.

Indeed to add insult to injury (as already mentioned above), the submitted Transport Statements for both roundabouts said *“The proposed roundabout will not generate any new trips itself”*, and that a sensitivity test had indicated that *“.....traffic associated with the wider MU1 development would be satisfactorily accommodated by the proposed layout”*.

As has also been said above, such statements beggar belief when these proposals are purported to be a key part of such a large scale development of 1760 houses and 43 hectares of employment land with all of the additional traffic movements which this will bring, together with the additional traffic generated from the 140 houses which are the subject of planning application 2020/0977.

The proposed layout of the Phase 1 residential layout is noted at this stage.

The annotation on the layout plan lacks clarity. The use of codes for the houses, coupled with the small type font, makes it very difficult to identify what house type is proposed for which plot. While there is a heading for this on the accommodation schedule, the entry under it is blank. More clarity is required. A plan showing the intervening distances between the proposed and existing dwellings is also required.

The short drives and lack of parking spaces, which is synonymous with all new housing developments leading to excessive overload parking on roads and pavements, is also noted.

There appear to be no drainage details provided under the heading plans. Are these shown elsewhere in the supporting documentation?

The change in levels on the boundary on the western edge of the site is depicted on the sections, but there is no indication of the screen planting on the boundary slope referred to in the Design and Access statement. This omission should be rectified by its inclusion in the application.

There is a clear need that any design of houses should meet Policy D1 in the Design of Housing Development SPD rather than a mediocre mass of volume-built housing having little or no merit as a model of good design, or relevance to the existing long standing residential developments.

The proposed site layout and house types suggests that that this policy is not being adhered to or respected, particularly three storey houses and the apparent location thereof adjacent to, or in front of, the existing residential properties some of which are single storey.

There is a large proportion of existing bungalows that border on to this Phase 1 area, but there are no bungalows however, proposed in Phase 1 which is again viewed with concern.

Some, for instance the existing bungalows in St John's Avenue in Barugh Green, were designed so that their main aspect faced onto what was formally Green Belt Land.

This is a characteristic also evident in some of the neighbouring properties in Wharfedale Road and Colster Close in Pogmoor which will be affected by later phases.

How is the physical relationship between the new and existing housing, including bungalows to be addressed in order to meet the requirements of Policy GD1 and its associated paragraphs?

The Design of Housing Development SPD does set down quite clearly the requirements and provisions for the design for new housing developments at GD 1, including that there should be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

It is clear that there will be a significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing residents arising from Phase 1 (and the future phases of both residential and employment) from the proximity and type of housing proposed. In addition, it appears that there will be many years of heavy plant involved in site contour levelling, and construction activity bringing dust, noise and disturbance for existing residents.

There is no mention of any financial compensation for existing residents whose lives and property values will be blighted forever by this work and the permanent loss of Green Belt for this development.

The site plan proposals include green spaces within the residential development for new properties, but it does not respect or provide the provision of green spaces on the full perimeter of the overall site (including future residential developments) which abut existing residential developments.

Green buffer zones should be provided to safeguard and protect the living conditions and amenities of the occupiers of the existing dwellings on the edges of the site of the Phase 1 development, and all future residential developments in later phases. None are shown on the site plan for Phase 1 or future residential developments.

The existing natural “green” wildlife corridor that already exists on the eastern part of the site running alongside and parallel to the rear gardens of the properties on the south side of Colster Close and the boundaries of the existing properties in the upper part of Wharfedale Road to Farmhouse Lane is not shown on the layout plan. This should be addressed, enhanced and protected as a buffer zone between the existing properties and future proposed properties, in the same way that Harden Close and Drury Farm Court is shown on the site plan.

The proposals appear to conveniently omit such information, since looking at the site plan no concessions appear to have been made to protect the existing privacy and residential visual amenity and outlook as a result of the sacrifice of Green Belt land.

Whilst existing residents may be deemed (quite incorrectly in my opinion) to have no right to a view (which in itself adds value to a property), the concept of outlook and the right of light is a different matter. This point is acknowledged in the Council’s Design of Housing Development SPD at Policy D1, paragraph 3.1. and Policy D1 in the Council’s Residential Amenity and the Siting of Buildings SPD.

Since many new developments contain 3 floors of living accommodation, as appears to be the case looking at some of the “mundane” house types shown earlier on the BWC website, it is essential to ensure that the new housing does not have an overbearing effect on the outlook and the right of light of the existing dwellings, both for Phase 1 and future residential developments.

It is noted from the supporting documentation that it is proposed to re-contour the whole site by cut and fill and thereby lower the development platforms to counter this. It is not fully clear from the plans however, how this will be achieved.

The overall site cut and fill analysis drawing is very difficult to decipher. The use of different shades of the same colour makes it very difficult to interpret.

In view of the importance of this component of the proposal, the drawings should identify the 8 locations of the development platforms and the various areas of excavated and created embankments associated with each of them, together with clear sectional drawings for each of these areas. This has been done in the case of the road so it should equally apply to the earthworks.

Where new housing borders onto single storey dwellings, as mentioned above, it too should be single storey in this and future residential developments.

In addition, the Council's Design of Housing Development SPD at Policy GD1, paragraph 4 is quote clear on external spacing standards where new housing abuts the edge of "existing settlements". For example, the back-to-back dimension towards existing housing should be greater than the 21 metre minimum separation distance with the Council giving advice on a case by case basis, based on the privacy and outlook of the existing dwelling. This distance should increase further where the new dwellings are more than 2 storeys.

