

Application No: 13/4627C

Location: Land off Dunnocksfold Road, Alsager

Proposal: Erection of up to 95 dwellings and formation of access point into the site to serve the development (resubmission of 12/4146C)

Applicant: The Morris Family & P.E. Jones

Expiry Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### **UPDATE 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

### **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

An objection has been received from Alsager Residents Action Group (ARAG) which includes an alternative report with an alternative recommendation for refusal. The main points are summarised below:

- The recent appeal decision at Sandbach Road North found that the Settlement Zone Line and Policy PS4 of the Congleton Borough Local Plan are *'not sufficiently directly to housing land supply that it can be considered time expired for that purpose'*. Instead the Policy is *'Primarily aimed at countryside and Green Belt protection'*.
- The Inspector also noted that *'the lack of a 5 year supply of housing land does not provide and automatic green light to planning permission'*
- The appeal decision provides an adequate reason for refusal of this application which carries significant weight and should be the main reason to refuse this application.
- Due to the significant weight attributed to the principal of residential development on this site, ARAG agree with the objection received from Newcastle-under-Lyme BC in relation to the impact on the regeneration of the Potteries Conurbation. If approved the development would undermine the strategic aim of Policy SP1 of their adopted Core Spatial Strategy and detract from the regeneration of the North Staffordshire housing market and economic base.
- The issues of highways and the loss of the important hedgerow assume increased weight because they are both in conflict with the Cheshire East Pre-Submission Core Strategy and/or Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- The junction of Dunnocksfold Road/Hassall Road/Church Road is identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan where it is described as a small junction that is likely to be significantly affected by the planned development in this part of Alsager. The application site is not in the plan and its approval will only serve to exacerbate the problem.
- The recognised important hedgerow which borders the site is recognised in the Local Plan/Core Strategy which commits the Council to the retention of the existing hedgerows in Dunnocksfold Road and Hassall Road.
- The alternative report prepared by ARAG states that the application should be refused on the above grounds.
- The report also picks upon a number of minor typo's within the report.

The full text for all letters of representations can be viewed on the Councils website.

## **OFFICER COMMENTS**

In terms of the weight to be attached to the settlement zone line and the countryside policies this is considered as part of the officer report on pages 68 and 69. The report acknowledges the previous appeal decisions and the Inspectors view on the settlement zone line and the open countryside policies. The decisions also pinpoint that much depends on the nature and character of the site and the individual circumstances to each site. In this case there is not considered to be any significant landscape harm on this site which is the difference to the site at Sandbach Road North.

This site is flat and as part of the previous application no landscape reason for refusal was attached to the decision by the Strategic Planning Board. It is therefore considered that the harm to the open countryside policies is outweighed by the benefits of housing land supply.

In terms of the impact upon the Potteries and the highway implications this is a difference of opinion between the officer and ARAG. The issue of the highways implications and the impact upon the Potteries are considered within the officer report and did not form a reason for refusal as part of the last application.

In terms of the loss of an important hedgerow, this issue does not outweigh the benefits of the benefits of this application towards the housing land supply. This is similar to the Secretary of State's view as part of the appeal decision at Hind Heath Road, Sandbach.

Therefore the application is acceptable and the recommendation remains unchanged.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Officer recommendation on pages 80 – 82 of the SPB Agenda remains unchanged**