

Comments on Planning Application 18/00119/FULre: Land South of Grove Street Ashton-under-Lyne**A) Traffic issues****1) Prevention of traffic short-cut between Newmarket Road and Richmond Street.**

Currently Sat-Nav's appear to indicate a route between Lindisfarne road and Grove Street and it is not unusual to see cars attempting to drive across the grass towards Grove street from Lindisfarne Road. Some cars get stuck on the grass and need to be towed-off the grass. Currently motor-cycles often use this shortcut between Grove Street and Lindisfarne Road or also drive on the public footpath to Croxdale Close. There is no doubt that if there is no barrier at the end of the new extended Grove Street and turning circle, cars will also attempt to drive over the kerb and attempt to get to Lindisfarne Road or Marsden Close or Croxdale Close.

2) Grove Street

My knowledge of using Grove Street is mainly as a pedestrian and I am often surprised how many vehicles are parked on the road and pavements for such a short street. I often wonder if some drivers park on Grove street when they are visiting Grovewood Close and/or Lindisfarne Road and/or parking here to walk their dogs. I assume that some visitors visiting houses on Newmarket Road also park on Grove Street. There may be a congestion issue with two-way traffic using the extended Grove Street. This needs examining further.

3) Between Grovewood Close and Grove Street

My knowledge of Grovewood Close is as a pedestrian. Grovewood Close is a narrow road with no pavement. I am told by people living on Grovewood Close who use cars, that the junction with Grove Street is awkward to negotiate when several cars are trying to get in and out of Grovewood Close. The problem appears to multifactorial: the narrowness of the entrance to Grovewood Close, vehicles parked on Grove Street limiting the road to one-way and limited visibility cause by parked vehicles and overgrowth of bushes. This needs examining further during access design.

4) Between Grove Street and Newmarket Road

Newmarket Road is much busier than in the past and the vehicles appear to drive at a greater speed at this end of Newmarket Road. It is often difficult to turn onto Newmarket Road especially when turning right onto Newmarket Road. There are daily queues on Newmarket Road going towards Oldham Road with a tail-back reaching the Grove Street junction. Hence making turning right into Newmarket Road even more difficult as the traffic coming from Oldham Road is usually driving at speed. This needs examining further.

5) Pedestrian crossing of Newmarket road

There is no pedestrian crossing on Newmarket Road. Pedestrians have to run the gauntlet of looking for fast moving vehicles. It is surprising that access to Daisy Nook Country Park, which Tameside coucilors and officer's state is easily accessible within walking distance for adults and children in this part of Ashton, has no safe pedestrian crossing point. However locally used amenity green space accessible by footpaths is surplus to requirements! Although pedestrian crossing of Newmarket Road may not be considered to be relevant to the current planning application it should be addressed somewhere, maybe in the related application to TMBC highways department?

B) Building work and proposed trees near utilities, footpath and houses

The proposed new trees could be too close to underground utility routes, footpaths and houses and walls as they may cause damage if left to grow to a large size. I understand cherry trees are particularly prone to cause significant damage to surface landscaping if planted too close. Many years ago there were trees planted closer to the footpaths than the existing trees but these were removed: I assumed they were either too close to the utility pipework and cable runs so they were cut down, or they were diseased and were cut down, I am not sure which. I also understand some utilities go underground between Marsden Close and Grovewood Close. Also some telecom ducting and cables are under the public footpath but are not at a very deep level because I saw Openreach doing the installation work. Any building or groundwork will need planned and be done carefully to avoid damaging existing utility routes.

C) Disturbance and congestion during site preparation and building phases

There is no statement with regard to minimising disturbance and congestion during site preparation and building phases. Deliveries to the building site and construction workers parked cars and vans will be a particular problem. The junction between Grove Street and a busy Newmarket Road is likely to be a particular problem.

D) Comments on Open space statements

Comments on the Wiplow Open Space Assessment Date: 19 October 2018:

4.0 Loss of open space

Some comments on the following figures and associated text:

Figure Nine: Areas of Greenspace to the East and south of the site

These 3 areas are not available for informal local use:

- The running track is for formal use;
- The field to the East has a public footpath but otherwise it cannot be used as it is private land;
- The area to the south appears to be used formally (I assume for pre-booked events), informally by teenagers, adults, walkers, runners and dog walkers. This area does not appear to be used often by unaccompanied young children. I have asked some local children why they do not play on this field and they have said their parents have told them they are not allowed to go on the field, and some have been told while on the field they are not allowed to play there;

Figure 10 and 11: Daisy Nook Country Park

- The only access to this park is by crossing a busy road and there is no pedestrian crossing;
- Access not suitable for unattended young children or those who have problems crossing a busy road;
- It is not an area for general playing or ball games;

Figure 12: Extract from Tameside UDP Proposals Map showing the site is unallocated.

