



Cheswick Green Parish Council

SOLIHULL

Response to Solihull MBCs consultation on Cheswick Green Primary School

January 2022

CGPS-SUPP-1-2022

Objection - Proposal to expand Cheswick Green Primary School

The Parish Council is disappointed that the applicant on behalf of Solihull MBC chose to submit the supplementary information pertaining to this application on 21st December 2021, at such an inopportune time.

The Parish Council would thank Mr. M Preece, Senior Development Officer (planning), for being able to provide us with the three documents on 22nd December immediately prior to the Christmas Bank Holiday and for granting us an extension of time.

5124 Transport Deliverability Note B.pdf

Summary

The residents of Cheswick Green are being held hostage by the Council in respect of the needs of the school. No account is being taken of residents who live in close proximity to the school and if this planning application is approved other residents will also be inconvenienced. Indeed, residents who do not have children at school need to pass the school via what is the arterial road through the village to and from work during peak periods.

The Council has published documents that show simple easy ways to achieve desired goals. We liken this to Critical Path Analysis (CPA) where tasks are mapped out, within identified times and dependencies of each activity on any others. CPA works well in an environment where activities can be controlled.

Reality is somewhat different. Traffic is increasing and queues at junctions are getting longer. Parents and children are not able to operate like robots, they have their own problems to deal with. Simple easy delivery mechanisms do not work in this environment. Currently the dedicated bus takes 10 children from Blythe Valley Park to school. The Council hopes in future that take up of this service will require a number of buses. Such an outcome will lead to buses being stuck in traffic, arriving at school late, at the same time and with nowhere to park.

The Transport Assessment (TA) implies that growth in car traffic to Cheswick Green would be negligible and would be fully mitigated by specific measures.

At present, around 80% of pupils live in Cheswick Green village (including Cheswick Place). Where the trip to school is part of a longer journey (e.g. to/from work), or family circumstances dictate, the car is used. This situation is unlikely to change very much as a result of anything the school does.

The other 20% or so live outside the village and are brought, almost exclusively, by car which probably accounts for about half the pupil car trips to the school. As significant pupil growth from within the village population is unlikely, the additional numbers from the enlarged school will all come from further away (*see details of the Parish Councils survey on page 10 of this document*).

This tends to suggest an approximate six-fold increase in pupils not resident in the village. Non-resident children would account for 60% of the new school intake. All pupils will have to come to school by car and the increase does not take into account vehicles arising from new housing or other development.

The funding of all these mitigation schemes is expensive in terms of finance and staff time and if successful could not be adequately managed to deliver the desired outcomes. The Council will fund, but the school budget will end up funding, the walking bus staffing, wrap around staffing, and the BV

bus service. No doubt these mitigations will cease when there is a choice of these over the retention a classroom assistant, for example. If parents were to be asked to fund these schemes the majority would not take part.

This document lacks proper detail, and the planning application must be refused. The Council is adept at providing information indicating that schools modus operandi are good practice yet no details are put forward to show that school travel plans work well elsewhere.

The walking bus provides an assessment of routes, but no risk assessment has been undertaken to show that the practices are safe.

A review of the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) has not been undertaken. No account has been taken of the increase in traffic in the locality due to new housing developments along the Stratford Road corridor.

The drawings cannot be relied on because they are not to scale, incomplete and subject to a road safety audit. We also note that part of the supplementary information submitted is incomplete and cannot be considered other than 'work in progress'.

Most of Cheswick Green children walk to school unless parents are on their way to work and they drop their children as near as they can get to the school gates. These mitigation measures are targeted at pupils who are mainly not residents of Cheswick Green, the majority of whom will be taken to school by car, exacerbating the existing traffic problems. The reality is that the school already serves the whole of the village as it now is, and whilst there may be annual fluctuations, there is no trend requiring the school to be enlarged for the village population.

The proper course for SMBC would be to refuse the application, and to allow the various claims, facts and figures to be scrutinised on appeal by an independent inspector.