This standard should be applied rigorously wherever the proposed housing borders onto any existing residential development on the fringes of the Phase 1 development and for all future residential developments.

Supporting Documentation Comments

Arboricultural Report

It is clear from Section 2.1 that the report has been written with a brief from the developers with the sole intention of clearing the site with the exception of those trees which exist under a TPO and where the land is unsuitable for development.

This represents the "scorched earth" policy which I referred to above.

Paragraph 1.1.6 of the report is noted with grave concern:-

"The proposed development works will require the removal of all of the trees on the site with the exception of most of these two areas of gully woodland, and trees located within them. All hedgerows on the site will be removed. All off-site trees and woodland will be retained, although some trees located close to the boundaries will be felled. The trees located beyond the retained woodland and the hedgerows require removal either because they are located on the footprint of proposed buildings and roads, or because they are located in areas of proposed level change. The trees to be felled include 11 trees of high quality (A category) and 34 trees of moderate quality (B category). The groups to be removed include one group of high quality (A category), parts of two groups of high quality and four groups of moderate

quality (B category). All other trees and groups, and all hedges, to be felled, are either features of low quality (C category), or are unsuitable for retention (U category)."

All of the areas included in this statement currently provide, and have provided for many years, valuable habitat and wildlife corridors for the wildlife which I referred to above.

This action will result in the permanent loss of this habitat and all of the existing wildlife will have dispersed or been destroyed.

In the consultation time available, it is not possible to read and comment on the individual tree survey reports. Again the Council's Planning Explorer is not helpful in this regard.

Suffice to say however, that the trees and hedgerows have added to, and provided character, to the whole area both within and without for many generations.

The introduction of the Biodiversity and Geodiversity Policy B1O1 will do nothing to reverse this travesty.

The Council should carefully and objectively review the "*Comments*" and "*Recommended Work*" column in the schedule at Appendix A in the report.

In particular, Beech Trees T24 and T25 at the western lower end of Farmhouse Lane have been dominant visual features for many years, throughout the seasons. Consideration should be given as to how these can be protected, as with other mature trees south of Hermit Lane.

Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan

The report appears to be written in a standard format designed to give standard answers.

Table 1 in the report appears a little sparse and economical in its "*Survey of Results*" with limited information shown compared to the local sightings which I referred to above in my "OVERVIEW" section.

It is noted at paragraph 1.6 of the report that a "*Limitations*" section is included indicating that a review of the document should be undertaken "*once further landscape details are available for the scheme*".

In these circumstances, what value should be afforded to the information contained in the report?

It is difficult to see how Sections 4 and 5 in the report can be implemented under a scorched earth policy.

Again, the introduction of the Biodiversity and Geodiversity Policy B101 will do nothing to reverse this travesty. The damage will have been done and the site not protected by the aims of the policy.

Design and Access Statement

This document initially failed to open on several occasions on the Council's Planning Explorer,

Access was eventually achieved on 25/10/21.

The document is 65 pages long.

At this late stage and in the time available, it is not possible to read, digest and submit detailed comments thereon.

Having said that, the document appears to replicate much of what is contained elsewhere in these two planning applications, detailed comments on which I have been made elsewhere in this submission.

Environmental Statement (Non-Technical Summary)

I have already made many extensive comments above on related matters

The Environmental Statement (Non-Technical Summary) report purports to summarise the more detailed Statements and Appendices of which there appears to be approximately 97 in total.

It is peppered with the phrase "*mitigation measures*", as no doubt are the other 97 Statements and Appendices!

There is a summary section in the report. My comments are shown under each sub-heading below.

It is noted that **there appears to be no reference to light pollution** arising from the development in the report.

Increased light pollution is already noticeable from the J37/Capitol Park area and the Claycliffe area.

(i) Landscape and Visual effects

As has always been pointed out by objectors throughout the Local Plan process, the conclusion of this section of the report is that there would be significant effects both during and following completion of the development extending to Higham, Gawber and Pogmoor. This has always been argued by objectors to be not acceptable.

For some reason Barugh Green and Redbrook are not mentioned in the conclusion wording.

Having lost 122 hectares of open space Green Belt land, the mention of 30% of the application site (a figure which in itself is debateable) is set aside for amenity space, planting and green links is irrelevant to the existing local community who will see 1760 houses and large scale logistics use sheds imposed on their doorstep.

(ii) Ecology (Biodiversity)

The figure of 30% of the application site is set aside for amenity space, strategic planting and green links is again mentioned in the context of *“mitigation measures”*. My comments on this are shown above under the **Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan** heading.

(iii) Transport

The Volume 8 Transport supporting document to the Environmental Statement has clearly been written with the desired Council policy objectives in mind.

The document is littered with phrases such as *“minor adverse significance”*, *“negligible significance”*.

It is difficult to believe that the *“full development will only generate an estimated 1017 and 1189 new primary two way trips in the AM and PM peak hours”* as stated in paragraph 8.8.26.

The actual number of vehicle movements per day will be considerably in excess of this.

Remember that 1,760 houses are proposed under these two planning applications and 1,900 in total for the whole of Site MU1, together with large scale logistic uses on the proposed employment sites.

