

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Comments submitted by

Sep 24 2018

1 Identification of Sites

1.2 Does the LP provide for a range of sites of different sizes in Leek?

Comment - The Mount Road area represents by far the largest proposed development in Leek and would create a very new shape to the town, greatly affecting the balance of residential concentration. Inevitably this imbalance would impact into traffic flow, public amenities, accessibility and infrastructure.

3. Land at the Mount (DSL2)

3.1 What are the implications of The Mount as a recreational resource for the allocation?

Comment - This rural lane has been treasured by generations of walkers, cyclists, joggers, and horse-riders of all ages, with its open aspect, limited traffic, far reaching views and closeness to farmland. An unofficial survey conducted last year by local residents, of people enjoying this resource, was a clear indication of the affection in which "The Mount" is held and how widely and frequently it is made use of. Speaking personally, as an older resident, I know how much access to a local, pleasant walk adds to my physical health and mental wellbeing. One meets like-minded people, friendships are made and problems shared.

3.2 Is the Council satisfied that landscape, green infrastructure, biodiversity, heritage, highway, transport, air quality and flood risk impacts can be mitigated so that development of the site would be acceptable?

Comment - This question covers a wide variety of topics, some of which I have touched on in the previous paragraph.

Focusing on the highway aspect, no doubt Mount Rd will be widened, "improved" and fitted with street lighting. This will alter what is now a pleasant country lane into a main road, taking all the extra traffic from the new development (300 houses = perhaps 500 cars + delivery vehicles etc etc). Inevitably it will create a short cut between Buxton Rd and Ashbourne Rd, adding even more traffic. Residents from the new development are much more likely to travel towards Stoke or Macclesfield for employment, so all these extra vehicles will have to pass through Leek, already suffering congestion at peak times. Street lighting will destroy for ever the fabulous dark sky towards the east. The wonderful views of the full moon rising, planet alignments, the Orion constellation and seasonal meteor showers will be lost from this part of town.

The flood risk is also an area that concerns me. The field adjacent to Mount Rd, earmarked for housing, acts a sponge in wet weather. You can watch it glistening as it soaks up more and more water, before being visible as surface water. Finally, if rain continues, it forms streams which flow between the houses, creating a torrent down Moorland Road. Replacing this field with roads, drives and roofs will remove the "sponge" effect and I am concerned that the drainage infrastructure will not cope and flash floods will affect the houses on Moorland Rd.

3.3 Should parts of the allocation be safeguarded as Local Green Space, Green Infrastructure or Open Space?

Comment - Obviously, for reasons given above, I would argue that all the Mount Rd area should be preserved for ever as open green space for the enjoyment and health of Leek residents. One specific area that should be maintained is the wooded area beside Knivedon Hall. If any of the planners had ever walked here in the spring to see the intense carpet of bluebells, the mature trees just breaking into leaf and heard the birdsong they could not contemplate its destruction.

3.7 Does the wind turbine at The Mount have any implications for delivery of the allocation?

Comment - I live approximately 350 metres away from the turbine and from its installation it became increasingly noisy so that during the summer of 2017, with windows open, it did wake me on more

than one occasion. Repeated maintenance has silenced it, but will it deteriorate as time goes on? Even more disturbing is the "flashing" which occurs when the sun is low in the east around the equinoxes. Lined curtains do not prevent this flashing light filling all the rooms for about 20 minutes until the sun moves away from the turbine. It is VERY ALARMING. Any new houses built adjacent to Mount Road and facing this turbine, will be less than 250m from the turbine and consequently the effects I've described would be even greater to the occupants.