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B A CLAYSON



Consultation Response to Draft Local Plan Shirley South Green Belt residential Development

I OBJECT to this proposed residential development for the reasons I will refer to below:

The maintenance of sustainability does not appear to be given any consideration within this proposal, I have never observed such a lack consideration just to maximise the destruction of local habitat and ecological balance of this area. This is a time when greater consideration should be given to the environment.

The Shirley South appears to be carrying the main burden of the residential development throughout the Borough. I must highlight that Shirley and Blyth Valley area has already sustained significant redevelopment over the past 5 to 8 years. Token tinkering with the minor road improvements appears to be the Councils only response, not really addressing the increased levels of traffic growth.

Could I ask why Solihull is taking the extra housing burden? Why are the additional housing not being absorbed within the Greater Birmingham's initiative, in order utilise the Brown Field First site strategy: promoted by Andy Street. Why is the council intent on devouring large swathes of ecological sensitive Green Belt? This makes a complete mockery of the boroughs motto Urbs et Rure

The site in question –Site 26 (BL3) is adjacent to Whitlock End/ Dickens Heath is close to four local wildlife sites. In addition, being only one kilometre from a further 6 significant ecological natural sites. This development is too close to these sensitive sites and will have a catastrophic effect on the area, flora, fauna and wildlife, not to mention the quality of life for human inhabitants. These ecological sensitive high grade greenbelt sites perpetually flood and are therefore natural soak ways that mitigate local flood risk.

Thoughtless development like this creates flood problems and removes the flood protection from the surrounding area it currently protects.

The Shirley area is based on an ancient rural district, with lanes, bridle paths and narrow roads without pavement in many places. It has poor public transport, thereby making it a pedestrian and car dependant area. By increasing residential development this will exponentially increase car usage for each new household; the increase will be a 200% in car usage with a further potential increase of 200% because of natural family development. Expanding on this point, it does not consider employment in rurally established areas; they are by their very nature further away from employment, creating further stress on a low-key rural infrastructure, over time this grows further as families develop with the school runs and further education.

Problems concerning utility infrastructure such as gas, water electricity and sewage and water pressure of existing utilities infrastructure is near to breaking point. This is due to the constant bolting on of new developments to existing services, which is, essentially on to the original and existing rural setup. This appears to be short sighted and piece meal, leading to an eventual collapse due to inadequate planning. This highlights the council's agenda to purely expand the council tax revenue base, this is without any consideration of the utility infrastructure or the current residents.

Solihull Council must bear in mind the recent changes to the High Street brought about by the pandemic and changes in people shopping habits, which have created a significant change to the retail structure in this area. Many units are falling empty all over the borough; Shirley is a prime example, with the loss of Morrisons and closure of shops on the High street (even charity organisations have vacated) and stores Parkgate closing down. In addition, many units in Solihull town centre are empty, with a huge hole being created with the planned relocation of M&S. This calls for a completely new look at utilising the vacant units that will be left by the devastating impact of the aforementioned shopping and the reuse of brown field sites.

The wider consequence of this development is the disproportionate effect that it will have on doctors and the wider health care provision. The existing system is stretched to breaking point with COVID as well as more residential developments already under construction. This will exponentially increase demand due to pressure of later life care, which is more complex and demanding. The health provision is exacerbated by the down grading of Solihull hospital surely this significant health resource should be upgraded rather than downgraded now, to secure the existing population.

The Shirley South community is whole heartedly behind this OBJECTION and will not allow this Borough council to destroy the ecological balance, quality of life of existing residents any further with the short-term revenue generation schemes.

The community of Solihull, South Shirley and the Blythe want to set trends with good sustainable development not shoddy cash grabs with disastrous environmental consequences.

Brenda Clayson