In addition to the additional traffic emanating from the development, there will be additional induced traffic using the Link Road to other areas in the north and south of Barnsley, including HGVs from Claycliffe Business Park and beyond.

The cumulative effect shown at 8.9 all conclude with the phrase *“negligible significance”*.

Again such phrases beggar belief.

The summary at 8.11 is, as expected, designed to justify the Council’s policy objectives.

In particular, paragraph 8.11.4 which states that *“the potential environmental effects resulting from the increase in traffic generated by the development are predicted to be minor or negligible”*, is unacceptable for the reasons stated above.

As with paragraph 8.11.4 of the Volume 8 Transport supporting document, the wording in paragraph 26 of the Environmental Statement (which replicates paragraph 8.11.4) again beggars belief when these proposals include a new link road which is a key part of such a large scale development of 1760 houses and 43 hectares of employment land as proposed under these two planning applications, with all of the additional traffic movements which this will bring.

All of this on what was 122 hectares of former Green Belt land, where the only on-site traffic currently, is either the farmer’s tractor or traffic using Hermit Lane which must only have an existing very low or even “nil” environmental effect.

How can the high volume of additional traffic etc arising from this development only have the same *“minor or negligible”* effect?

See also my related comments on pages 7 and 8 above.

(iv) Ground conditions

Again we see the phrase *“Mitigation measures”* and that the residual effects have been reduced to *“negligible”* and *“not significant”*.

Are we seriously expected to believe and accept such wording?

(v) Flood Risk and Drainage

Again at paragraph 41 we see the words *“mitigation measures”* and *“no significant effect”*.

Off site flooding is known from rain water emanating from this site.

Will the measures proposed prevent this in the future when the area of natural seepage is reduced?

(vi) Air Quality

It has already been argued during the Local Plan consultation and Examination in Public procedures that the scale of the proposed Site MU1 development of industrial units, houses and the link road will lead to a marked deterioration in air quality throughout the whole of the site.

Despite what the report says at paragraph 45, it is difficult to accept that the effect would be *“not significant”* from the thousands of additional vehicle movement per day through this site.

Common sense dictates that it is irresponsible to use the phrase “*not significant*”.

It is also difficult to accept that mitigation measure will alleviate the problem.

(vii) Noise

Section 13 (Noise) of the Environmental Statement is 56 pages in length.

Much of the narrative is incomprehensible to the layman.

Section 13.6 is full of “*mitigation measures*”, all designed to convince the Council and the reader that the noise impact will be at “*negligible levels*”.

It is difficult to believe and accept this conclusion.

The M1 Motorway to the west of the site already transmits an increasing level of noise across the site to Pogmoor with a westerly prevailing wind. The additional traffic on Site MU1 will exacerbate this.

The wording in Section 13.6 does need serious challenge by the Council.

(viii) Socio-economics and Health

The figures shown in this part of the document represent the “*aspirations*” and “*selling points*” previously seen in various guises in different documents in the past, but now including the 15 year timescale which does not augur well for the local community and other adjacent areas affected by the proposals that will be faced with such a long period of disturbance as mentioned in the body of my submission above.

However, whilst the draft Masterplan Framework had bold statements of the perceived “*Economic Benefits*” of the proposed development, including “*3,510 FTE jobs supported by the employment floor space*”, the section in this document only refers to 405 temporary jobs over the 15 year build period and 2,539 gross jobs (whatever that means) will be supported by on-site employment space.

What happened to the other 1,000 jobs?

Interestingly, an even higher “*Output*” figure of “*3,851 direct jobs*” for Site MU1 was quoted in the Council’s Capital Programme report for the Quarter ending 30/06/17.

The employment numbers appear to be a moveable feast used to again justify the proposal.

This does cause concern since the use of such tactics does incorrectly influence the Council's aspirations and policy decisions, some of which for Site MU1 should now be questioned.

Since it is likely that the "*employment floor space*" is to be marketed for warehouse, distribution and logistic type uses, it is equally unlikely that the majority of such jobs will be located onsite to support the 1700 new housing proposals.

The perceived financial benefits to the Council of additional Business Rates and Council Tax are also noted.

A cynic would say that the Council's financial agenda is dictating the planning agenda and this will be the reward to the Council for granting planning permission, in addition to any S106 contributions received.

However, there is no mention of the level and extent of S106 contributions or the future basis thereof, other than a hint to it in paragraph 59.

The GVA figures are also noted but are irrelevant as a measure against the value and the loss of Green Belt land to the community.

Paragraph 60 again refers to the 30% of green space allocated within the development. I have commented in page 14 above that having lost 122 hectares of open space Green Belt land, the mention of 30% of the application site (a figure which in itself is debateable) is set aside for amenity space, planting and green links is irrelevant to the existing local community who will see 1760 houses and large scale logistics use sheds imposed on their doorstep.

No allowance for this loss appears to have been taken into account in claiming that the "*Proposed Development is considered to provide significant positive effects in terms of socio-economics and health.*"

This phrase in itself is highly debateable.

(ix) Climate Change

The Director of Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission has recently said that the climate must be at the heart of all major planning and investment decisions and that it will be harder to meet net zero targets "*if major decisions take us in the wrong direction and that we then need to somehow compensate for*".

In addition, he specifically referred to the fact that success should not solely be based on GDP, but should also include "*health, happiness and well being.*"

Despite its claims, this report does not satisfy these particular points.

