

PLANNING APPLICATIONS 2021/1089 and 2021/1090

Consultation comments submitted

We feel that despite all the consultations at each stage of the proceedings for the site known as MU1, from initial meetings to the Masterplan Framework being agreed to the present proposals, none of the very valid concerns raised by the public and those who will be severely impacted appear to have been taken on board thus far according to the submitted planning applications named above.

The planning applications run into many pages and some are very detailed. Presumably experts in the relevant areas, particularly matters relating to environment, pollution, noise, geology, engineering, drainage, flooding risk, landscaping, architecture, etc have been consulted in the drawing up of these planning applications and it is therefore almost impossible for the ordinary layperson to comment on with any authority. We would, however, like to submit the following observations.

POLLUTION/NOISE/ENVIRONMENT

Assessments have been made regarding the extra pollution risks associated with the proposals, but no one will actually know what these are until everything proposed is completed, by which time it will be too late. The pollution and noise created by vehicles accessing the new link road from the capitol park units, as well as the many new units to be built, is likely to be far in excess of what is acceptable for people living nearby; this is particularly so for the existing properties which are going to be virtually on the roundabout proposed at the top of hermit lane. It is most unlikely that the vehicles, which mostly will be heavy goods vehicles, would be electrically powered. The government are committed to a green planet and to stop polluting the atmosphere. Building so many units and new properties, with the resultant extra traffic and pollution (not everyone can afford electric cars) does not fit with this commitment.

An added worry is the positioning of the proposed school, which will be too near the link road.

This road will be very busy, particularly when the industrial units are built, an accident hazard for young school children and the children would be subject to noise but much worse, pollution from the vehicles.

The environment will be completely ruined; to decimate a vast area of green land, with hedgerows, trees, etc full of wild life is the very opposite of what we are being urged to do to make the country carbon-free. The area will nowhere near be replaced by the proposed ponds, small grassy areas, hedgerows, etc which also will take time to mature. The wildlife in the area, which is quite considerable, will have nowhere to go during groundworks and construction and certainly would not return.

GEOLOGY/ENGINEERING/LANDSCAPING/DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK

Presumably the landscaping, buildings and engineering are bound by the geology and topography of the land; it is known that the land was outcropped and the existing properties fringing MU1 site at Higham are built on the very edge of the steep slope created for the outcropping. By their own admission in the detailed comments, the architects and engineers

have based their landscaping/buildings on “desk bound” assessments and that once groundworks commence the proposed landscaping and building of properties may have to change from the initial proposals. If there are serious problems encountered during groundworks because of the previous outcropping it could be that much of the building work cannot take place, by which time the landscape will have already been irreversibly and drastically changed. It is also admitted that there could be safety issues for workmen on site. The drainage and flood risk are very real as Higham slopes down to Barugh Green and water collects in the fields, running into, collecting and flooding parts of Barugh Green Road after heavy rain, freezing in the winter.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

The proposals for the land will effectively put the people who farm the land out of their livelihoods. At a time when this country really needs to be self-sufficient and carbon-free and in view of the many other areas of Barnsley already developed or planned for development (which were not green belt), why could not the former green belt of MU1 be used in a more environmentally friendly way, used for crops for instance.

There are far too many houses in the proposals for this land. The total number of houses now proposed for the site is 1,760. Phase I residential development proposes 229 dwellings, 62 of which are proposed to be social housing. This is a sizable number of social housing in the Phase I residential development and all the 62 social housing properties are clumped together in one area, not spaced out over the land. We are not given any information as to how many properties (including social housing) would be built in other phases over the MU1 site and in fact the developer states that these “will be approved at a later stage through application(s) called “reserved matters”. The density of so many houses in a relatively small area of land in the Phase I residential development is worrying. Fewer properties would result in more “breathing space” and less density of buildings. It would also leave some of the existing beloved green space that we already enjoy and eliminate the need for the developer(s) to create new (albeit very small) such areas. In general, it would appear that the proposals in the two planning applications are not in line with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council’s Supplementary Planning Document for Design of Housing Development which was adopted in May 2019. The housing proposals do not take into account the Document’s wording of being in keeping with the distinctive local character of the area, scale, layout etc of properties so as to be in keeping with existing builds, nor does it meet the requirements of “no significant effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents”.