Rate of Expansion

We agree that the rate of expansion of Cheswick Green Primary School will span all year groups and the number of additional pupils admitted each academic year is likely to vary each year. However, although some attempt has been made to mitigate problems at and around the vicinity of the school gate to account for the increase in pupils, nowhere in this or any other document has mentioned traffic in the wider local area. During the period that the school is being extended and the school intake increasing, new housing developments will be constructed leading to a further increase in traffic in the locality.

School travel plan

The school has a travel plan in place and monitoring of the plan has overseen a reduction in walk trips and an increase in car trips. How would expansion of the school reverse this trend. No evidence has been put forward to show any substantial local school specific required transport behavioural changes still being effective ten, fifteen or twenty years after their introduction.

The bus service from Millison's Wood is not a good example. Balsall Common is quite a distance and is not on the way to anywhere significant from there. By contrast, for a Blythe Valley resident going to Birmingham, Solihull, or somewhere via M42, it's a maximum 2km (1.25 mile) diversion each way to CG school.

Any sustainable transport solution must be both sustainable in transport mode, and sustainable in time. The parking/congestion problems anticipated would not improve at all if everyone used electric cars instead and anything that costs money to sustain will not last beyond the next time someone has to reduce their budget.

The Blythe Valley development is given as the *raison d'être* for the CGPS expansion. The behaviours of the current (mainly Cheswick Green residents) pupils and parents will continue much as now.

Apparently, an increase in walking trips to and from the school of more than 30% is anticipated, with a consequent corresponding reduction in the number of car trips. This is nothing more than 'pie in the sky thinking' to make numbers seem more acceptable. The deliverability statement is not sustainably deliverable.

A staggered school start/finish time would not be taken up by parents, particularly those parents who have more than 1 child because most parents work and it would mean that children would face staggered waiting to join the walk. Parents work responsibilities would be in conflict with their responsibility to their children.

Funding provision is only for 2 years from the DSG (Growth Fund) and beyond that from a 'corporate budget until such time as the provision becomes embedded and self-sustaining, in agreement with the school'. We do not understand what this means, perhaps it means funding in the short term.

Dedicated school bus to Blythe Valley Park

Currently the dedicated bus takes 10 children from Blythe Valley Park to school. The Council hopes in future that take up of this service will require a number of buses. Such an outcome will lead to buses being stuck in traffic, arriving at school late, at the same time and with nowhere to park. Furthermore, as the Council is aware, there are not 2 bus routes to school, the bus company stated that to travel via Illshaw Heath Road is unsafe. The junction of Creynolds Lane and Stratford Road was changed recently to ease the volume of traffic elsewhere. Prior to that change alighting from Creynolds Lane required 2 changes of traffic signals, now motorists must wait for 3 changes. At peak periods the queue to alight from Creynolds Lane is 200-300 metres long. The queue to access Creynolds Lane from the direction of the M42 stretches back to J4 of the M42. And this is the only route to school from Blythe Valley Park. As we are well aware residents of Blythe Valley will take their children to school by car.

That is the situation at present. By the time that a 2-form entry school is full, a minimum of 2,343 more vehicles will be on the highway in our immediate locality.

Cheswick Green Walking Bus

We are concerned that the deliverability statement seems to rely on the implementation of a number of road works and traffic regulation orders, themselves subject to other statutory and consultation procedures, for the expansion effects to be mitigated. Would any approval be conditional upon these other measures being implemented prior to the start of development, this ought to be the case.

We also have several concerns regarding pupils walking to school from Cheswick Place and agree with PJA that any route taken by the Walking Bus will need to be subject to a comprehensive risk assessment by the SMBC Safe and Active Travel Team.

What PJA did not mention is that in the Guidelines provided by the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) in its publication 'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot' (2000) a section covers 'Barriers to Walking'. Specifically, 'Poor quality Pedestrian Environment and Inadequate Pedestrian Safety'.

The two routes shown in figure 1 on page 7, fails both of the above requirements and therefore the rest of the points raised on this subject by PJA cannot be justified.