Bearing in mind the Councils' own net zero targets, do the measures briefly outlined in paragraphs 62 to 64 in this section go far enough, particularly the statement in paragraph 64 which does take some believing?

Not unsurprisingly, the "*Summary and Conclusions*" statement at paragraph 65 seeks to say all of the right noises in support of these two planning applications.

These, together with the other 97 supporting Statements and Appendices to this report, do need careful objective examination by the Council.

Landscape Design Statement

Once again the content and scale of this document does not make for easy reading on the Council's Planning Explorer.

Whilst the plan at 2.1 shows a landscape framework centred on the new development, landscaping around the perimeter of the site where it abuts existing dwellings at the east and western boundaries is conspicuous by its absence in the plan. This is not acceptable.

As has been noted elsewhere, part of the landscape framework reflects the proposed change of levels of the development platforms (3.1).

The outlook and aspect of existing dwellings on the east and western boundaries will be particularly affected by this.

The proposed lower levels of the proposed new housing developments will not offer sufficient protection as required by Policy GD 1 of the Design of Housing Development SPD.

These boundaries and the existing dwellings need to be fully protected and respected, including the existing wildlife corridor which runs along the eastern boundary of the site at Colster Close and Wharfedale Road to Farmhouse Lane, by careful and measured appropriate distanced and spacing landscaping between existing dwellings and the proposed new dwellings.

Whilst there is reference in the document to edge parameters (3.2), this does not go far enough.

Paragraph 4.11 of the Planning Statement report refers to high walls which are "*undevelopable land and as such provide an opportunity to become a network of strategic greenspace surrounding the development platforms*".

One of these high walls is at the Pogmoor eastern boundary of the site and should provide sufficient scope to provide a buffer of green space between new housing on the site and the existing dwellings in Wharfedale Road.

I would be concerned if the proposed lower platform levels (or coal extraction) resulted in damage, land slip or stability of adjacent land boundaries and existing properties. This point is recognised at Section 5 of the *“Coal Mining Risk Assessment And Coal Recovery Report”* (Pogmoor).

The Biodiversity Strategy at 3.12 does not go far enough and totally ignores the exiting Wharfedale Road wildlife corridor referred to above.

All that is being proposed in the document appears to be slanted towards the new development within the site based on the levels strategy.

The maximum height of the commercial units is shown at 23 metres. These will be visible both within and without the site for some considerable time until the proposed landscaping matures.

The size of some of the proposed industrial "sheds" would be totally out of scale with the surrounding area and the existing and new dwelling proposals. The latest development at Capitol Park is witness to this.

Similarly, the proposed mix and scale of industrial "sheds" so close to existing and proposed housing is incompatible with other policies within the adopted Local Plan.

Neighbour Letter Addresses

Following my earlier E-Mail comments on this issue, it is noted that a list of addresses is now shown on the Council's Planning Explorer.

However, the addresses are somewhat mixed together and are not in strict alphabetical order. A much better way would have been listing them by village in alphabetical order, with each address in alphabetical order within each village.

It is understood that around 800 letters were sent to residents within 100 metres of the site boundary.

This compares to the consultation by Pegasus who targeted 2,400 properties "*within the vicinity of the site*".

It is considered therefore, that the 800 circulation list by the Council is questionable having regard to the scale of the development and the far reaching implications for a much wider community. The Council's circulation list should have been larger.

Outline Construction Management Plan

This document only appears to provide a draft framework from which the more detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be produced.

The current document is presented in outline only and would need further consideration and approval.

This is a key document which will set down and provide the framework and monitoring of the construction of the development over the previously quoted 15 year period in view of the type and extent of the proposed on site works and the resultant wide spread serious implications for the existing local community throughout the development period as described in the report.

The Council does need to be quite clear on this aspect to ensure that whatever (perish the thought) is finally agreed is sound, acceptable and enforceable.

Planning Statement

As with all of the other documents, this 73 page document appears to be written as an inward looking “sales brochure” designed to convince the Council and the reader, that these two planning application tick all of the correct boxes to secure planning permission for this development.

To this effect, the brief “*Conclusion*” at Section 9 could be said to be written in a disingenuous way to convince the reader of the merits of the supporting documentation without having to read them.

The document appears to replicate much of what is said in other documents.

Despite what the report says, the proposals are arguably incompatible with many of the Council’s Local Plan Policies.

Like all of the other supporting documents, the phrase “*mitigation*” is used to justify the proposals.

As a consequence the document is considered to have little merit.

The applicant must really be taken to task by the Council on the thinking, content and statements made in the Planning Statement.

I have many concerns, some of which are shown below or elsewhere in my submission:-

Paragraphs 4.28 to 4.31

I have expressed my concerns elsewhere on the issues in this section, including the initial scorched earth policy and what follows.

Paragraphs 4.32 to 4.35

Again I have expressed my concerns elsewhere on the issues in this section, including the positioning of 3 storey houses, the relationship with the existing dwellings and the distance between new and existing dwellings.

Paragraph 4.36

It is noted that Paragraph 4.36 again refers to “flexibility in delivering new homes within the market”.

This confirms my point at 4.47 below

Paragraph 4.37

There is reference in this paragraph to a proposed vehicular access to the south eastern part of the site (adjacent to Pogmoor) being taken from Farmhouse Lane which would form part of the reserved matter application for this phase of the development.

