

ALDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Council Document

To discuss a response to St Albans District
Council consultation on their Draft Local Plan.

AGENDA item 9

Full Council Meeting
11 September 2023

Background

On 7 August 2023 the Planning Committee considered a response to the consultation by St Albans District Council on their draft 'Local Plan'. Aldenham Parish Council have a particular interest in proposal number 'B8' Harper Lane, north of Radlett, WD7 7HU. (see appendix a)

This is a site where part of it is currently a 'brown field' site comprising of several businesses with uses such as suppliers of aggregates and car servicing/MOT's etc. The proposal is for 274 units which includes a 50plus nursing care scheme. The proposed site extends from Harper Lane to the rear of The Warren, The Heath and Park Avenue.

The planning committee were concerned, that although part of the site could be called 'brown field', the rest is in the 'Green Belt' and provides a buffer between St Stephens Parish and Radlett. There were also comments made regarding the bridge on Harper Lane taking more traffic, and the use of these future residents of the Radlett Railway Station.

A draft response to the consultation is attached for consideration (appendix b).

- a) Recommend that the letter is sent to St Albans District Council in response to the consultation on their 'Draft Local Plan'.
- b) That APC bring this letter to the attention of Hertsmer Borough Council and Ward Councillors asking them to respond in the same way to the consultation.
- c) That APC put a copy of the letter on social media to ensure that local residents are aware of this matter, and its possible impact on Radlett.

Reasons for recommendation

On point (a), as stated above this application, although partly on 'Brownfield Land' which APC would prefer used, it does extend onto Green Belt and then links up to Radlett which is against the principles of the Green Belt.

On point (b & c), APC needs the support of HBC and others to object to this type of development on the borders of this village.

Alternative options

That APC provide no response, and let St AlbansDC decide, but is this serving the local community?

Financial Implications




There are no financial implications involved.

Risk Management Implications

There is a risk that, if no objections are made, that St AlbansDC will deem that this site in its entirety is satisfactory with its possible inclusion in the final 'Local Plan' document for St AlbansDC.

Members are asked to consider this report.

Peter Evans,
Council Manager

B8 - Harper Lane, north of Radlett, WD7 7HU			
Parish	St Stephen	Allocated site boundary (red line)	Original HELAA site boundary
Hectares	11.40		
Proposed use	Primarily residential 274 units (indicative)		
Proforma Ref	C-234		
HELAA Ref	STS-51-21		
Green Belt Sub Area Ref	SA-152 / SA-153 / RA-48 / RC-11		
			
Key development objectives/issues to address			
<div>1. The dwellings figure above includes one 50+ home Nursing care scheme, in accordance with Local Plan policy.</div> <div>2. Access to Harper Lane must be agreed with the County Council.</div> <div>3. Improved direct footpath and cycle routes must be provided south into Radlett at locations agreed with this Council, the County Council and Hertsmere Borough Council. Pedestrian access to bus routes on both sides of Watling Street must also be provided.</div> <div>4. The setting of a Listed Building that is adjacent to the site must be taken into account.</div>			

Appendix (b)
Full Council Agenda item 9.
Sept 23

St Albans City & District Council
Civic Centre
St Peter's Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire AL1 3JE

Cc: St Albans Planning - planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk; Hertsmere Planning - consult.planning@hertsmere.gov.uk;

Dear Sirs,

Re: St Albans Draft Local Plan: Site B8 - Harper Lane, north of Radlett WD7 7HU

Aldenham Parish Council (APC) finds itself in agreement with the points raised in CPRE Hertfordshire's August 2023 initial response to the proposed St Albans City & District Council Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 18 Consultation, in that the timing of this seems particularly contentious as the Government is yet to release its amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Until and unless the Government's new rules can be used to plan future housing and commercial requirements, any consultation might become irrelevant even before it can be used to write a new Local Plan for the area!

APC is writing to make its views known ahead of the consultation, in relations to the above site. It acknowledges that although this is a largely brownfield site within St Albans's St Stephens parish, the effects of any developments at this site will fall on Radlett, its community and services.

APC understands and acknowledges that there is a need for new house building in the area, including affordable homes, but the facts and figures used for these projections are seemingly from 2014, and therefore subject to question as to their validity in 2023, or beyond. Indeed, according to CPRE's response, "the latest projections, currently available for 2018, show a decrease in new households in the District for the plan period, and we firmly believe that this trend is likely to continue as is confirmed by the initial findings of the 2021 Census". Added to this is the fact that more than 50 councils throughout England paused their preparation of local plans pending NPPF clarification by the Government to base the calculations for local housing need in the future.

APC would like the following points to be noted as the basis for its strong opposition to this proposed development.

Traffic and roads

APC would like to remind this consultation of the chaos caused by the previous Harperbury Hospital site redevelopment by Bloor Homes in Harper Lane. Radlett residents remember well the long lines of traffic on both carriageways caused by the badly thought-out (and implemented) traffic management plan for the Watling Street/Harpers Lane junction/bridge. These issues peaked when it was discovered some HGV's could not turn right from Harpers Lane bridge, without driving over the traffic islands and pedestrian crossing! Most of the residents at the Bloor development use cars for travel, even though cycleways had been provided in anticipation of heavy use (they are not). Indeed, the cycleways does not even extend over the Harper Lane bridge! This point leads on to what might be a mitigating factor for this latest housing proposal; a full redevelopment of the bridge to a two-lane crossing, complete with two-way cycleway controlled by traffic lights.

There is also the anticipated huge rise in HGV traffic volumes if/when the Strategic Rail Freight Terminal at Park Street is built. Literally thousands more HGVs will travel through that junction to and from the M25. The current bridge will not stand up to such a battering, having been built (as the RSGBA letter notes) in the 19th Century for horses and carts!

Travel

- Available buses are negligible, with only the 601 Uno Bus hourly services.
- Cycles cannot cross the bridge without using the main carriageway.
- Footpaths break off, requiring crossing the busy Watling Street to Radlett, and unless there is new access is created, all kinds of traffic to and from the site will use Harper Lane.
- The car park at Radlett Station has only 309 spaces, and Newberries Car Park limited to 203.

Services

There are no police or fire services in Radlett.

Medical

There is only one GP surgery to serve Radlett, and a few vets.

Schools

There are a number of oversubscribed nursery and junior schools, but no secondary schools, or any other provision for higher education. Secondary/higher education pupils have to travel to St Albans, Watford, Bushey, or Watford, and they mostly travel by dedicated bus services or by car; a small number use trains.

There have been a number of large housing development applications in and around Radlett in recent months which, if successful, will add their heavy weight to the points listed above, and this proposed development will only make them much worse. To note, one much smaller housing development pre-planning consultation has invited more than 900 objections already.

APC will object, and anticipates extremely strong objections from local residents to this application, should it be made.

Kind regards

Helen Jones
Chair, Aldenham Parish Council