In Route 'A' pupils will alight from Noble Way, turn left into Coppice Walk and left again on to Cheswick Way. Coppice Walk has always had many vehicles parked on the roadside, sightlines are

poor and it will be difficult to easily manage children. The situation has deteriorated since the new 274 housing development was recently completed. (See attached photos appendix A). If SMBC checks its records you will find several complaints from us and residents regarding access, egress, travel and speeding on and around Coppice Walk.

In Route 'B' children will cross the link bridge between Cheswick Place and Saxon Wood Road. We have complained about this bridge and pathways for the past 2 years. Bloor Homes who developed the estate informed us that this bridge is not meant to be a crossing point and residents should use Coppice Walk. Email attached – appendix B (in particular see parts highlighted in yellow).

The Council has held several meetings with us regarding our concerns about this bridge and was only recently informed by Mr. Wright, Landscape Architect that the bridge had been constructed as agreed in the planning application. Email attached – appendix B.

This bridge does not meet Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) superseded by the (Equalities Act 2010) requirements. Each end of the bridge breaches the 1:12 gradient and therefore does not comply. Parish Councillors and residents have seen mothers with prams run up at each end which is totally unsafe.

The bridge bows sharply and because it crosses swales the bridge is frequently under water and cannot be safely negotiated. The self-binding pathway material has been a cause for constant complaint, has been repaired on several occasions and has yet to be suitable to walk on. Residents slip on the material which does not self-bind and dogs and cats use the paths to daily defecate on. I cannot imagine that staff at school will want to clean that off pupils' footwear.

We would be delighted if the Council will fund the raising of the bridge and provision of effective pathways. See attached photos appendix A

Review of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

Background

Solihull Council submitted its Local Development plan to the Planning Inspectorate on 13th May 2021 for independent examination. Members of the Parish Council attended one day of the hearing on 16th November 2021 to object to the proposed 1000 housing development on Dog Kennel Lane. During that discussion Mr. Kevin Ward Chair of the meeting asked Mr. Simm a special planner of National Highways to outline his concerns regarding the impact of not only this but other developments on the infrastructure.

Mr. Simm said National Highways had submitted hearing statements in respect of modelling of the M42 junction 4 undertaken by Solihull Council. Mr. Simm said he was requesting mitigation from the high impact from cumulative developments on J4 and that proactive discussions are being held with the Council to see a way forward. To accommodate the increase in traffic, J4 needs to be upgraded with the current northern end replaced for which the Council is responsible. As there is no certainty to when this is likely to be undertaken. National Highways is requesting that the Councils policy be modified.

In reply Mr. Bailey of the Council said precise mitigation measures over the next 15 years are uncertain and that the combined effect of development and background traffic growth will require a traffic assessment.

Mr. Simm said in reply that Solihull's policy needed to be modified to include a traffic assessment.

New housing development

The Council does not have a transport plan in place and it is clear that it will not have one for many years. Indeed, 2034 appears to be the year when all mitigation measures and upgrades will be in place.

In the interim several large housing developments from Tidbury Green to Cheswick Green are proposed along the Stratford Road corridor. These developments are earmarked in the first phase of the 20-year development plan for the Borough which roughly equates to the timescale for the school to expand to a two-form entry school. These developments are likely to commence in 2024.

Current planned developments are 300 houses at Whitlocks End Farm, 350 houses West of Dickens Heath and 1,000 houses South of Dog Kennel Lane. When built these dwellings will generate a further 2,343* vehicles on the Stratford Road corridor not taking into account housing under construction in Blythe Valley Park or any further traffic arising further background traffic growth. (**1650 x 1.42 house per property in South Solihull – Source Solihull MBC Local Plan Draft October 2020*).

How can school buses and parents' vehicles be expected to arrive on time without abandoning their vehicles enroute?

