



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Planning Inspectorate
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

7th April 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your reference: H6955/A/19/3238470

I write the following submission in respect of the application by Glyndwr University to develop land north of Holt Road in the Rhosnesni area of my constituency, locally known as Dean Road Playing Field.

A Member of Parliament for the area concerned, I object to the development, and do so on the following grounds:

Local infrastructure will be unable to cope

Although any new development invariably puts a strain on local infrastructure, this particular development will push the current infrastructure past capacity. Most notable:

- Roads will not be able to facilitate the new demand. The draft Local Development Plan recognises that Holt Road is currently at capacity, but the proposed development has its access and egress on Holt Road.
- Flooding is already an issue around the Holt Road area and the Dean Road Field is one of a small number of green spaces into which water can escape to help alleviate this problem during severe weather. Developing the site will exacerbate existing issues.
- Primary and Secondary School provision is already difficult, with some parents having to send their children away from the village in order to be educated. Bringing in more families to this area without any extra schooling provision will put further pressure on the existing schools, as well as causing problems for schools in neighbouring villages where competition for places is also intense.
- GP surgeries area already struggling with existing demand, with some constituents telling me they are waiting weeks for appointments. Again, to increase the burden placed on local surgeries with no plan to increase provision, would be irresponsible.

The community will lose a valuable green space

Although the land is the property of Glyndwr University, it has been used by, and accessible to, the community for around 50 years. It has been used by organised sports teams for hockey, football and rugby, as well as by local individuals for running, walking and picnics. Green spaces such as this bring a number of benefits to local communities including:

- Physical health benefits – encouraging exercise, if only walking, among local people, as well as reducing air pollution. Research by Fields in Trust suggests that parks and green spaces save the NHS £111m per annum, based solely on a reduction in GP visits.¹
- Mental health benefits – it has been well documented that green spaces and wildlife have a positive effect on the mental wellbeing of those living near them, when compared with bricks-and-mortar developments.
- Preventing urban sprawl – the protection of green spaces encourages the development of brownfield land instead, which in turn stops towns and cities spreading into the countryside.

Conflict with Planning Policy Wales

Planning policy Wales states that:

All playing fields whether owned by public, private or voluntary organisations, should be protected from development except where:

- *facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;*
- *alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available locally, avoiding any temporary loss of provision; or*
- *there is an excess of such provision in the area.²*

In this instance, there is no attempt to enhance the current facilities and there is certainly no excess of provision presently. While there has been an offer of a separate football pitch to be created by the University on its own land this does not make up for the loss of open space for those that partake in other forms of exercise, and is not equivalent to the two football pitches marked out on the current site.

Consideration of the Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan is yet to come into effect but as it is being drawn up, submissions which have been made should be taken into effect. In Wrexham County Borough Council's 2009 Open Spaces Survey, the Council identified that there was a deficiency of open spaces in the Rhosnesni area. In 2016, the Council undertook an updated survey which claimed that there was sufficient green space in the community#. However, in considering whether the loss of this particular field would then create a deficiency again, the Chief Planning Officer reviewed the evidence and concluded that *"The site has been categorised with a high enough quality and value score to warrant a recommendation for its retention."*³

Conclusion

I hope, therefore, that you can see that on all of these grounds (local infrastructure, loss of green space, conflict with Planning Policy Wales and consideration of the forthcoming Local Development Plan) there is no strong reason to approve this application.

Should you require any further information, please do contact me at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Atherton MP

Member of Parliament for Wrexham

References

1. Fields in Trust 2020, <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/revaluing>
2. Planning Policy Wales 2020, 10th Edition, Page 71, Section 4.5.4
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/planning-policy-wales-edition-10.pdf>
3. Chief Planning Officer Report 2019, p.13,
<https://www.actoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/Acton-CC/UserFiles/Files/other%20news%20documents/2019%20News%20documents/APPLICATION%20NO.%20P20180673%20-%20LAND%20NORTH%20OF%20HOLT%20ROAD%20WREXHAM%20010719.pdf>