



Cheswick Green Parish Council

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Mr. Gary Palmer
Planning & Transport Policy Manager
Policy & Spatial Planning - Managed Growth Directorate
Solihull MBC

By email

27th January 2017

Dear Gary,

CGPC response to Solihull Local Plan Review

Cheswick Green Parish Council has several concerns regarding the proposals for housing sites in the local plan review. Members are aware of the pressures nationally to build more homes, but are very uneasy that most sites currently chosen in the review are in the green belt. Members of the Parish Council understands Solihull must find extra sites for homes by 2033 and that there is only a limited amount of brownfield land available for development within the borough.

The Parish Council is extremely disturbed regarding the overwhelming number of houses that are proposed within a relatively small area of the Blythe ward and its immediate neighbours. It would appear they amount to around 41% of the total extra homes to be found in this revision of the local plan. Whilst we are aware that some parts of the borough are already fully built up, this does seem rather a disproportionate percentage to inflict on such a small part of the borough which is already subject to other large housing developments. Cheswick Green Parish is at present seeing the number of dwellings being more than doubled with the developments on the Mount Dairy Farm site and in Blythe Valley Park, which have either commenced or have received outline planning permission. If development is also allowed on the site to the south of Dog Kennel Lane, this would add another 850 homes in effect tripling the number of dwellings from the current approximately 900 within the Parish. This development together with those proposed for the TRW site and those within Dickens Heath Parish would simply swamp the existing infrastructure. Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green Parishes are also currently seeing several new housing developments taking place, that have already gained planning permission. It is therefore essential that no further development be permitted in this area. None should be contemplated within the period of the proposed plan, before all the developments that already have outline approval have been completed, occupied and their impacts fully assessed.

In respect of the proposed site to the south of Dog Kennel Lane, there are a number of reasons why the Parish Council feel that this particular location is unacceptable, because its development would tend to promote the coalescence of settlements (which the green belt is meant to prevent) and harm the rural environment and the Arden Landscape which is the essential important

characteristic of this part of Solihull and adjacent areas of Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Any development of this site would narrow the gap between the existing West Midlands conurbation and the village of Cheswick Green and in doing so, this site together with the TRW site would contribute towards further urban sprawl directly increasing the size of the conurbation. The site is also green belt land which is supposed to be protected from development to allow green space to be available around our towns and cities, so that city dwellers are not too far from open countryside. This development would also contribute further to the loss of the rural nature of this area. This is not a very sustainable location being remote from railway services and where peak hour traffic congestion adversely affects and reduces the attractiveness of bus services, leading to likelihood of greater car dependency and the knock-on effects of increased air pollution, health and road safety risks, and even more congestion.

Also, this land has no defensible southern boundary and its development would set a precedent for the development potentially of all the land between the settlement of Cheswick Green and the conurbation.

This would fundamentally alter the character of the area, totally destroying the present rural environment and inflicting great damage to the important Arden Landscape of this area.

Another reason why this site should not be developed is that it lies within the catchment of Mount Brook, a tributary of the River Blythe, which is a stream with an extremely 'flashy' regime and is very prone to flooding. The open land currently in this area helps to absorb rainfall and hence lower the amount of flooding that currently occurs downstream. The underlying rocks and soil are impermeable which means water cannot easily pass through them. It is therefore essential that there is as big an area as possible of open ground where vegetation can use rainfall and soil can absorb it. Increasing the amount of tarmac and concrete in this area will exacerbate the flooding problem. This is particularly likely if the lower lying land is built on as has been suggested. Once again with the building on the Mount Dairy Farm site and further development in Dickens Heath time is needed in order to assess the impact of these developments on the drainage basin, and also whether the flooding measures put in place for these developments are successful.

The Parish Council is also worried about the pressures such a development will place on local services such as schooling and medical provision. This also needs further assessment once the developments already planned have been completed. The Parish Council feels that the large number of homes which now have planning permission in this area, need to be completed before any further development is considered. This is also the case for the implications for traffic flow on already very busy roads within the area. Dog Kennel Lane is currently extremely congested at peak times and therefore any further development in this location will only exacerbate the situation.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Marie Zizzi
Clerk
Cheswick Green Parish Council