

66 Grosvenor St
Leek
Staffordshire ST13 5LY
July 16, 2015

Dear Ms Simpkin,

SMD/2015/0407 - Land At Milltown Way, Leek, Staffordshire

Outline application for up to 90 dwellings, with associated public open space, Ecological Management Area and landscaping, with all matters reserved except for access (resubmission of SMD/2014/0618)

I am writing to reiterate my objection to the granting of the development outlines in the above re-submitted application, on the grounds described below.

First of all, though, I would like to express regret that it's been possible for Gladman to make this re-submission without any form of supplementary public consultation, and to do so at a time of year when they are perfectly aware that many residents will be on their annual holidays, so that they perhaps are not aware that their prior (2014) expressions of objection will not be automatically considered in reference to the re-submission.

Why, I wonder, was Gladman not (as indicated on the Planning portal) required to pay fees for this 2015 submission, as is usual for an *actual* standalone application, unencumbered by prior comment from the public?

1. Access to the planned development

The only matter in this application for consideration on a non-outline basis is that of access to the planned development. It is proposed to extend Milltown Way into the site land to provide vehicular access to a residential development.

Section 6.2.17 of the Planning Statement states that “Milltown Way is a single carriageway road and circa 5.5m wide”. What it fails to mention is that much of this width is usually taken up by parked vehicles which cannot be accommodated in the driveways and garages of the existing residences on Milltown Way. A major increase in the volume of traffic, from the traffic generated by no more than 10 homes, to that generated by at least a further 90, will render the existing stretch of Milltown Way unfit for the purpose envisaged by this application.

Vehicle ownership in the existing homes on Pickwood Avenue, Milltown Way and adjoining residential roads is high (most households own at least two vehicles), due to the dispersed workplace and school locations of relevance to residents, and the structure and timetables of the local public transport services.

The question of workplace locations makes the relevance of local authority boundaries to housing development a more qualified matter than is acknowledged by any of the Statement's many invocations of the National Planning Policy Framework. Leek residents commonly work in areas such as Stoke-on-Trent (where, it's surely not irrelevant to mention, the City Council estimates that over 170 hectares of brownfield land await development), or in Ashbourne or Uttoxeter, which makes residents' private car usage likely to be more prevalent than this application reflects.

The reality as currently experienced by residents of Milltown Way and the adjoining roads is one of substantial queueing at peak times of the morning, which could only be worsened by a doubling of the number of houses being served by the single junction with the A523 at the end of Pickwood Avenue. I'm at a loss as to enhancements to the somewhat distant junction of Springfield Road and (the opposite side of) the A523 will materially alter this, although I'm aware of the Highways Authority's recommendations in this regard, from 2014.

Given that the actual scale of the development (90 houses) is stated purely on an outline basis in this application, it's hard to see how the applicant's projections regarding traffic volume have any validity.

While vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is of course of great importance, the Statement

2. Ecological impact of granting access

In any event, the suggestion that the surrounding area needs to be disrupted, in many aspects, for up to half a decade, in order to erect run-of-the-mill housing stock which can better be provided elsewhere, such as on derelict land in Leekbrook (as per application SMD/2014/0544), or in Cornhill and Barnfields as per the Churnet Valley Masterplan, is not acceptable to residents of the area.

The pedestrian approaches to Pickwood Recreation Ground from the north provide a green finger stretching from near the Conservation Area, into a large green space, which is used by Leek residents of all ages, including those whose mobility may be too limited to allow them access to the more open countryside of the surrounding Moorlands. Given the vantage point which the Rec offers from which to view much of that surrounding landscape, on several sides, it fulfils a unique role within the town.

To curtail this view, and to cause the Rec to be entered from all sides through concrete corridors, with a possible view to eliminating it later (as per the discarded 'Area 4' provisions of the draft Local Development Framework of 2008, or a past Ogilvie application SMD/1981/0158), can only have a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the town.

It is my strong opinion that the case put by this applicant does not justify such an effect now, any more than it did in 2014.

Yours sincerely,

Cathal Coughlan (Mr.)