

HEARING FOR STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS PLAN - OCTOBER 2018

SITES WE003 AND WE052 OFF ASH BANK ROAD ADJACENT TO WERRINGTON YOUNG OFFENDERS PRISON

I intend to proceed through aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and set beside it the Matter Issues and Questions (MIQS) raised by the Planning Inspector.

2 Achieving Sustainable Development

Point 8 has three objectives - a economic, b social and c environment.

A Economic - Where is the provision of infrastructure mentioned to accommodate these sites?

B Social - Where is the support for the communities' health .. cultural well being addressed with the loss of visual amenity

C Environment - How is the natural landscape being protected and enhanced?

MIQ 3.6

Point 12 The statutory status of the Development Plan seems to preclude building on other sites. I am concerned that there has been a determined effort to exclude sites which affect some people so that the two sites now under consideration - in the heart of Werrington - are to be considered first. This seems like manipulation to me. The people of Werrington were asked some years ago whether or not they supported the closure of the prison and building on these sites and the prison and decided to support the continuance of the prison. I believe that consent has been manufactured for these two sites to be in this plan.

MIQ 3.6

3 Plan-making

Point 15 The planning system should address housing needs and other 'social priorities' and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.

Many people gave their choices in 2015 at a well attended meeting by a wide cross spectrum of residents. Why has it been ignored?

MIQ 3.6

Point 20 Strategic Policies - again is mentioned the '... conservation and enhancement of the natural environment'. How will this development help the environment of everyone in Werrington who pass by on the A52 during everyday life? For me, it will be painful to travel through a corridor of bricks where I once had a spectacular view by day and night. I do not live overlooking this view, but I treasure it each time I pass by. What is all this talk of well being for? It does not matter when the government can make cash selling of assets - of which we have had decades of experience. This place is something for everyone.

MIQ 3.3

Point 22 Strategic Policies should look ahead 15 years to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements. Who are these requirements for? The residents of Werrington or incomers from near and far.

There are many elderly people in Werrington who would like to stay here but find inadequate choice. I would like to know the future of this prison (there are always rumours of it closing especially with so many super prisons being built). Surely one development of Care home and Warden accommodation in the future on the footprint of the prison is preferable to this mad rush to build on this conveniently available land (a windfall I read under the LP Tregaron Court section) which is just the government selling assets. The elderly could move out of their houses in Werrington making them available. Or if the prison closes in five years houses could be built there instead on its footprint.

Point 34 Plans should set out ... infrastructure. I have only notices vague references to the fact that large developments will attract investment. Airy fairy nonsense. This will not happen.

MIQ 3.6

Point 35

Plans are sound is they are Positively prepared if they are ...informed by agreements with other other authorities, so that unmet needs from areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with sustainable development.

Why dissipate investment throughout the Moorlands instead of focussing on Stoke-on-Trent, a regeneration zone whose road network desperately needs a revamp and whose improvement would benefit all in North Staffordshire. Stoke and Newcastle will not put forward proposals until next year. Why can plans for adjacent rural areas such as Werrington not be put in abeyance until then. Two miles down the road and contiguous with Werrington is Bucknall where the huge site of Mitchell High school is available for redevelopment. Surely SMDC should be asking for help here.

MIQ 3.6

5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Point 61 Within this context the ... housing needed for different groups **in the community** (Werrington only?) should be assessed ... older people.

As previously mentioned Werrington is an aging community and older people need their future needs addressing which means downsizing so making family homes available. The issue of the prison itself needs urgently addressing because it would be ideal.

MIQ 3.6

6 Building a strong, competitive economy

Point 80 Werrington is residential area , a dormitory settlement for Stoke-on-Trent. It is the city which needs a critical mass of housing development and its concomitant investment which will be to the benefit of all in Werrington too.

Point 83 Werrington can only support shops and pubs, not large scale employment.

MIQ 3.6

7 Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Hanley (Stoke city centre) is the largest local shopping area. It is dying. This is yet another reason for Stoke-on-Trent to build homes within its area (so wait for their plans to be formulated to establish if it could help SMDC)

MIQ 3.6.

8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

Point 91 C Provision of sports facilities.