Car Park Management Strategy

We have looked into arrangements for tandem parking at the schools mentioned in this document and understand that they are effective. The norm is that teachers park at the front and Teaching Assistants at the rear which aids arrival and departure. We note that the number of bays at the four schools are minor in comparison to the requirements of Cheswick Green. We have not had the time to comment on how well these arrangements work at other schools but will do so if further submissions to this planning application become necessary or at the appeal stage of this proposal. We would add that tandem parking is merely a minor point in the size of this project.

A7/A8 Public Bus Service

The A7/A8 bus service details/agreements have yet to be finalised, yet another area of this application that is incomplete. We reiterate that currently a bus service is not available because the service has been partially withdrawn. Why, because the bus cannot travel past the school. A dedicated bus bay at the expense of disabled parking is of no use when a bus cannot arrive at the designated destination on time. The desired 30-minute journey will not be possible at peak times due to the ever-increasing traffic on our congested roads.

Expand provision of before/after school club

Would the club be able to operate effectively with double the intake, the inclusion of staggered intake and limited space? We think not.

Drawings

We stated in response to the initial planning application that the content lacked detail, again, by the author(s) admission this is an incomplete document.

The following is taken from the notes that appear on all the drawings shown in this document which to some extent renders them meaningless.

Site specific detailed surveys need to be carried out to confirm design information which may impact the outline design proposals. These include, but are not limited to, ground conditions (geotechnical and geo-environmental), groundwater levels, buried services, remnant obstructions, ecology, tree protection and topography.

Impacts relating to other civils features; namely; fencing, road restraint systems, drainage, pavement, kerbing, pedestrian crossing facilities (other than those displayed), footway construction, street lighting, have not been completed and are subject to detailed design.

The design speed of the existing roads is 30mph. However, this is subject to a speed survey to verify the design speed of the road. The existing road widths are based upon ordinance survey information. Outlined proposals are subject to a Road Safety Audit.

The design is preliminary and subject to discussion with the planning and highway authority.

The scale of drawings is 1:500 yet the reader is requested not to scale from the drawing?

We note that the existing disabled parking bay is to be replaced with school bus bay. What is intended to assist parents of physically or mentally challenged children in getting them safely and easily to school. Do these children not matter or are design considerations paramount? What is required is a separate off road parking bay for buses.

Drawing No 05214-A-0102 states that visibility is not compromised at the junction of Cheswick Way and Saxon Wood Road. This is correct during some parts of each day. However, we know that vehicles currently compromise visibility during the periods 8-10am and 2.30-4.30pm which will be exacerbated if the number of pupils' double. So, this observation is not correct.

If we were in favour of this proposal the inclusion of white lines, a zebra crossing, and no parking across residents' drives would be welcome. All these measures help children enter the school premises more safely than at present but, as the intake expands the benefit will be lost as more children and parents will block the school entrance and queues will form in the immediate vicinity. That is, further down Foxland Close, Saxon Wood Road, and Cheswick Way, which will annoy more residents, and not reduce traffic

The further from the school parents are forced to park, the longer their dwell time will be, further reducing any possible benefits of the staggered start/finish times. This will raise the risk of the safety of children. If the school really wanted to demonstrate its commitment to pedestrian priority, it should alter its own access. It presently gives the clear impression that vehicles are most important, and pedestrians must give way to them.

It would really help if the whole area in front of the gate were raised to footway level, to make it part of the pedestrian space, a space which vehicles would cross slowly, giving way to pedestrians.

What measures will be taken to enforce the parking restrictions and blocking of residents drives and how often? Will a road crossing officer be present to assist at the zebra crossing? No mention is made of these necessary requirements.

The applicant must realise that the current problems we have highlighted at the school are accepted otherwise these mitigation measures would not be proposed. If these measures were adopted the ongoing problems will continue to occur but a little further from the school gates. We envisage the junction of Cheswick Way and Saxon Wood Road will become grid locked long before the final years of a second intake of pupils are taken up.

Meeting with Residents

Members of the Parish Council and the Residents Association held a meeting with concerned residents on the evening of Wednesday 5th January and the following views were expressed.

Parents with children at school said that the Head Teacher had asked them about staggered starting and finishing times and the overwhelming response was that this is not a good idea.