Concern has previously been expressed about this access proposal and the wider proposed housing development on this part of Site MU1.

I have shown below an extract from my submission to Stage 4 (Main Matter 18.9) of the Local Plan Examination in Public.

“A further concern expressed at the re-convened Stage 3 Hearings relating to Site MU1 is the absurd proposal to access the site from Farmhouse Lane to develop the agricultural land to the west of Wharfedale Road, Pogmoor. Farmhouse Lane is a narrow lane at this point and the proposal would create additional excessive traffic flows in an area which is already subject to heavy traffic congestion. The access proposal is no different to Site AC42 at Wombwell, which has been rejected by the Council at the Stage 3 Hearings”

My recollection of one of the reasons given for the rejection of Site AC42 was that the access would pass in front of existing dwellings.

What is the difference between that rejection and the Farmhouse Lane proposal now submitted?

The Illustrative Masterplan does now indicate that vehicular access would be via Farmhouse Lane.

The existing Wharfedale Road access option appears not to be included in the proposal. It is not clear why.

Farmhouse Lane is narrow throughout its length and links into the southern end of Wharfedale Road at what is considered to be a dangerous corner where motorists have a bad habit of ignoring the white line markings.

At present there are no pavements on either side of the stretch of Farmhouse Lane to the west of its junction with Wharfedale Road and none on about half of its south side going towards the Pogmoor Road junction. There is a going to be serious safety risk to pedestrians here.

The housing proposal here is also likely to increase the propensity for vehicles to travel to Westmoor Crescent along Pogmoor Lane in order to short cut to Pogmoor Road.

Pogmoor Lane's almost complete absence of a separate footpath, coupled with its relative narrowness, already gives rise to safety problems for pedestrians.

The proposal as indicated, will also involve the removal of yet another section of mature hedgerow.

Wharfedale Road already acts as a 'rat run' for through traffic in both directions which has to pass along the narrow Church Street or Beever Lane where the amount of parking already does constitute a safety hazard. The extra traffic generated by the housing envisaged will only serve to exacerbate these problems.

There will be a detrimental effect on the local character of the whole of this area together with a significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing residents.

The Farmhouse Lane access proposal is unacceptable.

Paragraph 4.46

It is noted that the "remodelling of the site would last for up to 8 years".

Concern has been expressed elsewhere in my comments on the disruptive and devastating effect that this would have for the area and the local community.

Paragraph 4.47

My submissions to the Local Plan consultation procedures have also made the point that regardless of the housing targets set by the Local Plan, the actual number delivered is always determined by developers.

This is borne out in the statement "*the number of dwellings to be built per year would be subject to market conditions*" and confirms that the granting of planning permission does not equate to new houses delivered.

Paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5

These two paragraphs replicate extracts from the Councils adopted Local Plan and are being used to justify and claim that these two planning applications now presented meet the policies within the Local Plan.

An examination of the detail of these two planning applications suggests this not be the case.

Paragraphs 5.6 to 5.8

These paragraphs are preceded by the heading "***National Planning Policy Framework (2021)***" and are again used to justify and claim that these two planning applications now presented meet this framework.

It should be remembered that the adopted Local Plan was prepared, examined and adopted under the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

Indeed, paragraph 2 of the appointed Planning Inspector's report dated 14/12/18 said:-

“The revised NPPF was published in July 2018. It includes a transitional arrangement in paragraph 214 whereby, for the purpose of examining this plan, the policies in the 2012 NPPF will apply. Unless stated otherwise, references in this report are to the 2012 NPPF. In addition, references to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are to the previous versions of the guidance in place before the revised NPPF.”

Despite the strong and consistent arguments made by objectors throughout the Local Plan Consultation and Examination procedures to the Site MU1 proposals, and its failure and conflict with a number of key elements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the conclusion in the appointed Planning Inspector’s report at paragraph 299 said:-

“The Plan has a number of deficiencies in respect of soundness and one in respect of legal compliance for the reasons set out above, which means that I recommend non-adoption of it as submitted, in accordance with Section 20(7A) of the 2004 Act.”

However, paragraph 300 of the same report then went on to say:-

“The Council has requested that I recommend MMs to make the Plan sound and legally compliant and capable of adoption”

In the event the Council had to introduce 127 Main Modifications (MM) to satisfy the appointed Planning Inspector upon which there was no recourse to objectors to appeal against the recommendations of the appointed Planning Inspector, other than through the courts.

It has been quoted before, that one of the many sad consequences of the limited availability of cost protection for objectors is that that potentially arguable claims are being abandoned at pre-action stage because the government seems determined to minimise legal scrutiny.

As a consequence, it is now only too easy for the Council to hide behind the appointed Planning Inspector’s report.

Regardless of this outcome, including the appointed Planning Inspectors report, the fiercely held view of objectors to the Site MU1 proposals remains the same.

Despite all its rhetoric, nothing in the Planning Statement report alters this view.

Paragraphs 5.9 and 5.10

These two paragraphs “hang their hat” (as the Council has also) on the “*Barnsley West Masterplan Framework*” as further justification and support for the Site MU1 proposal.

It should be remembered that the applicants have effectively written their own script over the last 8+years leading to the Council adopting the Local Plan and the subsequent Site MU1 Masterplan Framework.