Meigh road playing fields is now mostly redundant because the football pitches have relocated to another site more suitable. This area has become a place for anti social behaviour, vandalism, arson, exposure, fire setting and threatening behaviour to dog walkers. It is, in part, redundant. The equipment is too spaced out and could be set out more compactly, closer behind the Scout Hut on Bridle path.

Point 97

Existing sports fields should not be built on unless

- a the land is surplus to requirements
- b the loss is replaced by better provision (it already has been)

See comments point 91

MIQ 3.6

9 Promoting sustainable transport

Point 102 e patterns of movement, streets and parking

How will an estate on these sites join the A52, the junction is narrow and no amount of promised investment will make the junction any wider, unless the St Philip's Church or the cottages are being demolished! Many people will therefore try to enter the A52 by driving down Chatsworth Drive to Clough Lane. The car park behind the Church is full at certain times of the day with parents taking their very young children along a narrow pavement to and from the school on the other side of Ash Bank road. Impatient drivers emitting noxious fumes will be unpleasant. Also future residents will approach the Red Onion, see traffic held up at Washerwall lights and turn into Clough Lane to go through the Chatsworth estate where there is a very pronounced bend.

MIQ 3.6

Point 103 Planning should reduce congestion and emissions, improve air quality and public health. Why are these houses not built in Bucknall with the co-operation of Stoke-on-Trent.

MIQ 3.6

11 Making effective use of land

Point 117 Planning policies should safeguard and improve the environment and ensure safe living conditions.

MIQ 3.3

These proposals impact the landscape unacceptably (a veritable blot on the landscape).

How can these sites be safe next to a prison which has no walls - just a fence - and has had escapees. There are recent reports in the Sentinel of extra time being added to sentences for bad behaviour and one of inmates making improvised weapons.

MIQ 3.5

These sites were left as buffer zones for the safety of prison warders who lived on Salter's Close and the main road. They are not unused sites. They have a purpose and serve a function.

MIQ 3.5

Point 118 a Improve public access to the countryside (a public right of way used to pass by the prison but was closed some years ago by SMDC.) Presumably they know their reasons.

MIQ 3.6

Point 122 b Local market conditions.

This means that the buyers and sellers of land should be able to operate freely. However, the government blocks local sellers from obtaining access to this market by pressing Local authorities for the sale of land it owns (on my behalf) and selling this asset to organisations such as Homes England who will make enormous profits. It will ruin what is left of the precious landscape we had (once it was possible from the road opposite these sites to see Wetley Common. Now the views south to Cannock Chase and south west to the Wrekin and Long Mynd will be taken from us too. Shameful. I would like to know the well being value of feeling space and having your soul uplifted.

MIQ 3.6

12 Achieving well-designed places

Point 124 Good design and affordable houses. Do they go together? Does SMDC have a financial plan to subsidise these affordable homes?

MIQ 3.6

Werrington has never had well designed development. It has been piecemeal and careless. These two sites continue the tradition of trying to squeeze too much into a small place. I am particularly concerned with the devastating impact to the top of Werrington. In recent times I have seen houses built at Oakmount , Sandy Lane, Irvine Road and two years ago at Scholars Way (after the loss of the First School). The area around my home is now unbearable. Semi urban and not semi rural.

The doctors' surgery cannot physically expand on its current site. The new addition to the school on Washerwall abuts it. The attempted purchase of an adjoining bungalow failed when it was bought for a residence. The clinic on Salter's Close has already been sold by the Ministry of Justice. I asked Mr Larner about the doctors and his uninformative reply was that the developer must see to it. Where will that be then? Our well being is a word only.

MIQ 3.6

Point 127 c are sympathetic to local character and history.

How can Werrington afford to lose its character? For us at this top end that landscape, its height and the view and the feeling of space is tangible. It is the soul of the place. It is in my soul too.

MIQ 3.3

Point 127 f create places that are safe.. and which promote health and well being (enclosing us) with a high standard of amenity for existing users (the amenity of the latter is being callously and ruthlessly tossed aside). The fear of crime and disorder do not undermine the quality of life. How can this be living next to the prison fence?

MIQ 3.5

13 Protecting Green Belt land

Point 133 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. These sites are green belts and prison buffer zones.

