

*R.P Rendle, The Willows, 112 School Road, Hockley Heath, Solihull B94 6RB*  
~~Telephone: 0121 713 1118, Email: r.p.rendle@solihull.gov.uk~~

Policy & Spatial Planning  
Solihull MBC  
Council House  
Manor Square  
Solihull  
B91 3QB

14 March 2019

Dear Sirs

**Solihull Local Plan Review – Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation January 2019**

**Site reference: 49 - Land adjacent to 84 School Road  
Ward – Dorridge & Hockley Heath**

**Site reference: 175 - Land to the south of School Road, Hockley Heath  
Ward – Dorridge & Hockley Heath**

**Site reference: 328 - Land at and to RO 84, 86 and 90 School Road  
Ward – Dorridge & Hockley Heath**

I am writing on behalf of myself and my wife to object to the proposed release/re-designation of the above sites for development on School Road, Hockley Heath or any other development on School Road.

I and my wife live on School Road and have done so for nearly 20 years.

The principle grounds on which we object to the proposed release of the above green belt sites and their consequent development are:

- Highway and public safety
- Lack of adequate parking
- Traffic generation
- Lack of appropriate road access
- Noise and disturbance
- Local planning policy
- Inadequate local facilities
- Loss of amenity, wild life, flora, fauna and trees
- Effect on the rural life of the village

#### **Highway and public safety**

School Road is small, narrow country road the upper reaches of which, near the Hockley Heath Academy School, have been developed in recent years without any significant improvement to the road.

The road is no longer fit for purpose due, in part, to the developments around the school area and the general increase in traffic. I will explain further.

The road itself is narrow country road and in parts only just wide enough for two cars to pass each other. Whenever a lorry or a tractor is coming in the opposite direction at the lower end of the road (Illshaw Heath Road end) it is necessary for one vehicle to stop to allow the other to pass. It is not unusual for passing vehicles to damage their wing mirrors when passing because of the natural desire to avoid the soft verges which border most of the road.

There are inadequate footpaths only on a small part the road and those that exist have been substantially damaged by the latest developer with apparent impunity. We understand that the damage to the footpath has been reported to the Council on numerous occasions however the Council does not appear to have taken any action.

There are no footpaths at the lower end of the road where there is a dangerous blind bend. Nor would it be possible to provide a footpath because of the narrowness of the road.

At the upper end of the road, near the school, people park on the footpath because of the narrowness of the road particularly around early mornings and in the afternoon. However some residents park on the road as a matter of necessity. Having reviewed the current proposed plans put forward by the promoter of one of the proposed developments it is clear that there is no provision for parking and any further development on the road will only exacerbate the current problem.

The nature of the road leads a certain section of the public to use the road as a high speed cut through. We understand that the Council is considering some traffic calming measures and these cannot be implemented soon enough. I have reported various car and delivery van drivers for speeding on the road to the Police with little effect.

The opening of the bicycle shop in the village has generated significantly more bicycle traffic down the road and it is only a matter of time before there is an incident between a bicyclist and a vehicle. Regrettably, any such incident will be very serious, if not fatal, because of the nature of the road and the speed at which cars travel on the road.

One of the more dangerous parts of the road, just before the blind bend, there is a dip which is subject to flooding with water running across road almost on a daily basis. Whilst attempts have been made to resolve the issues they have been unsuccessful. Late last year the road was closed for several days due to flooding under the bridge.

The road is a natural cut through from Shirley to Warwick area avoiding the main roads as a result over the last few years there has been a significant increase in the number of vehicles using the road and the speed at which they travel. Whilst this is bad at present it will become substantially worse when the 750 house development at Blythe Valley is built out. Surprisingly, there does not appear to have been any thought given to the effect of the Blythe Valley development on School Road or if there was none of the proposed measures have been put into effect to cope with the increased traffic volumes.

To make matters worse the road is in a poor state of repair. The road has been resurfaced in a couple areas with the worst areas having had no work done on them. As a result there are numerous potholes and breakups of the surface which are dangerous for bicyclist and vehicles alike.