This again, despite the local community’s continued objections thereto.

It is interesting that Paragraph 5.10 refers to *“a landscape-led development and will seek to create a more productive landscape for walking, cycling, growing food and biodiversity.”*

As has already been said elsewhere in my submission, this appears to start with a scorched earth policy with remodelling of the site taking 8 years as part of a longer 15 year development period.

In the meantime all of the current topography, managed agricultural arable and grazing land together with the amenity green open spaces will have been destroyed, along with trees, hedgerows and the wildlife with it.

Paragraph 5.11

A list of the Council’s Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) is being put forward as being relevant, and by implication complied with.

Again, an examination of the detail of these two planning applications suggests that this is not the case.

Paragraphs 6.1 to 6.156

In the limited time given to submit detailed comments on these two planning applications it is not possible to fully analyse this section of the Planning Statement.

Suffice to say however, that these paragraphs replicate much of what is contained in other supporting documentation, upon which I have commented elsewhere in my submission.

Having said that, I do have some additional comments below on related issues which are also included elsewhere in my submission.

Paragraph 6.12

It is not clear how the affordable housing numbers have been arrived at in the table shown in this paragraph having regard to Policy H7 and the areas shown in the Council’s adopted Local Plan. Is it Dodworth or Darton and Barugh?

Paragraph 6.13

Paragraph 9.5 of the Council’s adopted Local Plan for housing sites in Urban Barnsley shows an indicative density of 40 dwellings per hectare. The density for residential development for the Phase 1(a) is shown as 27.36 in the Planning Statement.

Why is this?

I have commented elsewhere in my submission about separation distances from existing dwellings.

The quoting of Paragraph 124 of the 2021 version of the NPPF by the applicant in support of these two issues is considered to be stretching the intention of this paragraph in this instance.

Paragraph 6.31

I have commented elsewhere in my submission about the history and background of the link roads inclusion in the SCRIF programme, the timing of which in 2013 contributed to the objector's "pre-determination" argument of Site MU1, its history and how it was included in the Local Plan.

This does now beg the following question however.

What financial agreements, or other undertakings, now exist between the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and the Barnsley West Consortium in relation to the funding of the link road which may affect/influence the Council's consideration and determination of these two planning applications?

The existence of such agreements or undertakings will fuel the belief that there is pre-determination once again in relation to the proposed development.

Paragraph 6.35

I have commented elsewhere on the environmental effects of the increased traffic arising from this development.

The ludicrous, some would say absurd, statement in this paragraph that the environmental effects of this increased traffic will be "*minor or negligible*" once again beggars belief when it is currently 122 hectares of open green space.

I have said elsewhere in my submission that common sense dictates that it is irresponsible to use such phrases.

Paragraph 6.93

I have commented elsewhere on Ecology matters and in Page 6 above on the wildlife spotted locally which certainly included more than a single hedgehog sighting mentioned in this paragraph.

Paragraph 6.107

The contents of this paragraph are noted with concern and are indicative as to why there are strong objections to the development of Site MU1. I have commented elsewhere in detail on my, and the community's, concerns that this project is forecast to take 15 years to complete, with 8 years of earth moving and remodelling of the levels on the site as part of a

scorched earth policy with all of the significant adverse effects that this will have on the landscape.

The comment in the paragraph that “*At year 15 significant adverse effects remain*” is viewed with continuing concern.

Paragraph 6.108

The paragraph as written does not make sense and is contradictory.

Whilst the cumulative adverse visual effects on Higham and Gawber are mentioned in this paragraph, there is no mention of Pogmoor.

The properties in Wharfedale Road with boundaries on the eastern edge of the site would equally be adversely affected.

In addition, as mentioned elsewhere in my submission, the development would result in the coalescence of the historic villages of Pogmoor, Gawber, Redbrook, Barugh Green and Higham, the avoidance of which is a key part of the NPPF.

Paragraph 6.115

The wording of this paragraph is biased, totally unacceptable and far from the truth.

I have commented elsewhere in my submission on distancing issues between proposed new dwellings and existing dwellings for the whole of the development site.

I have also commented elsewhere in my submission under the **Landscape Design Statement** heading that the new landscaping which is being proposed in the document appears to be slanted towards the new development within the site based on the levels strategy, and not the existing perimeter of the site to protect existing dwellings.

Indeed the final sentence in paragraph 6.115 is considered to be offensive to the reader if this is the current thinking of the author of the Planning Statement. It is an inward looking theme which appears to run through the whole of the Planning Statement.

Paragraph 6.116

My comments on paragraph 6.115 above apply equally to the wording of this paragraph. To again say that “*there are no concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development in terms of residential amenity for existing.....residents*” together with “*.....and the scheme is considered to accord with National and Local Policy in terms of good design*” is totally unbelievable biased thinking and logic.

Paragraph 6.119

I have commented elsewhere in my submission about the 30% quoted figure in this paragraph and that the new landscaping which is being proposed in the document appears

to be slanted towards the new development within the site based on the levels strategy, and not the existing perimeter of the site to protect existing dwellings.

Paragraph 6.120

The wording of this paragraph beggars belief and is ironic to say the least.

The wording effectively replicates the very argument put forward by objectors throughout the Local Plan consultation and the Examination in Public, as to why the 122 hectares of Site MU1 should have remained in the Green Belt.