Point 134 c Green belt is to safeguard the countryside against encroachment. This will be encroachment on a huge scale, obscuring a view of 20 miles or more. What exceptional circumstances could possibly justify this? Where are they articulated in an acceptable way? This proposal is devastating for all of Werrington. It is conspicuous and on the main road we all use each day.

MIQ 3.1 and 3.2

Point 136 Detailed amendments to the green belt may be made through ... neighbourhood plans. The Parish council was opposed to these sites. The Parish Council were the points of contact on these matters. One member of it resigned at a crucial stage before an unexpected vote was sprung on us in a hall packed with residents from Meigh road estate, who do not want developments on the playing field or sites WE042 and WE043. Tregaron Court and Langton court. I believe it is called Nimbyism.

Point 137 a Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green belt boundaries, the strategic policy making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options. Has the Meigh road playing fields situation been investigated? In a recent article in the Sentinel, Mr D Shaw (retiring Parish councillor and member of the Steering group for Local Plan and District Councillor, (indeed head of the District Council at one point), seemed to allude to these playing fields. These two sites at WE042/3 were mothballed with access roads still there and storm drains in place. A landowner who wishes to sell and an interested builder but they are precluded by the government from operating a market.

Point 137 a Meigh road playing fields must now be classified as under-utilised land.

Why has Little Ash Farm been ignored when it was previously acceptable? As were sites WE042/3. (see Local Plan). The access roads are there for them. What has access to employment got to do with a residential site with roads off the estate? What are the historic assets here? Yes it is in the Green belt but alongside an existing residential zone which is not in plain view to everyone from a main road like sites WE003 and WE052.

In the Local Plan there are constant references to the unsuitability of sites WE042/3, even when the site being looked at is Little Ash Farm or the sites off Salter's Lane and Ash Bank road. The aim seems to be indoctrination. The two paragraphs which are the Council's response to WE042/3 are woolly and imprecise. They seem specific with references to policy numbers which I believe are designed to obfuscate. After waffle the final sentence states that is why these sites are unsuitable. I would like to know who worded these (indeed the whole Local Plan). Who was leading these discussions?

MIQ 3.1 3.2

Point 137 c Before concluding exceptional circumstances

Have there been detailed discussions with neighbouring authorities (ie Stoke-on-Trent) about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development especially those sites which border each other? Can we see these consultations please. Again, Stoke-on-Trent has so much empty space, claiming the title as the authority with most derelict land. A proper

redevelopment of this city is long overdue. I used to drive through on my way to work. It is the city where I was born and lived till I was eleven years old. I love this city too. I love Werrington, but enough is enough now in this village. What is left without the view we all love and have?

MIQ 3.1 3.2

Point 145 g Development here would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt nor is it redundant land, it is a buffer zone against noise and for safety. It has a purpose over and beyond its Green belt status.

MIQ 3.2

15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Point 17 Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by

- a protecting and enhancing valued landscapes - (an obvious cataclysmic failure), sites of biodiversity (the bats study)
- b recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside(not happening with these plans)

MIQ 3.3

16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Point 185 c How will a new development make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness when it will be an eyesore and intrusion on the wide open space. It will be opposite a viewing point and bench installed for all the residents of Werrington to enjoy. Can we be considered? Particularly those in Windmill ward who have already experienced the more recent house building. Ideally there would be no more development here. All the local services are stretched now. To build again, which is the last straw, in what remains a stunning view which has just always been there for us all is unbearable.

OBSERVATIONS ON CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SMDC AND MR M AKDEYNE (JULY-AUGUST 2018)

Can we have reasons why the fact that Werrington is adjacent to the city boundary and its residents mostly commute into the city not been a major factor in the decision making process.

Why has SMDC decided not to meet housing needs from elsewhere, when quite obviously it has workers from Stoke which is evidenced by the huge commute to work down the A52.

Will the back log mean that an intemperate rush will occur to develop these sites which the government seems to ramming through for the benefit of Homes England? (16 August 18)

The plan runs from 2016 to 2031. Have the (31?) houses at Scholars Way been included in the number tally?

What contribution will Cookshill and Caverswall make?

