

Planning application SMD/2021/0418 – Blythe Vale phase 2

Dear Planning,

Thank you for forwarding the plans for the proposed development on land south east of A521 Uttoxeter Road, Draycott In The Moors.

The following information provides more detailed comments regarding the opportunities relating to play, open space, playing pitches and Sport England 'Active Design' guidance.

Open space / play provision

As the second phase of a large development on-site play and open space has been provided within the proposed layout for the site.

The plan shows two areas marked as LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play), one at the north boundary and the second towards the south-east side within the larger area of open space. These areas are also marked up on the plan as being 200m² and 220m² respectively. For an area of play to be considered as an LEAP it is required to be at least 400m², therefore the two individual areas are not currently meeting the required criteria for a development of this size.

We would ask that the marked LEAP to the south-east is made in to the preferred larger play area with an minimum area of at least 400m². The smaller area to the north boundary would be welcomed to remain within the plan and it is suggested that this smaller area could be a toddler only site, which would give an alternative option to parents/carers from the larger site. The main LEAP should have sufficient equipment in terms of both number and scope to fulfil the full age range of toddler to junior (0 to 14).

The plan shows a circular path associated with the play area to the south-east. There is also a label nearby which says "Proposed ecological area with trim trail". It is not clear from these whether the proposed trim trail will follow the marked path or be located within the ecological area. The ability for the new community to access this wider area of open space is welcomed and the inclusion of a trim trail would enhance the opportunities for people to be active and enjoy the outdoors. The circular path seems to require those who use it having to walk through the play area to complete the route. It would be better if the conclusion of the path is kept outside of the play area so that users aren't required to access that area unnecessarily.

The Service Commissioning team would welcome working with the chosen contractor for the provision of play, trim trail and wider open space provision for more detailed talks regarding the type and design of equipment used and final layout of provision.

The future management of the play areas / trim trail and areas of open space should be covered by way of a management company, ensuring the equipment is monitored regularly and well maintained.

It is unclear from the plan whether the area next to the proposed play area to the south-east, marked "proposed underground attenuation tank" would be completely underground. If any structure or equipment would be located above ground this could pose a danger or risk to children using the play area, due to its very close proximity.

The plan shows a number of existing ponds on the site. These ponds should be considered for their safety and risk to the children who will be “playing” around them.

Active Design

The site has an existing Public Right of Way running through it near to the north boundary. The proposed plan shows this will be enhanced within the development which is welcomed.

It would be equally welcomed if this pathway could continue within the site boundary to create a circular walk for the new community. If the pathway could be linked up and extended from where it leaves the site to the east heading south through the ecological (open space) area and then following the southern boundary and up the west side to the top where the current footpath leaves the site. This would provide an excellent opportunity for residents to have a substantial circular walk which will enhance access to traffic free, exercise opportunities on the doorstep. The new development is surrounded by major roads and therefore to offer a safe internal walking route would be very positive.

Promotion of a safe walking / cycling route from the development to the local amenities should be encouraged and as there is only one entrance and exit for vehicles, the increase in walking and cycling opportunities will also help to reduce congestion and frequency of vehicle movement.

Off-site playing pitch provision

We would be seeking off site contributions for Playing Pitches which would be delivered within a 20 minute catchment of the development.

The formula for calculation of the off-site playing pitches contributions is £685.36 per bedroom.

Further discussions are required regarding the trigger points for the off-site contribution payments but would be required at 10% occupancy of the dwellings.