

INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE DEVELOPMENT – PUBLIC RESPONSE

The Parish Council were informed by BKW Developments and their Planning Consultants of their intention to apply for planning permission on a field on the Blackburn Road, for the use of industrial units/warehouses/offices and proposed road access for vehicles to access Hillside School, with additional units there.

Following this, the plans were put onto the notice board and on the web-site, a newsletter was circulated to all residents, and a public meeting was arranged. The Parish Council also received letters and e mails from residents and local people. The result of both of these consultations are as follows:-

PUBLIC MEETING – held on 14/03/2017

The meeting was held in the Pavilion at Hothersall Lodge and was attended by 41 members of the public, 22 of whom were Hothersall residents, plus other concerned local residents, and 6 Councillors and the Parish Clerk. The proposed plans were displayed. The chairman explained that the purpose of the meeting was to gain the public's opinion, to enable the Parish Council to formulate a response which reflected those views, once the plans had been submitted. The meeting was then opened to the public. 20 people spoke. Speakers were asked to be succinct and relevant and were kept to a short length of time. No-one spoke in favour of the development.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was received from 40 people, 11 being Hothersall residents.

TRAFFIC/ROAD ACCESS/ROAD SAFETY

This was the biggest overall concern at the public meeting and was mentioned by 36 correspondents, including 15 Hothersall residents.

Firstly, local people are concerned about the road access to the site. Traffic, both for the people working at the site, (there is a planned 250 parking places on site), and for the heavy goods vehicles accessing the site, would need to go through Ribchester, which has restrictions for HGV's, Grimsargh via Skew Bridge which is adjacent to the local Primary School, or Broughton crossroads/by-pass. This route would necessitate driving either up Dilworth Lane and down to Stonebridge roundabout, or along Lower Lane and then past

both High Schools and again to Stonebridge roundabout. These routes are not practical for HGV's, and most traffic will go via Grimsargh as this is the most direct route if going south on the motorway network. The roads through Longridge are already in a poor state of repair with many pot-holes. In addition to this, there will be a lot of increased traffic from the new housing estates, which have not yet impacted on the roads as the houses are not completed.

Secondly, the proposed site is on a very dangerous stretch of road, which has had many accidents, including fatalities. It is between the difficult T junction at the end of Lower Lane, which has poor visibility and will have added traffic due to the Tootle Heights housing development, and the blind bend by the Corporation Arms, which is also a very difficult road junction. At this junction, which suffered a fatality a number of years ago, and has had other accidents on a regular basis, there are a number of properties, some of the properties park their vehicles at the Corporation Arms, which necessitates them crossing this road on a regular basis. The proposed access to this site is situated very near to this blind bend, on the red hatched area, near to a bus stop on both sides of the road. If traffic is delayed on this corner turning in or out of this access road, more accidents are inevitable.

There is no pavement on this side of the road and public transport is very infrequent.

A number of businesses have re-located from Longridge, including Ridings, DJ Ryan and the Co-op warehouse, due to poor road access to the motorway network/lack of local infrastructure.

SCHOOL CONCERNS/NOISE/POLLUTION

School concerns were mentioned by 22 correspondents, 4 of whom were Hothersall residents. In addition noise pollution was identified by 21 correspondents, 4 of whom were Hothersall residents, air pollution by 13 people, 4 of whom lived in Hothersall, and one person mentioned light pollution.

There were a lot of concerns expressed at the meeting about the effect of the development on the nearby Hillside School, which is for children who have severe autism, and therefore have very special, and specific, needs. The school had not been consulted about this proposal. A number of staff from Hillside school spoke very passionately about their concerns for the children who attend the school. They felt very strongly that this development would be detrimental to the needs of the children. The children are very noise sensitive and the proximity to an industrial estate would be very distressing to them, particularly if the transport was re-directed through this estate, as suggested. The children are taken outside into the grounds on a regular basis, as the school has been allocated as a Forest School, both for play, learning, and time-out/de-stressing, and this would be seriously disruptive. In addition to this, if the taxi's were re-routed, it would mean there are more gates and entrances, which would make it more dangerous from a security point of view. Other issues for the school were the fact that staff use two way radios for security purposes, and the frequency could be used by other people nearby, which has been a problem for staff in the past, when the frequencies have needed to be changed.

A lot of concern has been expressed also about the danger of air pollution caused by the diesel fumes, especially with the proximity to the school. It was mentioned that a school should not be closer than 150 metres from an industrial estate.

There are concerns regarding noise, air pollution and light pollution to the nearby residents in addition to the proximity to the school. Mention was made that activity at the site should be restricted to day-time hours, but this would be directly in opposition to the needs of the children at the school.

CHARACTER OF AREA/VISUAL IMPACT

These concerns were expressed by 20 correspondents, 5 Hothersall residents, and by 7 speakers at the meeting, 5 of whom lived in Hothersall.

This is a rural area and is the gateway to the Ribble Valley and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the development will be able to be seen from this area, as well as 2 Biological Heritage sites, including one which is 100 metres from this proposed site, College Wood. In addition to this, the stone structures and retaining walls of the reservoir, and the Corporation Arms have been listed as Local Heritage Assets.

ENVIRONMENT/GREEN FIELD SITE

This was identified by 25 correspondents, 8 from Hothersall and by 11 of the speakers, 6 from Hothersall.

There was a very strong feeling that this green field site should not be used for this purpose. There have been much more suitable brown field sites in the Longridge area, but these have now been allocated for housing. People felt very strongly that this is completely inappropriate and that it is the wrong place to be considering such a development.

Concerns were expressed about the local wildlife, including inhabitants of the 2 ponds in this vicinity, and also owls, bats, and foxes.

One correspondent and 3 speakers mentioned the concern regarding this development causing extra flooding to the area.

SIZE OF DEVELOPMENT

6 correspondents, including 2 Hothersall residents, were concerned about the size if the development. This was also mentioned by a number of the speakers. There has been a 50% increase in the size of the development proposed to that originally put forward in the 'Options Consultation Housing and Economic Plan' by RVBC.

There is concern about the potential height of the units.

It is felt that these units are not needed as there are empty units already in Longridge.

There is a lot of concern that this is 'the thin end of the wedge'. The proposed road ends abruptly at the southern end of the development, and there is concern that, if this is accepted, that the development will be extended further.

OTHER ISSUES

3 correspondents, all Hothersall residents, and a number of speakers, spoke of the need for sufficient landscaping in the event of this development going ahead. A 50 metre buffer zone should be allowed, there should be sound retention barriers in the form of acoustic fencing and earth bonding, screened by landscaping. Building should be constructed of random stone to fit in with local construction materials, and the rooves should be constructed of living materials to counteract the risk of flooding.

The area has no mains drainage.

It is very strongly felt that there are other, more suitable sites, some of which have already been identified by RVBC as potential sites. These sites are not in residential areas, are situated on trunk roads and have easier access to the major road networks.

All correspondents and speakers at the meeting were strongly opposed to this development, and the inappropriateness of this location.