- The three Areas of protected open space identified under Policy OL4 shown on the aerial photo are walking paths through natural wild areas rather than for general playing or ball games;
- A busy road has to be crossed to access two of the northern areas on the photo from houses near the application site;
- These 3 areas have a different use than the application site;

Comments on specific sections and conclusion:**4.9**

The developers in section 4.9 refer to an exemption listed under UDP policy OL4 (d): *“it can be demonstrated, by means of a suitable supply and demand study taking account of possible future as well as current requirements, that the retention of a site or facilities for sport or recreational use is not necessary and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport and recreation”*.

- However, I have been unable to find any details of a *“suitable supply and demand study taking account of possible future as well as current requirements”* on Tameside MBC website and the local councillors for Waterloo did not appear to know of such a study before the land was sold.
- Where is the suitable supply and demand study?

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 *The site forming part of this planning application was previously incidental open space with no formal sport facilities. The site is also now privately-owned land.*

- I do not believe the developers know how the land was used by local people before TMBC sold the land.

5.2 *This site is not demonstrably special to a local community or holds a particular local historical or ecological significance because there is no recorded historic significance or richness of its wildlife as defined by paragraph 100 of the Revised NPPF.*

- The local community have not been asked if it is special to them;
- The local councillors were not asked about the local significance of this area before the land was sold;
- The land must have been deemed to have been an important area to be included in the original design of the estate;

5.4 *The retention of the site solely for the purpose of limited visual amenity value for nearby residents would therefore represent the inefficient use of land within the urban area and would not comply with the Core Principles of NPPF.*

- I do not believe the developers know how the land was used by local people before TMBC sold the land. The local community have used this land since the estate was built and not just as a “visual amenity”;
- Section 2 Achieving sustainable development Paragraph 8) b) of NPPF also states *“to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support health, social and cultural well-being”*. The original developers of the estate and TMBC planning, I assume, must have included this “play area” in order to achieve the same outcome as Section 2 of the 2018 NPPF appears to want to achieve. Why has this area now been made redundant when currently there is a greater need to support healthy options for local communities and their

children?

5.5 *The site is unallocated the UDP but the site falls under the UDP policy OL4 which allows for development on Protected Open Space where it can be demonstrated, by means of a suitable supply and demand study that the retention of a site is not necessary and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport and recreation. The council disposed of the site as they considered it surplus to requirements. Policy OL4 is also 14 years old and we have doubts that it is now compliant with paragraph 99 of the Revised NPPF.*

- I have been unable to find any details of a “suitable supply and demand study taking account of possible future as well as current requirements” on Tameside MBC website and the local councillors for Waterloo did not appear to know of such a study before the land was sold. In fact the local councillors had not been informed the land was going to be sold until the sale sign stuck in the ground.
- The current Neighbourhood Plans were produced after the estate was built and this area was already in use. Paragraph 99 of the revised NPPF states “*Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period*”. Presumably the plans TMBC had when the estate was designed and built with the application area included, these plans should be capable of enduring after the original plan period?
- On what criteria was this site deemed as not necessary when there does not appear to have been an adequate and “suitable supply and demand study” with no apparent communication with local communities and their democratic representatives?

5.6 *This report has identified that there are 40.45 hectares of open space or greenspace land available in Ashton which is considered sufficient to be able to accommodate sport and recreation. Areas of public open space or green space are within easy walking distance of this site and the loss of this site was justified in the councils Disposal of Surplus Land Strategy.*

- To correct the above text the figure of 40.45 hectares is contained in the report as PART 6: AMENITY SPACE and in: Table 6.1: Distribution of amenity space sites by analysis area.
- This report has based a number of its findings on a street survey of a total of 162 people in Ashton-under-Lyne, which is a small sample when compared to the 102 amenity spaces across the town. This survey cannot be deemed an adequate and suitable “supply and demand study” mentioned in OL4 or to represent each local amenity greenspace as allocated in the PPG17 typology.
- Where is the adequate and suitable “supply and demand study”?

E) General comments on open space

Many of the existing estates which were built with amenity greenspaces designed-in appear to have been built between World War 1 and WW2 and up to early 1960's and many were council housing estates. Many of the newer estates around Manchester do not appear to have small local amenity greenspaces designed-in. It looks as our estate is one of the luckier ones as it was designed/built in approx. 1979-81

I am worried that TMBC appears to intend to increase cramming of houses into residential areas. Old estates which were originally designed to have green spaces of presumably appropriate sizes and approved by the council authorities at that time are now judged to have excessive amount of green space.

TMBC without any clarity of adequate local consultations and/or surveys appear to have judged designed-in green spaces in residential areas, that are big enough for one or more houses, are now deemed to be of no local value and surplus to requirements.

I have tried searching TMBC website on many occasions over past years to find-out decisions/judgments on specific issues. It is very difficult to find out information. Last year I asked local councilors about the local green area sale but they did not appear know any information. I asked about what decisions have been made relating to the local amenity space being sold, where is the documentation, and what communication has been done with the local community. The councilors could not answer my queries, so logically they either did not know or they would not answer.

There should be improved clarity and communication in the way decisions/judgments are made and logical simple accessible routes to view the information.

Also an adequate and suitable “supply and demand study” with local community and local councilor involvement and communication should be done before local amenity greenspace is sold or removed from use.