

STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD UPDATE

23 JULY 2014

Application No: 13/4132N

Proposal: Outline application for the residential development of the **White Moss**: Incorporating the provision of up to 350 residential dwellings; extra care facility; relocation and redevelopment of existing garden centre; provision of local services including A1 uses: 465 square metres convenience store, 3no. 95 square metres retail units, D1 uses: childrens day care centre and doctors surgery, public house/restaurant; and, provision of public open space and associated highway improvements and biodiversity enhancement.

Location: Land at and adjacent to, **White Moss Quarry, Butterton Lane, Barthomley, Crewe**

CLARIFICATION

The erratum report (already posted) provides an updated conclusion which replaces that from the original version of the report.

CONSULTATIONS

The Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager

Following the withdrawal of the initial application for 1000 residential units, the application has been amended to provide 350 residential units, there is no change to the other uses proposed in the application.

As was described previously, the Council (CEC) have undertaken a traffic study in Alsager taking account of all the committed development sites, the sites allocated in the Local Plan and sites that have current planning applications submitted. The results of the study indicated that a number of junctions on Crewe Road would suffer from congestion problems with all of the traffic generated by the sites being added to the road network.

It was apparent from the capacity tests undertaken that a 1000 unit application would produce an unacceptable traffic impact on the road network predominately at the junctions of Sandbach Road North / Crewe Road /Lawton Road and Hassall Road/ Crewe Road. The test that assessed the Local Plan sites that included the White Moss allocation for 350 units showed that the Local Plan sites did not introduce so severe a capacity problem with the above junctions operating just above junction capacity.

Therefore, there is a significant reduction in impact between the previous 1000 unit scheme and the revised 350 unit application. As the development will still add further traffic to Crewe Road through Alsager, there is a need to provide mitigation measures at the two junctions that have capacity problems. As a result of other development proposals in Alsager, financial contributions were agreed to improvement schemes at these junctions, although from the capacity tests undertaken by CEC it was clear that more comprehensive improvements were needed at the junctions and further design work has been undertaken on these schemes.

Given that the White Moss development would have an impact albeit a lot smaller than the original proposal the development should nevertheless make a contribution to improving the local infrastructure. The level of contribution will be based upon the cost of the infrastructure works and the number of units in the application, this methodology is consistent with other developments in Alsager. However, the detailed cost estimates have yet to be completed for the schemes and as such the actual level of contribution (should the application be approved) can be delegated for approval at a later stage. However, an indicative level of contribution to be secured for highway improvements is £342,000, this would allow along with other contributions to complete the funding of traffic signals at Hassall Road/ Crewe and provide a sizeable contribution to the improvements at Sandbach Road/ Crewe Road /Lawton Road.

On other matters, there would be no diversion of Close Lane through the development site as proposed, Close Lane would remain as it is currently. There are no changes to the access proposals to the site, the main access will be via a new large roundabout, this new junction will be an improvement to the existing signal junction at Radway Green road as capacity of the junction will be improved. A smaller priority T junction access with ghost lane is proposed a little further north on Crewe Road.

Network rail have requested the installation of CCTV cameras at the rail level crossing on Radway Green Road to improve safety, a contribution is being provided by the applicant for the cameras.

In summary, the reduction from a 1000 to 350 units has reduced the impact of the proposal considerably on the road network although there still is a residual impact to be mitigated. To address these impacts a financial contribution needs to be secured and subject to the appropriate level of contribution being secured I do not raise highway objections.

Arboricultural

The amended plans and details include a detailed Tree Survey Report provided by Solum Environmental which provide recommendations for the protection of valuable trees to inform any subsequent detailed design proposal should the application proceed. The additional information is now considered adequate to allow an assessment of the impact of the proposals on trees. This includes individual tree constraints plans which will allow reflective developable areas to be established. BS5837:2012 will prevail should a full application be submitted

The reduction in numbers and site area is welcome; this should allow any specimen trees to be retained as part of a detailed application. Given the Nature Conservation issues on the site and its SBI status both the views of the Councils Nature Conservation and landscape officer prevail in terms of the overall restoration plan. How the trees are managed as part of this, either in terms of the original restoration plan, or as part of a housing development would have to be given an ecological bias given the characteristic of the site

Solum has also provided an addendum Hedgerow Regulations Report. The report identifies a section of hedge row (H2) which marks a Pre-1850 Parish boundary and runs parallel to a public footpath. The existing usage of the site has caused the field hedge network to become fragmented leaving this aspect in isolation. A short section has been identified for removal in order to facilitate the access road, this aspect is gappy and species poor. Should the development proceed to a full application the identified hedge should not form part of any domestic curtilage which would negate its importance.

REPRESENTATIONS

14 additional / further comments have been submitted.

This includes

- Site is too near Radway Green and the M6
- What about the promised restoration of the site
- Restoration of lakes and natural areas as stated in 1988 should be adhered to
- Alsager is not a sustainable service centre
- Alsager cannot support the extra houses, there would be too much extra traffic, the loss of hedgerows would impact on ecology.
- Loss of agricultural land and biodiversity.
- Highways infrastructure is already operating above maximum capacity.
- Triangle Field is open countryside and shouldn't be included.
- It will create urban sprawl and be intrusive in the countryside.
- The agreed restoration programme for the site should be enforced.
- Air and Noise pollution.
- The scheme should be refused as originally recommended.
- Approval would completely change the character of the site and the area
- It is contrary to the Local Plan
- Impact on the nearby RAMSAR site due to the alterations to land drainage and water table causing loss of habitat to rare mosses and wild flowers.
- This is an attempt to get development on the whole site
- 350 families are being offered homes surrounded by bog, pylons, overhead cables, sand and peat quarrying and aggregate recycling
- Cheshire East is not a competent authority to carry out a proper determination

- Some of the proposed development may have a negative impact on Alsager establishments re shops, restaurant whilst looking to Alsager to provide other amenities eg schools, healthcare, leisure etc

On behalf of BAESystems

- Need to consider distances to be maintained from vulnerable buildings
- Design - Curtain-wall construction, where the method of construction means that in the event of an explosion, there would be a hazard to anyone in the area from falling glass and masonry
- Use – Consider vulnerable sections of the population (young children, the sick or elderly) in the immediate area of the site, for example if a building housing a school, hospital or old people's home were immediately adjoining an explosives site. It would be worthwhile considering that they are placed outside of any explosive licenced distances.

OFFICER COMMENT

As indicated above, the Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager does not raise an objection to the scheme as it is now reduced to 350 dwellings. This aligns with capacity studies which have been undertaken to consider the impact of this scheme and others in the area. Therefore subject to a contribution of £342,000 it is considered that the highway impact can be mitigated.

Comments raised by additional objections area addressed within the details of the main report.

The application is recommended for approval subject to section 106 Agreement and conditions within the main report.