

Comments re: application 100477/FUL/20

I am writing to object to the above planning application.

1. With regard to its location, the application site is isolated from any services or facilities, and has only very limited public transport availability. As such the proposal for 18 dwellings conflicts with Policy L2.2 of the Core Strategy (CS), which states that:

“All new development will be required to be (amongst other things):

(b) Appropriately located in terms of access to existing community facilities and/or delivers complementary improvements to the social infrastructure (schools, health facilities, leisure and retail facilities) to ensure the sustainability of the development.

For the same reason, it would conflict with Policy L4.1(e), which states that the Council will ensure that, “as appropriate, development proposals within less sustainable locations throughout the Borough, will deliver, or significantly contribute towards the delivery of, measures to secure infrastructure and services that will improve access to more sustainable transport choices

2. It would have a significantly harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area, including its impact on the Listed Ackers Farmhouse. The proposal to have two substantial blocks of modern two-storey dwellings in an area currently typified by farm and farm-type buildings, along with stables and equestrian buildings, surrounded by largely open land, would be totally out of character. Moreover, the proximity of a two-storey block to the Listed farmhouse, and the use of large amounts of full-height glazing in the housing blocks, would be harmful to both the character and appearance of the surroundings – immediate and beyond. In this respect it would conflict with policies on protecting the setting of Listed Buildings and also with Policy L2.2(c) which states that development should not be harmful to the character or amenity of the immediately surrounding area.
3. There is a well-established equestrian community here and in the wider locality, and the proposal would result in the loss of 3 full-time jobs. Especially at this current time, the loss of such jobs is highly undesirable, and the proposal would conflict with Policy W1.12 of the CS which states that:

“In determining applications for non-employment uses on unallocated employment sites, developers will be required to provide a statement to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, demonstrating that:

- There is no need for the site to be retained for employment purposes and it is therefore redundant;
- There is a clear need for the proposed land use(s) in this locality;
- There are no suitable alternative sites, within the locality, to meet the identified need for the proposed development;
- The proposed redevelopment would not compromise the primary function of the locality or the operations of neighbouring users; and
- The proposed redevelopment is in accordance with other policies in the Development Plan for Trafford.”

The proposal would clearly fail to meet these criteria.

4. The site is in Green Belt and it would represent inappropriate development, with no other considerations that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Whilst the applicant may contend that the site represents previously developed land, the proposal would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt because it would result in a large block of dwellings projecting much further west and well beyond the current line of houses and gardens in the converted farm buildings nearer the road. The block would be highly visible and, in addition, it would appear out of character. Moreover, whilst the applicant claims to accept a need for affordable housing, it is also stated in the Design and Access Statement that this matter will be determined later in the process. This is unacceptable and a firm commitment to meeting the Council's own policy relating to affordable housing, such that it would definitely be reflected in any permission given, would be needed, before any exception to inappropriateness in the Green Belt could be claimed. And in any case, the amount of affordable housing would be very small, and it would not outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Finally, the claim by the applicant that the proposal would result in "a vast increase in Green Belt land" is somewhat hard to understand. The Green Belt boundary would not change, so the amount of Green Belt land would be exactly the same. The only impact that the proposal would have on the Green Belt would be a harmful effect on its openness.

5. The Statement of Community Involvement is inadequate for such a sensitive development in the Green Belt. It is, in fact, virtually non-existent, and does not appear to have any evidence of meaningful involvement the community, and certainly not with the substantial element of the community involved in equestrian pursuits.
6. The proposal would result in a very small residual parcel of land being given over to "meadow". This residual parcel, which presumably is currently used for equestrian activity and grazing, would be surrounded by a major road to the north, a football training ground to the south and west, and a rugby training ground to the east. It would clearly be of no practical use for any agricultural purposes, and this element of the plan for the site and its surroundings should be ignored in terms of having any practical value whatsoever. It will result in an area of waste land, with little or no biodiversity value, and which will almost certainly be followed with pressures to extend the housing development, causing further harm to the openness of the Green Belt.