

## **Westminster Park Residents' Association response to consultation on proposed housing development off Lache Lane, August 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. As a residents' association we seek to represent the majority views of the residents of Westminster Park and have therefore assessed the responses sent to us and summarised their content. Please find below our collective view. There are many questions and we hope that these can form the basis of future dialogue.

### **Positive points raised by residents**

- The retention of the pond and surrounding area, accessible to residents.
- Improvement of the habitat – planting of trees and hedges (although many residents are concerned about the effects of the development on their boundaries).
- No through access from Lache Lane to Winkwell Drive.
- The provision of a mix of housing, particularly bungalows and affordable housing.
- New homes would exceed the requirements of current building regulations.
- The Marjory Boddy Trust will benefit from additional funds for its charitable work.

### **Main points of concern**

- This land is a Local Wildlife Site under policy ENV4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity. It is also allocated as a stepping stone under policy DM44 Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment (Corridors and Stepping Stones) as it supports amphibians, bats, hedgehogs, etc. What studies have been undertaken to ascertain the biodiversity of the site and assess the area of land required to sustain the existing flora and fauna?  
Any design for the development of this site should have the preservation of this habitat at its core, ensuring that sufficient area is retained to provide a habitat for its protected species. This should then inform the plan and the area available for development (if any) can then be determined.
- Who will own and maintain the wildlife areas? How will it be funded? How will access be organised to allow community involvement and yet protect the flora and fauna?
- Why is this housing needed? Cheshire West and Chester Council's most recent Housing Land Monitor 2018-19 shows that its deliverable housing land supply is already well ahead of target for the current period to 2024 and a further 1000 houses will be built on Wrexham Road over the following 10 years.
- The infrastructure in terms of roads, sewerage and surface drainage south of the Dee is already operating at capacity and cannot cope with additional load without significant improvement. Cheshire West and Chester Council and the utility companies need to develop a comprehensive plan to address the future needs of residents and businesses before agreeing to any further developments.

- 1400 houses on Wrexham Road and 20 at Decoy Farm have already been approved and will seriously impact on our roads. Further traffic will cause more hold-ups and reduce air quality.
- This will be a difficult project to deliver in terms of surface drainage and sewage. The site sits on heavy clay with a high watertable and surrounding properties already suffer from surface water flooding in winter. Both the Sherbourne Avenue development and the Wrexham Road development have had to design attenuation systems to spread the load over the course of the day. What studies have been done to assess the impact of this development on the surface drainage in the area and on Welsh Water's ability to handle the additional load? Surface drainage systems need to ensure that these precious habitats are not polluted by run-off during and after construction.
- Residents are in two minds about access to the site. What studies have been done to justify access to the site via Lache Lane rather than Winkwell Drive? There are major safety concerns about the access road proposed from Lache Lane which is sited on a bend in the road with narrow pavements, a cycle path and bus stops on both sides of the road; visibility for motorists entering Lache Lane will be poor. To reach the housing, the new road goes round a 90° bend alongside 107 Lache Lane with no visibility for oncoming vehicles. Access via Winkwell Drive however passes close to the pond and surrounding habitat may be lost.
- The density, location and design of housing is not appropriate for this site adjacent to established housing. The density is too high; some dwellings are located very close to boundaries which will result in gardens being overlooked affecting privacy; some building designs appear to have elevations which are higher than surrounding properties. There is great demand in this area for single storey bungalows to meet the needs of an ageing population. These would be far more appropriate in this situation and fit with the aims of the Marjory Boddy Trust.
- It is hoped that any properties constructed would meet the highest environmental standards, given the Climate Emergency declared by Cheshire West and Chester Council. They should include solar panels, heat pumps, heat recovery, rainwater catchment/grey water systems as well as the EV points proposed. Is it proposed to interlink the gardens of the new properties so that they can continue to allow wildlife to pass through?
- There does not appear to be adequate parking for residents and their visitors, nor space to turn around at the end of the road leading to Winkwell Drive.
- There is no mention of the tenure of the properties. Is it intended that these should be freehold or leasehold? Are the affordable properties to be for sale or rent?
- How will the management company be structured? What will their responsibilities be?

### **Suggestions to improve the scheme**

Several points have already been suggested above. Additionally, we would suggest more communication with residents. Although there are restrictions around conventional consultations in view of Covid-19, it would be possible to organise limited presentations at the Westminster Park Community Centre.