



# Chapel & Hill Chorlton, Maer & Aston and Whitmore Neighbourhood Development Plan

[www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk)

5 May 2016

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Dear Sirs,

## **Baldwins Gate Public Consultation, 27 April 2016**

The Bellway Homes proposed site in Baldwins Gate is within a designated Neighbourhood Area for a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). Members of the NDP Steering Group attended the public consultation event on 27 April 2016. The Steering Group has the following comments on the proposal.

### **Infrastructure and community facilities**

- We would expect the developer to make a significant section 106 contribution of at least 15% to the local community, to be spent on projects to be determined by the Parish Council and local community.
- 99 additional homes would add 240-300 to the village population, but the proposal shows no provision for infrastructure and community facilities to serve the needs of a growing population, including shopping facilities and playing field facilities.

### **Layout, density, appearance**

- We consider the layout, density, design and appearance to be inappropriate to a rural village site.
- The maximum height of dwellings should be limited to 2 storeys; there are no dwellings in Baldwins Gate above this height.

### **Local housing need**

- Local opinion is that housing need in Baldwins Gate is for small houses only (2 and 3 bedrooms).
- Local opinion is that housing need in the area is primarily for housing and facilities to meet the needs of older people.
- A Housing Needs Survey that is currently underway for the NDP and will provide the most up to date information in respect of the numbers and types of dwellings needed in the village. We believe that any proposal put forward should reflect the results of the survey.

### **Highways impact**

- We are concerned about further pressure on the A53 from the additional 200+ cars that this development would bring. The A53 is a village road for the local community and the level of traffic is making conditions unsustainable.

### **Environmental impact**

- We are very concerned about further encroachment onto Chorlton Moss and the impact that the proposed development would have on this important wetland area. The West Midlands Meres and Mosses are recognised internationally as a unique group of wetland types. Chorlton Moss has been encroached upon twice in the last 50 years and we feel that further losses of this environmentally and ecologically important area cannot be tolerated.
- We are especially concerned about:
  - (a) the impact of the removal of peat from the site. Development would involve the removal of a significant depth of peat. We note that peat is laid down at a rate of 0.5–1.00mm per year and the accumulation of a 1 metre depth can take about 1,000 years.
  - (b) the impact of the proposed development on the lowland raised bog adjacent to the site. Development of the site would drastically alter the water balance on the site itself and this in turn would have negative impacts on the adjacent land.
- The proposal is for surface water from the development to drain into a local waterway that flows into the Meece Brook. Flood attenuation projects on farmland lower down the Meece Brook contribute to flood mitigation in the centre of Stafford. Even with the proposed storm water storage on site, the development would result in a significantly increased flow of water into the Meece Brook and this would have a negative effect on flood attenuation downstream.
- The local sewage works discharges into the same waterway that flows into the Meece Brook. The additional flow from 99 dwellings would further increase the flow into the Meece Brook and impact on downstream flows.
- The site is located over a major aquifer from which water is extracted by Severn Trent. Local residents with wells report significant lowering of the water table in recent years due to increased extraction. Currently, rainwater falling onto the site infiltrates into the ground and replenishes the aquifer. Development would prevent infiltration of rainwater and replenishment of the aquifer.

It is our opinion that environmental damage caused by this development should be compensated by environmental projects elsewhere but nearby within the Neighbourhood Area, to be proposed by and agreed with the Parish Councils and communities of the Neighbourhood Area. Such projects would be on top of the usual section 106 contributions.

To conclude, we believe that development on this site would not be sustainable and would cause significant environmental harm.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Oppenheimer  
Chairman, NDP Steering Group