

Comment

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Question 2

Do you consider that this part of the Local Plan is unsound because it is not: (tick all that apply)

Question 3a

Your Comments

Please give details of why you consider that this part of the Local Plan is not legally compliant or unsound or fails to comply with the Duty to Cooperate.

Social and Economic

The proposed development would bring too much pressure on already stretched local services. At the time I moved to Whinfield, the estate on the A1150 by the playing fields had just been built and all of these additional residents put increased demand on local services. It took nearly a decade since moving in before I could be registered at Whinfield medical practise, such was the increased pressure on the doctor's surgery. The majority of the proposed development is for three-bedroom properties, over the size of the proposed development that is a lot of individuals who will need to access to a doctor's surgery and potentially many children who will need nursery provision and school places. The Strategic housing market assessment (2015) stated Darlington had a substantial need for affordable housing and housing suitable for older people. This development does nothing to support the town's housing needs.

Bellway have made nothing clear in their plans about how they plan to support local community's health, social and cultural well-being. This alone should be grounds for the proposal to be rejected.

Transport

Distance from potential employers, the town centre and the nearest bus stop mean it is highly likely that any development will increase traffic, putting a further strain on the already near capacity A1150 at Whinfield Road, undoubtedly increase traffic congestion and pollution in the area.

The development is contrary to policy IN2 of the Draft Local Plan as more than 80% of the site is greater than 400m walking distance of a bus stop. The plans submitted state that access to the site is within 400m but this is just at the access point and not the development itself.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that development should seek to address the needs of people with disabilities & reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport. This is clearly not achieved if the nearest bus stop is in excess of 400m away and the nearest local facilities are over 600m away.

Resident and non-resident parking on Sparrow Hall Drive currently already severely reduces traffic flow and additional journeys at key parts of the day will impact on this severity resulting in traffic safety issues. The suggested additional journey data included in the application seems rather low considering that it is reasonable to assume that most of the dwellings will be occupied by families, many of whom will potentially have two cars per household.

The Transport Assessment or the Addendum report is not easy to comprehend and needs to be written in such a way which is open to scrutiny and examination by the general public which we feel it is currently not.

The suggestion that the junction of Whinbush Way/Whinfield Road will operate satisfactorily during peak periods is flawed. As it currently stands this junction does not operate properly during peak periods and an additional traffic from this development would exacerbate this problem further. The council have already highlighted the need for the Darlington Northern Link Road because of traffic issues along A1150/Whinfield Road.

The original study and the addendum study conducted by Bellway only looks at the impact of this development, however, there are also further developments within the ward, namely the impact of the Skertingham Garden Village and developments across the Borough which will also impact heavily on the A1150, Whinbush Way and Barmpton Lane. These will undoubtedly result in unacceptable levels of traffic congestion and traffic pollution in the Whinfield Ward. These should also absolutely be considered alongside this application as they cannot be separated.

Public Right of Way

The existing public right of way is proposed to be re-aligned through the housing development. This is apparently due to safety concerns about the new houses having a public right of way alongside their back gardens. This public right of way has been in existence for many years and already runs behind existing properties. There is no need to change this right of way as it can exist alongside this development.

Loss of Open Space

The proposed development will produce an Urban sprawl which will not reflect the character or needs of the area. In 2016 the World Health Organisation reviewed evidence of health benefits and green spaces, before publishing their full report 'Urban green space interventions and health: A review of impacts and effectiveness' in 2017. In brief the WHO stated:

"Modern urban lifestyle is associated with chronic stress, insufficient physical activity and exposure to anthropogenic environmental hazards. Urban green spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery, can promote mental and physical health, and reduce morbidity and mortality in urban residents by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, stimulating social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise and excessive heat."

Skertingham Countryside Park is a beautiful area of woodland & hedgerows covering many acres and home to a wide range of wildlife and species as well as plant life with many accessible walkways and public footpaths as well as historic routes which are so important to the area's heritage. It is actually the only publicly accessible woodland to the north of Darlington and offers walkers both beauty and tranquillity in equal measure. This area has been highlighted & included in Darlington Borough Councils 'Green Infrastructure Strategy' and it is therefore very concerning that this area therefore could be lost if plans go ahead for the 'Skertingham Garden Village' or the Northern Darlington Link Road which

has been currently muted by The Tees Valley Combines Authority (TVCA). During lockdown we saw an increase in the volume of local residents enjoying the open spaces, the same spaces that this proposed development would take away. Brownfield sites are available in the borough and these should be given consideration prior to the development of public open green space.

It has not been demonstrated in the planning application that this loss will be replaced by an equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity & quality. This is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Removing green spaces does nothing to support local community's health, social and cultural well-being. This alone should be grounds for the proposal to be rejected.

General Comments

This site was included in the Draft Local Plan (albeit under the heading of Elm Tree) which was consulted upon earlier in the year. The whole point of the consultation was to ask the people of Darlington what they thought about the plan and where they wanted to see development and where they did not. The results of this consultation are yet to be published so, as this development was part of that consultation, it should be rejected until the outcome of that consultation and the Local Plan is approved. If not, then it would make a mockery of the whole consultation and Draft Plan process.

Stop ignoring the local communities, that you were voted in to serve.

Question 5

Attendance at Examination Hearings

If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to participate in the examination hearings? No, I do not wish to participate at the examination hearings

Question 6

Do you request to be notified that the Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 22(3) of the regulations and to be notified of the adoption of the Local Plan? Yes, I request to be notified