On Illshaw Heath Road, which is an extension of School Road, it is not uncommon for vehicles to have to stop to allow another vehicle coming in the opposite direction to pass because of the potholes and soft verges.

Any development on School Road is only going to exacerbate the above issues for which a resolution is difficult, if not impossible.

#### **Traffic generation and lack of appropriate road access**

It is scandalous that no thought was given to the effect of the increased traffic on School Road as a result of the Blythe Valley development and that this should be given high priority consideration in relation to the current proposals for School Road.

We are also concerned about the road access if any development is permitted on School Road. It would seem that all three proposals would require direct access onto School Road with a single access point for each. This will inevitably create bottle necks as is evident at times of high traffic with access onto Stratford Road. These bottlenecks will be exacerbated by the problems regarding parking and significantly increased vehicular movements.

Any development on School Road will inevitably create greater traffic on Saddler Wells Lane which incorporates a narrow, single vehicle width bridge over the canal. It is self-evident that any increase in traffic over the bridge is wholly inappropriate.

On a less specific but related point; whenever the M40 is blocked at Warwick or there are delays on the M42 the volume of traffic passing through the village increase very significantly. This increase in traffic volume is only likely to become more frequent and more pervasive if further development is allowed.

#### **Noise and disturbance**

We have already suffered the noise and disturbance generated as a result of the relatively small, recent development on School Road. When the development was being built I found it necessary to complain on many occasions to the Building Department of the Council about the state of the road which was in a dangerous condition. The footpath was badly damaged and was unusable and the parts of the footpath that had not been damaged couldn't be used because of the vehicles parked on the pavement. As a result it was necessary to walk on the road which was covered in mud and extremely slippery. On two occasions I had to help a disabled person walk on the road because the footpath was unusable and the road so dangerous. This should not be acceptable. Action was only taken after I threatened to apply for a "stop notice" if the Council did not take immediate action.

The proposed developments will inevitably create significant noise and disturbance in the build phase, should the proposed developments be allowed, and ongoing noise and pollution thereafter. We therefore object on these grounds.

#### **Local planning policy and facilities**

As a small village Hockley Heath does not enjoy the facilities of say Dorridge. There is no doctor's surgery or pharmacy etc. and in reality there is no space for any such facilities without encroaching on green belt land. Whilst facilities such as these would be desirable there are not going to become available with the release of the three small proposed developments on School Road.

If serious consideration had been given to these sort of facilities they would have been considered when the Blythe Valley development was approved as that development is many times larger than those proposed for School Road.

The whole infrastructure of the village is inadequate to support any significant development in the village. By way of one example only, Hockley Heath Academy would likely require substantial expansion as would any parking facilities associated with the Academy.

Another example of the lack of facilities which make any significant development in Hockley Heath inappropriate is the bus service which can be described as extremely limited at best. Getting to or from either Birmingham or Stratford is likely to require a lengthy wait as the service is infrequent even during peak hours.

#### **Loss of amenity, wild life, flora, fauna and trees**

The green fields which are the subject of the proposed developments are used by local residents and have an abundance of wild life, fauna and flora and are bounded by mature trees.

A large Tawny Owl can be seen and heard regularly late at night and in the early mornings as well as bats in the evening. Small deer, foxes and badgers can be regularly seen crossing School Road. The loss of the green belt land will have an adverse effect on local wildlife and to the community.

#### **Effect on the rural life of the village**

In summary, whilst these proposals for the development of School Road appear to be relatively insignificant they will have a substantial effect on Hockley Heath village, its rural aspects and School Road in particular.

Any increase in vehicle movements on School Road is only likely to worsen an already bad, not fit for purpose, small country road. It will inevitably lead to a serious accident/incident which the Council has an opportunity to prevent.

Any development on School Road has to be objected to and rejected on the above grounds.

Yours faithfully



**R P Rendle & M-A Rendle**