Parents would not permit their children to use any form of bus travel including walking because they had concerns about their children's safety. In particular, foundation 1 & 2 pupils.

Parents had concerns about the walking route from Cheswick Place to school because of the increased level of parked vehicles in Coppice Walk and an increase in vehicles trying to negotiate along Coppice Walk.

One resident said in an e-mail:- 'I am told that the question of parents refusing to send their young ones to school by bus was brought up at the RA meeting. I certainly wrote about this in my objection. The section below was part of it. This was **removed** by Solihull Council.

From my own experience I can state that a school bus is not acceptable for young children, one of my children suffered great stress on a school bus, caused by the bus operators, not other children. To my mind most parents will use a car.

A woman who worked as 'chaperone' on the bus subjected my son to verbal abuse and was picked on as a troublemaker (apparently because he had red hair.) Eventually this was sorted out after complaints to the Head Teacher. This may sound petty, but this sort of behaviour can be devastating to a young sensitive child.'

Residents wondered how and if staff at the school could possibly cope with the mitigation measures in the event of a high take up what is being proposed.

05214 CGPC Response Technical Note C pdf

Our consultant, Adam Lechmere of Pell Frischmann has responded in a separate document to the majority of this letter and the Parish Council has also covered many of these issues within the transport document. We would however challenge the validity and recording accuracy of road traffic data contained within 'Table 4 Accident Data Summary' on page 17 and thereafter of this document.

We would reiterate that the data is flawed The crossroads at the junction of Creynolds Lane, Watery Lane, Vicarage Road and Illshaw Heath Road is acknowledged by Solihull Council as one of the 4 worst crossroads in the Borough which is why £40,000 was spent on improvements to the junction.

During the 5-year study period in question we are aware of at least 3 accidents that cannot be considered as 'slight' and are 'serious' in nature.

A cyclist who collided with a car was unconscious for approximately 20 minutes before a paramedic arrived and took the injured party to hospital.

On another occasion a woman had to be airlifted to hospital following an accident at this junction.

On 19th October 2019, Brett Hopkins of 89 Coppice Walk, Cheswick Green, B904HZ, was injured at this junction. He was in Hospital for 4 days suffering from body pain, whiplash including shoulder injury and torn ligaments.

We are appalled by the comments in sections 3.3.29 – 3.3.32 detailed below of the PJA Technical Note Review of CGPC Response, which implies that no consideration for the health and well-being of all residents has been taken into consideration and sums up the attitude of the Council. This application must be approved to the exception of any other factors.

The only concern is that no pupils of the school have been involved in an accident, therefore this application has not been adversely affected and it is acceptable for other residents to be hurt.

MORE CARS MORE ACCIDENTS

3.3.29 The junction with the highest frequency of collisions occurred at junction of Vicarage Road/ Illshaw Heath Road / Watery Lane / Creynolds Lane. All incidents recorded at this junction were slight

in severity and only involved one sensitive road users (pedal cyclist) who was not of school age. Additionally, the incident involving the sensitive road user occurred on a Saturday, outside the operational hours of the school.

3.3.30 Along Creynolds Lane, there two slight collisions were recorded at two different locations. One collision involved a pedal cyclist who was of school age (12-15 years), who reportedly entered the road from the pavement into the path of an oncoming vehicle.

3.3.31 Along Saxon Wood Road there was one serious collision reported which occurred on a Sunday, between an agricultural vehicle and a motorcycle. The causation was attributed to traveling to the agricultural vehicle travelling too fast and close to the motor cyclist. It is understood that this incident does not demonstrate a concern with regard to highway safety.

3.3.32 It is concluded that based on the assessment presented above there has been a low frequency of collisions within the study area. The collisions have not involved children of primary school age, nor occurred during school peak periods. In addition, none of the reported collisions have occurred in close proximity of the school. This revised data does not change the conclusions drawn in the Transport Assessment.