The “employment units” proposals are not sufficiently detailed and it is therefore not possible to comment fully, but if similar to the existing units at Capitol Park, these are mainly storage/distribution units. We do need addition employment facilities in the Barnsley area, but there are many of these distribution units around in various parts of Barnsley already, many unused. What Barnsley needs is other types of employment, employment which pay good salaries and gives the working people of Barnsley meaningful employment and self respect. We will never lift the impression people have of Barnsley or make it a better place for its workers if all we do is build distribution units and drive through food and drink. Also it is doubtful that the type of employment created by the proposed units would pay salaries sufficient for the employees to purchase any of the properties proposed for site MU1. It is

much more likely that the properties would be purchased by people from outside the area, who may be attracted by the lower cost of living in the Barnsley area. This would not benefit existing Barnsley residents.

There will be insufficient infrastructure to cope with the increase in traffic created from the proposed residential properties and the proposed employment units. There would be the proposed "link road" but all that will do is take traffic away from Higham Common Road and place it on the new "link road". It is proposed that this new road will terminate on Barugh Green Road via a roundabout. As all those of us who live in this area know, Barugh Green Road is already extremely busy, particularly in the morning and at teatime. The road serves traffic from many directions, via the crossroads at Barugh Green and Claycliffe Road. This traffic then travels to the roundabout by the Chestnut Tree public house, which is horrendously busy in the morning, with people travelling towards town, the hospital and from the town area. It does not bear thinking about how much busier and more dangerous Barugh Green Road would be and added to that would be even more traffic, created by parents driving their children to the proposed new school.

We note that it is proposed to build a new junior school on the initial phase of Phase I. This is presumably to accommodate the expected increase in children who may come to live in the new properties. However, this does not address the fact that there will also be children needing senior school or higher education facilities. Nor does it address the situation that will arise regarding health care. There are already insufficient General Practitioners and surgeries, as many know from experience it is already almost impossible to obtain an appointment to see a G.P. In addition, Barnsley Hospital is already under extreme pressure, it would not be able to cope with the vast number of people coming to live in not only the many proposed new properties on site MU1 but also other areas of Barnsley where properties are being built under the Masterplan. As mentioned before, many of these people will not be Barnsley people, but from outside the area, creating a big problem for the already overstretched health care system in the area.

OBJECTIONS AND COMMENTS SPECIFIC TO US AS RESIDENTS OF WELLAND COURT, HIGHAM.

The proposals include designs for many closely spaced 3-storey detached houses to be built. During the Masterplan consultations people requested 2-storey detached, semi-detached and possibly terraced housing **and bungalows**. This is mentioned on Barnsley Council's website regarding these consultations. During consultations in the past nothing was mentioned of 3-storey properties, and in fact representatives of both Strata and Spawforths stated quite categorically that they would build bungalows to face existing bungalows. There is no mention in the proposals of ANY bungalows being built. Three-storey housing does not fit in with existing properties; there are no three-storey houses in the areas to be affected. Also, older people need somewhere to live as well as young people and many look for single storey properties as they age. There should be a good mix of new housing, to include bungalows.

During proposed groundworks and the construction period of many years, the health of residents whose properties adjoin the land and are on the boundary will be severely compromised. The pollution, construction noise, land disturbance and dust, possible nasty odours and general shattering of the peace would be unbearable. Our garden, which is

situated immediately next to the field, would be unusable for many years. Surely all it is against human rights of people to have to live in that way, not just for weeks but many years. The outlook from our house would be totally changed, in fact there would not be much of an outlook except on to completely dense areas of housing.

There is little information on the gradients between existing properties fringing the boundary and the proposed new builds. On looking at the Architects' plans, it shows possible gradients of 1:2 and states that new build properties should be built lower than the existing properties, with buffer zones planted with trees etc so as not to impinge on the views of existing properties. On the plans there are areas from Number 5A Welland Court, right along the boundary to the end of the existing builds fringing that boundary. These are, for the purposes of proposed gradients, categorised as B, A, C and D. For some reason Numbers 5A, 5 and 3 are not within any of these categories and therefore we are not aware of what gradients will be used between these properties (including ours at Number 5) and the proposed new builds at the back of them. If there is to be no gradient or less than 1:2 it is not acceptable as we will be overlooked and have no view at all.

No one is denying that SOME new housing is required in the Barnsley area, but is it really necessary to build so densely in what has for many years been a beautiful and former green belt area, particularly as no one really knows what lies beneath.

ADDENDUM

It may be worth mentioning that during Chancellor Sunak's budget on 27th October 2021 he committed to spending £11.5billion to build 180,000 affordable homes, **spending £1.8billion to bring 1,500 hectares of brownfield land into use** for the purposes of building affordable homes.