



R18/076 or SHLAA2901 – Land to the East of Crouchley Lane. Part of parcel of Land LY22’

Local Plan Consultation

I recently attended the local plan consultation event in Lymm and watched the video concerning the need to make adequate provision for the development of Warrington and its surrounding outlying areas. My understanding is that the authority must make provision for large number of future houses across the borough to meet their housing need assessment and that it has therefore brought forward a proposal which will see development of new housing and industrial/commercial land for development consisting of – Majority of Green Belt release adjacent to the main urban area with incremental growth in outlying settlements

In principal I am supportive of the councils overall aims to control the development of Warrington through the Local Plan.

I trust the authority will adopt a robust methodology in assessing releasing areas of Green Belt to facilitate the plan and to minimise the development impact on the Green Belt. I am aware that the council has undertaken an assessment of the green belt and in doing so has graded accordingly.

The parcel of land of greatest concern to myself is ‘R18/076 or SHLAA2901 – Land to the East of Crouchley Lane. Part of parcel of Land LY22’. This parcel of land has been graded as making a strong contribution to the preservation of the green belt. I understand that a developer has proposed this piece of land for potential development and that they have attempted to differ from the councils assessment and propose that the land only makes a moderate contribution. I strongly disagree with this assessment undertaken by an interested party and support the independent assessment commissioned by the council. For a number of reasons:

Green Belt

- The existing land use mainly consists of open countryside in agricultural use
- The land presently prevents encroachment with current housing limited to ribbon development along the A56 forming a boundary and defining the edge of the village with amenities such as schools and shops situated on the North side of the busy main road
- Development of the land would change the character and nature of Lymm as a settlement and remove this natural boundary of the A56 and its ribbon of houses and allow for further development in a southerly direction with no natural barrier to further settlement growth in that direction provided by the exiting features
- Uncontrolled development in this manner would be contrary to the purposes of The Green Belt in checking unrestricted sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Many sites have been proposed for development in Lymm that make only a weak or moderate contribution. I estimate c.2000 houses worth. The Council's own profile for Lymm states that the 500 house target can likely be met without releasing any of the strong sites such as ‘R18/076 or SHLAA2901 – Land to the East of Crouchley Lane. Part of parcel of Land LY22’.



Landscape value

As interested residents bounding 'R18/076 or SHLAA2901 – Land to the East of Crouchley Lane. Part of parcel of Land LY22' we have commissioned a report by Xanthe Quayle BSc (Hons) DipLA CMLI dated September 2017. In summary this report strongly supports my personal opinion in that it determines that landscape effects of development of the site are unlikely to be mitigated through design and therefore have a moderate/major adverse effect on the landscape. This report has been provided to the council as a separate enclosure from all the residents adjacent the site.

Listed buildings

The site affords the only uninterrupted views of Lymm Water Tower. Development of the site would undoubtedly compromise the visual amenity associated with the tower and be certain to place it in a less sympathetic setting - its current setting is in effect little changed since the 19th Century.

The tower was built to resemble a castle on top of a hill with open land around. This feature would be completely lost should the land around the tower be further developed.

From the lanes and fields it is also possible to see the church tower. Further development may also restrict this making it impossible to see this prominent feature of the village.

Agricultural value

I have noted that Berry's report appears to suggest that the agricultural value of the site is grade 3. Although I am no expert in such matters the site's agricultural use is currently varied with wheat, potatoes, peas, barley, rapeseed, soya bean and sugar beet all having been planted in recent years. As well as being indicative of high quality agricultural land, this varied crop cycle adds to the visual amenity of the site and sense of connectedness with a natural landscape. I believe the site is likely to be deemed grade 1 if actually assessed by experts. It is capable of taking agricultural machinery of all types and both grow crops and if the farmer so decided keep livestock without restriction. The soil quality also appears good based on the crop rotation currently employed for the land.

Amenity value

A right of way crosses the site, used regularly by dog-walkers, ramblers, and runners and providing a more pleasant non-vehicular route to other amenities, such as Lymm Dam, than does Higher Lane. The site is visible from the local lanes and provides an open view and quiet area away from the built up areas of the Village.

Ecology

I appreciate that the area has been farmed for some years and on first view may appear of low ecological value. However there is a pond at one end of the site which attracts birds and insects. It is highly probable that this will contain some protected species. However no detailed assessment has been undertaken to establish what ecological value the site truly has.



It is possible to see bats, lapwing and hares within the field and the presence of the water feature and open fields is likely to attract over flying or migratory birds for feeding which would probably be displaced if the field were to be developed. Even if the developers were to retain the water feature it is probable with the loss of the openness of the site its attractiveness to birds would greatly diminish and the habitat for the hares, and lapwing lost entirely.

Highways & access

The road structure to the south of the village quickly changes to that of narrow lanes. Development in this direction would therefore likely put considerable pressure on these local narrow lanes. The lanes do narrow in places to single file traffic with limited to no passing places. Albeit the developer may seek to provide funding to improve the roads around the site this is likely to fundamentally change the rural nature of the surrounding fields and mature hedgerows to have any real effect. This would therefore cause damage to the open nature of the surrounding countryside and its continued rural nature and "green belt" designation far beyond the development of the site itself.

The site would be accessed from the Village itself via Crouchley Lane. At the point where access is required the road has already begun to narrow and become more rural in nature. The access I do not consider to be suitable for a large housing development.

In addition my own commentary above further documentation has been commissioned by us residents and submitted collectively on my behalf. I have already mentioned the report produced by Xanthe Quayle BSc (Hons) DipLA CMLI of Camil Lonsdale but there is also a report produced by Walsingham Planning and by Gary Earnshaw Planning.