

## RESPONSES TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

### Proposed residential development on land off Gateway Avenue, Baldwins Gate, Newcastle, Staffs

Further to the above consultation held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at Whitmore Village Hall, Whitmore Parish Council and Baldwins Gate Action Group wish to make the following comments:

1. A number of responses provided by representatives from Kier and Hourigan Connolly to local residents were inconsistent and consequently led to some confusion as to what was being proposed by the applicants. Some examples are as follows:
  - (a) The proposed timescale and phasing of the development was unclear. Varying timescales were quoted by different representatives.
  - (b) The type of construction proposed for the dwellings was described as either conventional brick or timber framed. Similarly, foundation construction was referred to as either raft or conventional strip foundations.
  - (c) The purpose of the pond illustrated at the south-eastern corner of the development site was described either as a balancing pond for the sustainable drainage system or as separate a water feature to encourage wildlife. We note the proximity of the pond to the West Coast Mainline.
2. The proposed site plan shows no provision for larger five bedroomed housing and as such does not provide for the executive style accommodation which was widely quoted at the outline stage as being in short supply within the Borough and badly needed to attract high level professionals.
3. The public footpath running parallel to the West Coast Mainline and north-eastern boundary of the development site, and to which a connecting path from the development is shown, should be upgraded to afford a high quality, safe pedestrian access to the eastern end of the village and its facilities (shop/post office, letter-posting box, bus stop, pub, village hall, Jubilee Gardens, public ROW to south of village). These works should include appropriate lighting, widening and proper asphalt surfacing of the footpath.
4. Clarification is required as to the location and size of children's play areas to be provided on the site, together with information as to the type and location of play equipment to be installed.
5. Responsibility for the future maintenance and repair of the sustainable drainage system, which runs along the entire length of the northern boundary of the site, should be clearly identified, together with the appropriate provision for maintenance of this permanent facility.
6. It should be clarified if it is the intention of the Borough Council to adopt the landscaped public open spaces, children's play areas, pond and surface area of the swales. If the Borough Council do not intend to adopt these areas, who will be responsible for their maintenance?
7. A planning condition should be included within the detailed full permission restricting any further development or changes along the entire length of the northern and western boundaries of the proposed development site for a period of not less than fifteen years. The purpose of this condition would be to allow time, as stated during the planning appeal, for

the landscaped area to become fully established and provide an acceptable boundary treatment bordering the open countryside.

8. The density of some of the development appears excessive, particularly where the number of dwellings in the two blocks at the north-eastern end of the site has been increased from 17 on the indicative plan to 26. Further, the indicative plan submitted with the outline planning application showed a significant separation distance between the boundary of number 14 Gateway Avenue and a proposed new property. The new layout shows a house directly adjacent to the boundary of 14 Gateway Avenue which will result in the obstruction of a large side window facing the development site. Loss of light and privacy will be significant adverse effects on 14 Gateway Avenue. During discussions with representatives it appears they were unaware of the existence of the side window and had not considered the adverse effects that will arise.
9. The new road layout is unimaginative. The straight road network lacks character and features to enhance the street scene. In short, it resembles a 1970s-style housing estate.
10. It is not clear if the new detailed layout of the site has been subject to independent planning assessment, as was carried out by MADE for the indicative layout submitted with the outline planning application. If such an assessment has taken place, what was the conclusion?
11. The lack of a pedestrian access from the south-western end of the development site to facilities at the western end of the village (shop, church, bus stop, letter-posting box, dog waste bin, access to public ROW to south of the village) is a matter of concern, as it is both socially and environmentally unsustainable. Without such access there is only one route out of the proposed development. Residents at the western end of the development, instead of having ready pedestrian access to the facilities at the western end of the village will either not use them at all or use their cars to access them. This will create an unsustainable transport scenario.
12. The situation described in 11. above, where Gateway Avenue will effectively provide a single a single corridor into the village, will also have an isolating effect and act to prevent integration of new residents into the community. Residents of the new development will become 'gehttoised'. This is a socially unsustainable situation and is likely to give rise to problems such as anti-social behaviour on the new development. The developers are urged to seek and implement a suitable solution to the problems described in paragraphs 11. and 12.
13. The existing highway and footways in Gateway Avenue are breaking up and in need of repair. As the highway and possibly the footways will have to be excavated to provide services including gas, electric, water, foul drainage and telecommunications, the opportunity should be used to repair and resurface the road and footways, which will in future be subjected to a significant increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
14. The currently uncontrolled junction between Hillview Crescent and Gateway Avenue will need to be controlled with either a give way or stop signal. Additionally, the junction should be traffic calmed with a raised platform to control vehicle speeds at a safe level, as is shown on the proposed development site.
15. The redbrick red tile finishes proposed on the development site do not complement or blend in with the variety of brick colours and other exterior finishes and the grey tile finishes in the

immediately neighbouring areas – Gateway Avenue, Hillview Crescent and Sandyfields. A more imaginative approach is needed, with a wider variety of brick colours together with cladding and rendering, and grey tiles, so as to blend in with the existing developments.

16. HS2 should be contacted to identify whether or not the current proposals conflict with any future plans for the construction of the HS2 railway and its associated infrastructure. Similarly, Network Rail should also be contacted to discuss their requirement that they be indemnified in the event of the sustainable drainage system not being maintained and subsequently causing flooding of the West Coast Mainline. (See Network Rail correspondence dated 17 September 2013 addressed to NuLBC Planning Dept and 25 October 2013 addressed to Richard Lomas and Rachel Killeen.) Representatives from Kier did not appear to be aware of the Network Rail concerns.
17. The Kier representatives seem to be unaware of the condition of the sewerage system from Gateway Avenue, along Meadow Way to the pumping station and of the pressure that current flows put on the pumping station, such that Severn Trent personnel visit after every rain event to check that the pumps are operating properly.
18. In the event of Newcastle Borough Council's SHMA being completed before detailed plans are submitted, the information reflective of the housing market and needs in Whitmore parish should inform housing provision on the proposed development.
19. Any contributions made to the Borough Council by the developer towards maintenance of public open space should be appropriately adjusted to assist in the maintenance and enhancement of sites across the whole of Whitmore Parish and should not be restricted to the development site. (Section 106 – we need to get this one right and secure a meaningful contribution to the parish!)
20. A liaison group should be established with the developer comprising officers from Newcastle Borough Council, a local elected Borough Councillor, together with representatives from the Parish Council and local residents, to ensure that any problems/issues arising during the construction phase are promptly and effectively addressed, thereby ensuring good working relationships and responsible development of the site. Local experience of a Liaison Committee that was set up as a result of a Condition imposed by SSC in the planning permission covering the Green Waste Recycling Operation in the nearby village of Acton proves the enormous value of such an arrangement, having enabled various local issues to be aired and resolved without confrontation between Village and Operator.
21. It is accepted that outline permission has been given for up to 113 dwellings. However, it is the view of local residents that the density of this development does not reflect and is completely out of character with that of the adjoining areas of the village and consideration should be given to adopting a scheme which realistically reflects the adjacent residential developments.

The Parish Council and representatives from Baldwins Gate Action Group would welcome the opportunity to have further meetings with the developer to discuss their proposals prior to the submission of a detailed scheme to Newcastle Borough Council Planning Committee, so that the issues raised in this response can be addressed.