

ADVANCE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT
TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
3rd February 2015

Agenda item 9

Application ref. 14/00875/OUT

Land adjacent to Slaters, Stone Road, Hill Chorlton

Since the preparation of the agenda report a further letter has been provided by the **applicants** and their **agent**, the main points of which are summarised as follows:

- Regarding reason for refusal 4, an appropriate location for the new access was agreed at the pre-application stage with the Council's Highway Officer. It has been designed to provide the required visibility and avoid the loss of the Oak tree.
- Regarding refusal reason 5, the applicants have confirmed their agreement to pay the education contribution and therefore listing it as a refusal reason is misleading.
- The Planning Office advised that schemes for under 10 dwellings would no longer need to provide affordable housing contributions and on this basis, the scheme was reduced to 8 dwellings.
- Whilst Hill Chorlton comprises primarily detached properties, they are all located in small pockets of development along the roadside and would therefore be seen more as a nucleated settlement pattern.
- No layout has been put forward and therefore impact on character of the area cannot be considered at this time. The site could easily be designed to reflect the sporadic and informal pattern. The number of dwellings could be reduced further if considered appropriate.
- The site lies between existing residential development and is an infill development. There is a large craft/shopping centre adjacent and there is a regular bus service with a bus stop on the opposite side of the highway. It simply cannot therefore be seen as an isolated or unsustainable location.
- Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
- The applicant is also the owner of Slaters Hotel and 'Village' and the purpose of this application is to seek additional funding to assist in the ongoing management of Slaters. As per para. 55 of the NPPF, the development will support both immediate services and those nearby in Baldwin's Gate and vice versa.
- Alternative sustainable transport modes are available and in relation to an appeal decision in Montford Bridge, nr Shrewsbury the Inspector states "I am therefore satisfied that there are a range of services and facilities within the local area that future occupants could access via sustainable transport modes should they choose to do so".
- The Officer report concludes that Montford Bridge differs from the application site as Montford Bridge is defined as a 'rural settlement'. Hill Chorlton is also a rural settlement and what was of key importance in the appeal decision is that Montford Bridge only has a public house, much the same as Hill Chorlton. Reference is made to other services in a village that is 1 mile away, much in the same manner as Baldwin's Gate. That proposal was still considered sustainable and seen to support nearby villages. The application situation is directly comparable.
- Although there are 63 representations, several are couples or families from the same household. Most are not within the immediate vicinity and many of the residents of Hill Chorlton have not objected.
- With regard to sustainability, all the same issues apply as to Baldwin's Gate.
- In addition to the GP in Madeley there is also a good service in Ashley that opens almost full-time and there is a part time surgery in Baldwin's Gate.
- There is a farm shop about a mile from Slaters which is popular with local residents and would benefit from further households in the area.

- Slaters is not specifically a tourist attraction and the majority of customers are local. There are the following shops in Slaters village – wedding venue dresser and accessories shop, bridal gown shop, artist, photographer, clothes shops, jewellery/hat shop, shoe shop, nail and beauty salon, crafts shop, furniture shop and tea room.
- Slaters is a very busy and popular country pub whose main customer base is with locals. In addition it has a separate wedding venue and there are 84 weddings booked this year. There are also 17 letting bedrooms which are filled with businessmen during the week.
- Slaters employs over 50 staff and the shopping village has enabled 13 new businesses to develop creating another 30 jobs. Students rely on Slaters for employment.
- More houses will help sustain and secure the businesses within Slaters and other businesses locally.
- Slaters also houses the local bowling club and the team are desperate for more players to support its retention.
- With regard to schools there is a shorter route to Baldwin's Gate School – along the footpath on the A51, down Sandy Lane to the first turning on the right and along the footpath to Moss Lane. This avoids the A53 and takes about 10 to 15 minutes. There is a school bus service directly opposite the site to Madeley Secondary School.
- There is mains gas in Baldwin's Gate but people are now opting more for ground or air sourced heat pumps which are environmentally friendly and do not necessarily require gas or oil.
- There are mains drains and the site can be easily connected to this existing facility.
- The Baldwin's Gate appeal confirms that there is a high value rural market with a very high likelihood of delivery for this area. The site would contribute to the five year housing land supply deficit. Additionally the monies accrued from the sale of this site will be utilised by the landowners to further their family business at Slaters.
- The NPPF seeks a presumption in favour of sustainable development unless there are significant and demonstrable impacts of approving the development. It is not considered that the Planning Officer has provided Members with refusal reasons that can be substantiated with appropriate evidence to demonstrate that their impact is severe. There is no doubt that the location is sustainable with access to local services both immediately in Hill Chorlton and nearby in Baldwin's Gate via public transport.
- The Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply and as such are obligated to approve sustainable residential development. Members are therefore urged to give serious consideration to the above matters in light of a number of appeals which have been allowed recently in the Borough.

One further letter of **representation** has been received. It states that the shortest walking route to Baldwin's Gate and any of its services is via Sandy Lane and the A53. Google Maps shows the distance from the site to the school to be 1.5km or 0.9miles. It suggests a walking time of 18 minutes but 20 to 25 minutes would be a better estimate of the walking time. Not only does the route go along a narrow and unlit country lane which is also quite busy, but it also goes along the busy and dangerous A53 where there are only narrow footways for a substantial part, some of which are also unlit. This is not a route that many parents would feel comfortable allowing their primary school-aged children to walk or cycle along.

Your officer's comments

Although the applicant's agent has confirmed their willingness to pay an education contribution, no completed Section 106 Agreement has been received. The reasons for requiring an affordable housing contribution following the Ministerial Statement of 28th November 2014 are stated in the agenda report. Therefore reasons 5 and 6 of the recommendation remain unchanged and are considered to be appropriate if Members agree with any of reasons 1 to 4.

The other matters referred to by the applicants and their agent have been considered in full within the agenda report and therefore it is not considered necessary to comment further now.

The RECOMMENDATION therefore remains as set out in the main agenda report.