

LDP – Proposed Housing Allocation Site 18 – Sharmans Cross Road

I write in regard to SMBC's Local Development Plan (LDP). I wish to register my objection to and request the removal of a new housing development on the rugby ground on Sharmans Cross Road.

Maintain Sporting Ground

The rugby club ground must be retained for sporting purposes. This is clearly specified within the current Borough lease with Oakmoor (Sharmans Cross) Ltd. It is a travesty that local sports clubs have made enquiries to use this land for its intended purpose but have been met, at best, with obstacles and to no avail.

As our Council, I urge you to encourage and cooperate with sports clubs to promote and utilise this valuable sporting land and to continue to honour its original intended use in perpetuity.

With poor sporting participation rates and a continuing decline in sports grounds and facilities, it is imperative that this rugby club land is retained thus going some way to reversing this very sad trend. There is so much potential to preserve, maximise and fully utilise this land and to cement this unique 'sporting corridor' once and for all for the benefit of the local community and the well being of individuals. The rugby club land is adjacent to Solihull Arden Tennis Club, itself looking to expand, financially invest in and diversify by proposing the introduction of paddle tennis courts, Silhill Football Club pitches and the playing fields of the junior school. Further, there is a section of land which is identified as SSSI which supports bats, wildlife and it is believed, birds of prey. The land provides a perfect habitat for prey and predators. All are part of an expanse of green open space.

As mentioned, with ever decreasing sports grounds and poor facilities, such as a lack of changing rooms particularly associated with public grounds, I plead with SMBC to be proactive and give its support to the continued use of the land for sporting purposes for future generations. Any assurance in this regard will generate confidence in the long term, encourage investment opportunities and further optimize sporting usage.

Covenant

I urge, in the strongest terms, that the 2013 All Party Policy on the rugby ground to maintain the sports ground only covenant and not sell the freehold be retained. SMBC has obligations to its residents and to this land and its sporting commitment. It is incomprehensible as to why, given all of the above, that the site has been identified as available and suitable for 67/100 mixed residential properties.

NOTE: only this week, Stratford upon Avon Council has launched a Compulsory Purchase Order to buy Wellsbourne Airfield, I believe to prevent it becoming a potential housing development. I ask our Council to take back control of all of this land and lock in for perpetuity for sporting purposes.

Whilst maintaining the ground for sporting purposes is my main thrust, I wish to record further objections:

Density – The proposal to develop 67/100 homes is completely out of character and would be an intensive overdevelopment. Consequently it would be totally out of scale compared to dwellings in the immediate vicinity. It most certainly would not enhance the local and distinctiveness of the surrounding area.

Flooding – Sharmans Cross Road is renown for flooding during heavy rain. The green open space provides excellent natural drainage. Hard surfacing of the order of the proposal will further exacerbate this ongoing issue.

Increasing Traffic- At peak times, Sharmans Cross Road and peripheral roads are totally gridlocked. A housing development would have a most serious impact on highway safety. One only has to look on in horror at school drop off and collection times to the chaos which ensues. The risk of incident and accident to motorist, buses, lorries, pedestrians and young children is high most days.

Sharmans Cross Road and Streetsbrook Road are bumper to bumper from as early as 7.45am. Traffic into the town centre and surrounding feeder roads very quickly get backed up causing frustration and motorist perhaps taking undue risks.

All day parking in near by side roads are a major nuisance and inconvenience to residents. With most homes having a minimum of 2 cars, this proposal will inevitably lead to further street parking adding to congestion and chaos and nuisance.

Health – the emissions from idling traffic, at the levels mentioned above, are particularly damaging to young children who walk, cycle and scoot to school. These young people, given their height are closest to the fumes especially given the close proximity of the pavement to the road.

I hope that you will take these points into account, recognize their validity and withdraw this site from the LDP

Yours

K Trueman
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