

SECTION 78 APPEAL at :- Land at former site of Hafod Tileries, Hafod Road and Bangor Road, Johnstown, Wrexham - H6955/A/15/3135730

Appeal Case No. H6955/A/15/3135730

WCBC planning application reference: P/2013/0545

Esclusham Community Council Submission

It is plainly evident that an appeal against the delegated decision made by WCBC would ensue. The confusion surrounding the proposed development's location with regard the settlement limits, the previous land use and adjacent landowner's record of planning applications make clear interpretation of planning policies difficult.

Members of Esclusham Community Council are not minded to comment on the rights and wrongs of each argument from a planning standpoint and will instead focus on more factual, locally based knowledge to attempt to provide a more rounded, local context, which, hopefully, will form part of the appeal judgement.

Members of the Community Council recorded their objection to the original application in September 2013, citing the following reasons:

- Mixed use development
- Visibility splays at the road junction
- Change from employment to residential use

Members were aware of the previous applications and appeals made by Eco Readymix located adjacent to the proposed development. The Community Council's view was that the proposed development was to be located on land that had been used for employment for many generations. This was effectively supported by the judgement detailed in appeal case APP/H6955/A/11/2150207.

It is noted that the appellant's agent does not reference the Community Council's objections to the proposed development in the initial appeal submission.

The Community Council raised its objections purely on the basis of local knowledge, both historical and current.

The site in question is large, some 17 ha. No similar sized employment site exists within the vicinity.

Many previous residential planning applications have identified the major employment centres of the Wrexham & Llay Industrial Estates as part of the sustainable development argument, saying each is serviced by public transport. In practice this is nonsense. Ever diverse shift working patterns mean that public transport is not in a position to support transit from residential to employment centres. Transport by car and to a much lesser extent bicycle are the only effective solutions.

The existing Hafod Tileries site is adjacent to a current employment location. Eco Readymix & Enviroclear are two significant operations located directly adjacent to the proposed residential development. Both organisations operate large goods vehicles over extended hours. It is estimated that some 80 to 100 people are currently employed in the vicinity. A waste transfer station operates from the same locality. Sustainable development does imply harmony between neighbours. Placing 300 residential units adjacent to the existing employment centre is expected to lead to conflict and complaint.

The location of the site in relation to the A483 trunk road and existing residential sites, is in the view of members of Esclusham Community Council fundamental to

remaining in the employment classification. From an employment perspective, it presents many more opportunities for access on foot or bicycle for local residents using smaller service roads, while the link to the motorway network via the A483 provides significant attraction to business.

There have been a number of significant residential developments in the area over the past decade, plus there are still a number of major residential developments still to proceed, where planning permission is already in place.

The pressure on local services is becoming intolerable. Compliance with statutory obligations is becoming increasingly difficult.

Due to an inability to recruit GPs to existing medical practices, closure of a nearby medical centres has resulted. The doctor:patient ratio is outside of nationally accepted guidelines in the Johnstown, Rhos, Ruabon and Rhostyllen areas. To say residential development of the Hafod Tileries can be supported through existing medical provision is false.

The same is true with regard education provision. A deficit of places exists. The 21st Century schools programme is proceeding too slowly against the current trend in population growth locally.

The statement made by the developer that sufficient education places exist appears to be driven by financial gain and not founded on fact; it is glib and superficial. The design & access statement presented in support of the application does not break down the number of three and four bedroom properties and makes no attempt to quantify the number of education places required as a direct consequence of the development.

Finally, the proposed development, if allowed, will reside in close proximity to sites of conservation and special scientific interest. Land was transferred to the British Wildlife Trust in 2013 to mitigate against the potential adverse impact of the Eco Readymix operations and to provide a sustainable GCN habitat management opportunity.

Through the chosen layout, the applicant potentially generates negative impacts on the ecology of the surrounds. The SSSI and GCN mitigation measures lie to the north of the development. The green open space is to the south with 300 houses in between. The reason for the overall design is clear, housing could not be located under the two 132kV overhead electricity lines. This however does not make the design right - amenity under power lines is a compromise too far.

Members of Esclusham Community Council do not support the application. Objection is based on clear and factual evidence. If the appeal is allowed, it will negatively impact on adjacent businesses and limit further job creation; it will place additional pressure on already scarce local services, particularly medical and education. For the reasons identified, the Community Council requests in the strongest terms not to uphold the appeal.

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