BDS letter

Our consultant Neal Kennedy of Progression Town Planning has responded in a separate document, to the majority of this letter but the Parish Council would point out the inaccuracies and misleading comments with regard to the expansion of the school.

The School Building

The original construction of Cheswick Green Primary School is a 'Vic Hallam' modular prefabricated system, factory manufactured and designed principally for speed. A timber post and plywood box beam system braced by rigid tongue and groove boards was infilled with single pane glass, often with insulated panels below. The design of the structure of the school was to this specification. The school opened in September 1974.

The basic narrative, that the school has been gradually expanding over the years in respond to growing demand, is incorrect and we believe that the planning authority is being misled by BDS.

Shortly after opening the main building was physically smaller than now, but the number of classes and pupils was greater. Many of the pupils were taught in demountable classrooms, and some of the classrooms were quite small. The demountable would be moved between school to accommodate for the rise and fall in rolls at individual schools.

There were a couple of fairly inaccessible internal courtyards that could not be put to good use.

The school had about a 1.5 form entry and sometimes two year groups were split between three classes, sometimes two classes per year.

The nursery, now known as Foundation 1, had both am and pm sessions with 30 pupils in each, though not all continued to CGPS (some went on to St Patrick's, Our Lady of the Wayside, etc) We understand that the number is currently 22 pupils.

The building that housed this nursery is now hired out for wrap-around use. It is therefore now a separate entity when looking at numbers.

We believe there has been at least two lots of main building expansion.

Not in any particular order, the dead courtyard spaces were roofed and floored and incorporated into the building, the temporary classroom huts were removed, the nursery hut was vacated, a new

or extended provision made for Foundation and infant classes, and we believe more breakout space was provided, along with rooms that have variously been used for library, computers etc.

And a roofed veranda added to much of the outside which will also have increased the total floor area. It created what we have now a useful school building with enough space for the proper teaching of all classes in a single form entry primary school. Whereas around 35 years ago, with a smaller building, many more pupils attended the school.

The school is significantly smaller now, in terms of pupil numbers, than it was then and the overwhelming majority of pupils then lived in CG.

It also seems likely that the current total population of CG will be no more now than it was then, just fewer people in each property. Indeed, the average age then was much lower than it is now. In the 1970s residents over 50 years old were scarce and there were lots of children. The Parish Council carried out a survey in 2018 which proves this point. Of the 365 respondents', 33% had resided in their properties for 21-40 years and 27% in excess of 40 years.

The distance to CGP School from Blythe Valley via the Stratford Road is almost double the distance to Cheswick Green via Illshaw Heath Road. Vehicles coming this way down Illshaw Heath Road onto Creynolds Lane will mean using a junction labelled by SMBC as one of four most dangerous in the borough and has to date had only partial remedial work completed.

The submission by BDS does nothing to resolve the objections that have been previously submitted by the Parish Council. The Parish Council therefore requests that its original objection and this response to the BDS submission is given full consideration by Solihull MBC when determining the application.

Appendix A - Photographs below taken 28/01/2021 by a local resident



Gravel path, steep gradient and loose material slope up Kingfisher Way photo below taken 09/09/2021

Below taken 16/02/2020 10:44



Above taken 16/02/2020 10:44

Bridge and flood 2/1/22 morning

Appendix B

From: Wright, Nicholas (Places Directorate) <nicholas.wright@solihull.gov.uk>

Sent: 14 December 2021 16:32

To: clerk@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk

Cc: 'Sam Sedgley' <cllr.samsedgley@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk>; 'Cllr. Mick Swain' <cllr.mickswain@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk>; cllr.simoncoles@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk; cllr.michellesmith@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk; cllr.lencresswell@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk; 'Margaret Gosling' <cllr.margaretgosling@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk>; Edgell, Christopher (Places Directorate - Solihull MBC) <cedgell@solihull.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Bloor Homes Cheswick Green site

Hi Marie,

Sorry for the delay. I was on leave yesterday and in meetings all day today.