Has 'infill' been defined? If not, why were residents of Werrington reading it when offered site options? SMDC proposes a case by case approach on this matter which seems like a 'get out clause' to justify their decisions.

A view is a Heritage asset? Will SMDC protect it? Are we to have Main Modifications on this issue?

Compliance with procedural requirements and was Publicity adequate? We were asked for our choices in a ranking exercise in 2015 and it has been ignored. The invitation to meet the planners was poorly attended (I would have liked to have gone) because the flyer advertising it was put in with junk mail (did everyone get a copy anyway?). After the event I saw a poster advertising it, not on the side of the road at the Post Office, where most people pass by, but on the opposite side of the road and not even near to the bus stop. Practices from the box of tricks for avoidance of pesky residents. Also it was held during the summer holidays. I spoke to a Parish Councillor later who had asked the planners three times why these sites had been chosen and the others (Tregaron/Langdale, Little Ash were rejected). She got no reply. Later it transpired for the former it was access. There are access points already there. Access is something to do with access to employment in those two confusing paragraphs of the Council response in the Local Plan documents. I would like an explanation of those in English.

OBSERVATIONS ON LOCAL PLAN

PAGE 146 Key Issues

Werrington has 'limited capacity', so why not leave us alone or allow the 'proper market' to operate and provide land which is available at Little Ash and Tregaron/Langton sites. A more limited development of 20-30 homes would be preferable. No, we have to have government diktat by Homes England (we know!). Is this why SMDC has meekly agreed?

I cannot understand why the studies on these proposed sites have defined them as having 'medium landscape sensitivity'. These sites are very sensitive and are right at the highest point of Werrington opposite the Windmill. It is the very soul and essence of the place. Can we be left with our soul please because we have been overdeveloped to our boundaries already.

Access to the site needs to be clarified. There is no suitable and capacity carrying access.

Speak to the locals about the noise now. I am sure that the inmates will enjoy an even closer audience to swear at.

There is a Grade II listed building within 400 metres. Yes and it needs to be seen from the A52. It is very prominent in the area.

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Viability study May 2018

'... although the result is marginal the development could still potentially support this level of planning contribution.' I am not convinced by words such as marginal and potentially. When money is usually the object, these words indicate that there is no overwhelming case. Certainly the case opposing it in landscape and access terms are undeniable.

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For me this is the heart of the village.

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The Highway authority sees a problem with access. I have heard it proposed that the road to HMYOI is closed and that the prison be accessed through this new development. It would be an attraction for the new residents to see prison vans, warders and ambulances up and down their streets.

'New development is the main way to deliver new or improved infrastructure eg more residents may support additional medical facilities'. That is why the Clinic has been closed to facilitate this site then? The doctors' surgery has already been expanded twice. They did try to purchase the adjacent bungalow to expand a third time but failed. Surely this shows stress already without the addition of more homes. The First school could have accommodated the doctors but this site was developed as Scholars Way (with its squashed on homes). Only house building matters and not public services. Why should we believe this pacify the mob statement. Where and when are these improved medical facilities to appear? Mr Lerner could not answer me that question.

'The issue of using land in neighbouring authorities will be discussed as part of the Council's duty to co-operate obligation.

In terms of the suggested areas for development land adjacent to the Tregaron Court/Langton Court has been assessed and is not considered suitable for development due to constraints (*which are what exactly?*)'

Why have we moved from authorities outside SM to reiterate the Tregaron Court/Langton court sites. I detect the hand of interested party(ies) trying to take every opportunity to kick these sites out of the picture. Surely they doth protest too much.

The Parish Council asked for infill and gave preferred locations (WE 069, WE013, WE027). These are the people in contact with the residents. They specifically objected to these two proposed sites.

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How will developing these sites balance out housing distribution? The top of Werrington (where these sites are) has had Oakmount Road development, Brentwood, Sandy Lane, Irvine Road and within the past two years, Scholars Way. People in this village are concerned about the area around their home and their view. That is the issue, it is their view, fenced off to everyone else, shared by no-one else. These two sites provide a fantastic view for us all. Shared by all.

The Council has consulted poorly. Can we have names put to the decision makers who opposed other sites and who supported these two sites. Are there voting records?