As a consequence, such wording is considered unacceptable, an affront to the reader and the local community.

There is also a hint in the wording of the paragraph of an influx of commuters which will add to additional traffic movements. A point which was also been previously argued by objectors.

Paragraph 6.123 to 6.125

I have commented elsewhere in my submission on the environmental impact which the proposed development to build a new link road carrying many additional thousands of vehicle movements per day, the building of 1,760 houses with new estate roads and large scale industrial sheds will result in.

Paragraphs 6.126 and 6.127

Both of these paragraphs purport to indicate that the effect on air quality during the construction phase will be "*temporary and not significant*" whilst the operational phase is "*not significant*" and that "*the residual effect will remain not significant*".

Such statements again beggar belief and are seen as a means to an end, but are without substance.

Again the whole of the **Air Quality** section of the Planning Statement hangs its hat on mitigation measures.

It is difficult to accept that mitigation measure will alleviate the problem.

Such statements do need serious challenge by the Council.

Paragraph 6.128

The wording in this paragraph again needs serious challenge by the Council.

Paragraphs 6.129 to 6.137

I have commented above on noise issues under the **Environmental Statement (Non-Technical Summary)** heading.

It is again noted that the proposals heavily depend on mitigation measures, including the extensive use of acoustic barriers.

The wording in these paragraphs again needs serious challenge by the Council.

Paragraphs 6.138 to 6.150

I have also commented above on climate change issues under the **Environmental Statement (Non-Technical Summary)** heading.

It is noted from paragraph 6.143 that for the Phase 1(a) development that *“it is unlikely that low or zero carbon technologies would be required to achieve compliance with building regulations”*.

How does this fit in with the Council’s carbon neutral ambitions?

The adopted Local Plan at **Section 20 Renewable** (Page 263) is quite clear in this regard and the expectations contained therein.

The fact that a developer is now saying that *“it is unlikely that low or zero carbon technologies would be required to achieve compliance with building regulations”* appears to indicate that this policy will not be achievable.

Does it also mean that there is a cost issue here which would affect the overall viability of this phase of the development?

This is an issue which I raised as far back as January 2015 in my submitted comments to the Local Plan Consultation Draft 2014 under the following heading:-

“Local Plan Consultation Draft 2014

Response Date - 08/01/15

Consultation Point - Policy RE1 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

Site Reference - Site MU1 - Land South of Barugh Green Road”

The rest of these paragraphs go on to seek to make the right noises in support of these two planning applications, including paragraph 6.149 and the phrase *“mitigation measures”*.

There appears to be no direct reference to the effect on the Council's carbon footprint other than the statement in the Masterplan Framework to *“Reducing carbon footprint and improving air quality through mass tree planting and reducing the need to drive a car”*.

All of this starting with a scorched earth policy and a 15 year development period!

The current 122 hectares of green fields already contribute to the existing natural sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere. This ability will be lost forever,

As said throughout my submission, the wording in these paragraphs again needs serious challenge by the Council.

Pages 68 to 72

These pages replicate much of what has been said previously.

I have commented on these points elsewhere in my submission.

Page 73

Not unexpectedly, Page 73 comes up with the conclusion that these two planning applications, as submitted with their supporting documentation, *“accord with the statutory Development Plan and that there are no material considerations to indicate otherwise”*.

There are sufficient questions and comments raised in my submission about the quality of the supporting documentation such that the Council should seriously challenge this statement.

Road Safety Audit (Stage 1)

It is noted from paragraph 1.1 of the report that the Stage 1 audit report for the proposed link road was requested by an officer of BMBC *“on behalf of Strata Sterling Barnsley West Limited”*.

Is this normal practice whereby the Council is apparently acting on behalf of the applicant?

It is also noted that the audit has identified a number of problem areas, all of which need additional work, and presumably costs.

How does this affect the viability of the scheme?

Have these measure now been incorporated into the scheme?

How does this also affect the validity conclusions in my reference to page 73 of the Planning Statement?

Statement of Community Involvement

Like many of the other supporting documents, the Statement of Community Involvement is seen as no more than a sales pitch to justify these two planning applications as now submitted.

I have already referred earlier in my submission that the quality of the Barnsley West Consortium (BWC) consultation in May 2021 was not comprehensive or representative,

since generally some members of the local community may not have the skills, IT capacity or knowledge to understand the BWC website and therefore by default saw it as an arduous task resulting in a reluctance to involve themselves, even though they may have had strong feelings about what is proposed.

This applied not only to the BWC consultation, but will now apply to this consultation having regard to all of the supporting technical papers submitted with the detailed planning applications, or to be submitted under “*reserved matters*” at some future date.

The BWC consultation in May 2021 was deemed a waste of time by the local community and objectors because of what had gone on before.

Paragraph 1.5 of the Statement of Community Involvement is an extract from paragraphs 3.5 to 3.7 of the Council’s own SCI (April 2020) the content of which is quite clear on what is expected from developers even though an earlier version of the SCI was not fully complied with by the Council in its Local Plan consultations. As a consequence, this was the subject of criticism by objectors at that time.

Paragraph 3.5 of the SCI states, that one of the benefits of applicants consulting with local communities is “*Better quality applications which are easier to understand and process*”.

This is clearly not the case in this instance as far as the local community is concerned for all of the reasons mentioned throughout my submission.