I do not have a date for the works to be completed yet, I need to speak to Bloor Homes on another technical issue and have not been able to contact them, I will update you as soon as I get to speak to them. The handover is due at the beginning of April so it will certainly be complete before then.

As previously stated, we can't do anything regarding the type/supply of the footpath material, as the approved plans state self-binding gravel which it is. We (with Environmental Services) are currently looking at various protocols for development sites and one area for consideration is to tighten up the specification for this type of footpath surface and be more prescriptive in what Solihull MBC require.

With regard to the existing mature trees, Unless something is obviously damaged/dangerous, I am not sure we ask for a check prior to handover. I am very happy to discuss this with Chris Edgell and also make the request to Bloor Homes but I'm not sure that we can demand this. Chris will be keen for this to be carried out, as any potential future works will have to come out of his budget.

The handover of the site will only take place subject to the site being in a satisfactory condition at the final inspection, and maintenance by Environmental services can proceed from day 1, with no additional costs to Solihull MBC

From: STEELE, Katy A <katy.steele@parliament.uk>

Sent: 18 February 2021 10:05

To: clerk@cheswickgreen-pc.gov.uk

Subject: FW: (SB8993) Cheswick Green

Dear Marie,

Saqib has asked me to forward response below from Bloor Homes re. the footpaths. He has followed up on the other issues with the local authority.

Kind regards, Katy

Katy Steele | Office Manager

Office of Saqib Bhatti, MP for Meriden

631 Warwick Road, Solihull, B91 1AR

Tel. 0121 711 7029

From: Nick Rawlings <Nick.Rawlings@bloorhomes.com>

Sent: 16 February 2021 10:33

To: BHATTI, Saqib (2nd Mailbox) <saqib.bhatti@parliament.uk>

Subject: RE: (SB8993) Cheswick Green

Dear Saqib

Thank you for contacting me on this matter and I can confirm that we are in active dialogue with Cheswick Green Parish Council and Solihull Council in reviewing the condition of the 'self-binding' paths and any necessary repairs / re-surfacing. We have also instructed a survey of the ramps to the footbridge.

I trust you will appreciate that the footpath in question routes across substantial basins that were constructed by Bloor Homes to help provide flood alleviation for the Mount Brook. The basins are functioning effectively in this respect though the footpath was designed in full knowledge (and I trust understanding by the Parish Council) that although elevated it would flood from time to time, in particular during the wetter months. **It was always envisaged that if the path was flooded then pedestrians would use the public right of way and bridge located to the north of the ponds (via Saxon Wood Road) or the longer (though drier) hard surfaced route along Coppice Walk / Cheswick Way / Willow Drive.**

I trust this update is helpful and assures you that we are addressing the concerns raised by the Parish Council.

Kind regards

Nick

Nick Rawlings

Planning Director



Dear Saqib,

Thank you for your email alerting us to the concerns of local residents. Apologies for the delayed response, but there were a number of things we needed to do before I could respond.

From reviewing the planning history, it appears all necessary planning conditions have been discharged. Following your email, an enforcement officer visited the site. Whilst the visit showed the footpath was passable, it was noted that the area adjacent to it is currently very wet and marshy, and is only marginally lower than parts of the walkway. **However, from a planning perspective, the pathway/bridge appears to be in the correct position and design and it would appear that it was never intended to be a raised walkway.** In that respect the footpath appears to have been designed to follow the contours of the land and reflect the landscape character of the site. Therefore, while we recognise the concerns about occasions when the pathway is underwater, the development would appear to have been undertaken in accordance with approved plans.

Our Highways Officers have also been liaising with Bloor Homes with respect to complaints about the material used in foot paths being too loose and difficult for wheel chair users and people with prams to navigate, and also the path over the swales being too steep in places and dangerous to use. As you may be aware Nick Rawlings from Bloor Homes recently provided a response to Margaret Gosling, a Parish Councillor. Council Officers have made further enquiries and once we have received a full response from Bloor Homes, we will update you further.

Regards,

Mary

Mary Morrissey

Director of Economy and Infrastructure

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council