

LAND OFF SANDBACH ROAD NORTH, ALSAGER, CHESHIRE

GLADMAN DEVELOPMENTS LTD

CHESHIRE EAST REF: 12/4872C & 14/3919C

The Borough Council has been consulted by Cheshire East Council on an application (14/3919C) for outline planning permission for major residential development for 130 dwellings. The same proposal is understood to be at appeal (reference 12/4872C), the Inquiry being expected to finish on the afternoon of 9th December

The site is located to the north west of Alsager, in open countryside but adjacent to the built up area and not within the Green Belt.

The matter is brought to the Committee as an item of urgency because of the timing of the appeal inquiry, and the Inspector having asked for confirmation of the Borough Council's current position

RECOMMENDATION

To notify Cheshire East Council that the Borough Council OBJECTS to the application and the appeal on the grounds that major development in this location would be likely to undermine the delivery of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Core Strategy.

Reason for Recommendation

Whilst it is recognised that there may be limited evidence available at present to substantiate the concern, major development in this location is likely to have a negative impact on the strategic objectives of the adopted Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy and therefore the proposed development would have an adverse impact upon the regeneration of North Staffordshire.

Other Material Considerations include:

Emerging Local Plan – Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy has been submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration by an independent Planning Inspector at an Examination in Public. The Examination has been suspended to allow Cheshire East to consider the Interim findings of the Inspector.

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Newcastle-Under-Lyme Planning Policy

- Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026 (CSS):
Policy SP1: Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration
Policy ASP5: Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Policy

Applicant/agent's submission:

The appeal and application material is available to view on the Cheshire East website, using the above reference numbers

KEY ISSUES

As indicated above, the Borough Council has been consulted by Cheshire East Council on an application for outline planning permission for the construction of 130 new dwellings on Land off Sandbach Road North, and the Council has also been asked to confirm its position with respect to the same proposal which is at appeal.

The principal issue that could adversely affect the interests of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough is the cumulative impact of this development, when considered alongside other recent and anticipated speculative applications for major housing development in and around Alsager. Taken together, these developments are likely to lead to an over-provision of housing in Alsager against the target proposed in the emerging Local Plan of Cheshire East Council.

Given the strong economic links between this part of Cheshire and North Staffordshire, major development in this location could encourage further out-migration from the North Staffordshire conurbation. Such out-migration in turn would undermine the strategic aim and Policy SP1 of the adopted Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy, detracting from the regeneration of the North Staffordshire housing market and economic base. Providing substantive evidence to demonstrate this link is however challenging.

BACKGROUND

In March 2014, Cheshire East Council published its Local Plan Strategy submission document for consultation. This document identifies Alsager as a 'Key Service Centre' where development is to be of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of the town. A target of 1,600 new homes is proposed in Alsager during the plan period (2010-2030), 1,250 of which are proposed to be delivered on three Strategic Sites in the town. The remainder is to be met by existing allocations, planning approvals and previously completed development.

This proposal is not included in the 1,600 new homes proposed within the Local Plan Strategy and therefore it would be over and above that required to be delivered over the next plan period.

There have been a number of speculative planning applications for housing development on the outside edge of Alsager's Settlement Zone Line. Together these have the potential to far exceed the 1,600 new homes target, thus potentially undermining the strategy for Alsager set out in the Local Plan submission document. Previous speculative residential developments at Alsager that go beyond the target identified in the submission Local Plan Strategy and that have been reported to the Borough's Planning Committee in the past 18 months include;

- **13/4627C – Land off Dunnocksfold Road, Alsager;** 95 dwellings. Reported to Planning Committee on 19th November 2013. No decision yet issued by Cheshire East Council.
- **13/4150N – Land to West of, Close Lane and North of Crewe Road, Alsager;** 132 dwellings. Reported to Planning Committee on 19th November 2013. Application refused by Cheshire East Council on 24th March 2014.
- **13/3032C – Land Off Crewe Road, Alsager;** 110 dwellings. Reported to Planning Committee on 19th November 2013. Notice of approval by Cheshire East Council 4th November 2014.
- **13/4092C – Land South of Hall Drive, Alsager;** up to 125 dwellings. Reported to Planning Committee on 19th November 2013. Notice of approval by Cheshire East Council 24th June 2014.
- **14/4010C – Land to the East of Hassall Road, Alsager,** up to 60 dwellings. Reported to Planning Committee on 7th October 2014. No decision yet issued by Cheshire East Council.

Taken together with this new proposal, these speculative schemes would amount to an additional 652 new dwellings on top of the 1,600 proposed within the submitted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. So far 235 have been approved, 132 refused and it is understood that the remainder are currently awaiting a decision.

Recent appeal decisions have established that Cheshire East Council have to date been unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, and consequently that applications must be decided on the basis of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This limits the extent to which the current policies restricting the supply of housing land in the Congleton Local Plan can be applied.

CONCLUSION

Your officers consider that the development of this site when considered together with the revised planned allocation of strategic sites at Alsager, is likely to result in a level of development that would have an adverse impact on the strategic objectives of the adopted Core Spatial Strategy and hence has the potential to both undermine the North Staffordshire housing market and encourage further out-migration from the conurbation.

Background Papers

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Council Local Plan Strategy: Submission Document.
- Joint letter to Cheshire East Council 16/12/13 re: Local Plan Pre-Submission Core Strategy consultation.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy

Date report prepared

8th December 2014