Paragraph 1.6 is clearly an exaggeration of the truth. There clearly have not been extensive previous discussions by the applicant with the local community before the submission of these two planning applications, if that is what is implied in this paragraph.

Little if any, of what is in these two planning applications was included in the May 2021 BWC consultation or what went on before it.

Despite what paragraph 1.7 says, the conclusion drawn from reading the Statement of Community Involvement is that no notice has been taken of the consultation comments submitted by the community, despite the report suggesting that it has.

Section 2 outlines the applicant’s pre-application consultation with the Council.

What it fails to mention is that detailed discussions on this site go back much further, including the “*Keep in Touch*” meetings between the Council and Strata, the Masterplan report by Spawforths in August 2013 long before the Green Belt review report and the Council’s Local Plan consultation procedures including the Local Plan Examination in Public (EIP).

Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.10 outline the applicant’s community consultation methodology.

Many questions were raised by objectors during the May 2021 BWC consultation.

As a consequence it was considered at that time that the design and content of the consultation document and related documentation was not fit for purpose and should have been withdrawn.

Section 4 summarises the applicant's "*Community Consultation Assessment*".

Paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 use the phrases "*reflecting local interest people have regarding the development*" and "*widespread interest regarding the development*" in a suggestive way to imply that this "*interest*" was supportive of the proposals.

The submitted comments to the May 2012 BWC consultation shown in Appendix 5 are quite revealing in this regard, since they clearly show an opposite view.

The applicant's response to the consultation is shown in the tables headed "*Applicant's Response*" and "*Comment*" on the summary of comments made.

It is not clear if all of the submitted comments are included in the tables.

The final sentence ending "*.....without detriment to the community and environment*" on Page 12 under the "*Applicant's Response*" heading is viewed with alarm and resentment.

The "*Transport and Highways*" table on page 12 excludes reference to the local roads of Wharfedale Road, Church Street and Beaver Lane which I have referred to earlier in this submission.

The first paragraph reference to "*sufficient capacity*" in this response section under the "*Applicant's Response*" heading on page 13 is quite unbelievable.

I have already commented on the issues covered in the remaining sections of the applicant's Statement of Community Involvement document elsewhere in my submission document.

The above "*Applicant's Response*" sections together with those on pages 14 to 20 are all viewed on a "they would say that, wouldn't they" basis without any close regard to the views and concerns expressed to the May 2021 consultation.

They do not specifically address the concerns expressed by the community which are clearly evident in reading the copy responses in Appendix 5.

The "*Conclusion*" at Section 5 of the Statement of Community Involvement is noted on the same "they would say that, wouldn't they" basis.

Again the report is considered not fit for purpose and clearly drafted with the single aim of ticking the right boxes to secure planning approval.

Transport Assessment - Barnsley West Link Road RSA Stage 1

The document under this heading in Planning Explorer appears to be the same as that included under the "*Supporting Documentation*" heading "*Road Safety Audit*" and clearly duplication.

Is this an error or is there a document missing?

CONCLUSION

My detailed comments, concerns and objections on the two planning applications are shown above in the body of my submission.

The Council needs to take a long hard look at itself and its relationship with the developer in allowing the developer to get to this stage with this proposal since the two applications clearly demonstrate the problems which have consistently been identified by objectors for the last 7+ years.

Throughout the Local Plan consultations in 2014 and 2016, together with the Local Plan Examination in Public, I have expressed long standing concerns about the lack of objectivity, transparency and governance relating to Site MU1 and its inclusion in the Local Plan.

Nothing which I have read in the supporting documentation accompanying this planning application and the accompanying planning application 2021/1090 has altered that view.

My overall objections to the destruction of 122 hectares of Green Belt to facilitate Site MU1 remain.

The Council has already acknowledged the challenge which the complexity and scale of these two planning applications submitted present.

The excessive length of the supporting documentation is complex and time consuming to consider. The majority of the supporting documentation is far too technical for any layman without access to professional input to appraise.

This only ensures that local residents will be unable to make any meaningful comment on the technical aspect of these two planning applications.

The deadline for comments of 30/10/21 is far too short a timescale for the local community to understand, digest and comment on the full implications of these two planning applications and the wider effect on the area.

In view of their content and longer term implications and disturbance for a much wider area, the Council's notification letters circulation list should have warranted a much wider area in order for the Council to demonstrate full transparency on this controversial issue.

These two planning applications should have been the subject of a public information "drop in" session?

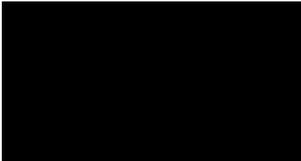
A more user friendly consultation exercise is needed before these two planning applications (and others) are considered.

The consultation timescale should have been extended accordingly for this reason, and the detailed reasons demonstrated above in the body of my submission.

The risk of appeal is no reason to grant planning permission.

There are sufficient doubts and questions implicit and arising from an examination of these two planning applications such that the applications should be refused.

Since the adopted Local Plan is now nearly three years old with the supporting evidence accepted by the appointed Planning Inspector somewhat older than this, and having regard to all of the problems with this proposed development site which have consistently been identified by objectors for many years, together with changing circumstances to those known when the Local Plan was adopted and the inherent failings within these two planning applications, it is considered that the Local Plan allocation for Site MU1 should now be reviewed and subsequently removed from the Local Plan.



29/10/21