

NOTES REGARDING LOCAL PLAN AND WHITE MOSS QUARRY.

Concerns

1. Concerns are confined to the inclusion of the quarry in the Local Plan NOT the imminent application for the Site
2. It is up to the CEC to JUSTIFY the inclusion of WMQ.

Regarding Housing Land Supply issues we are arguing, at appeal that we have a 5 year housing supply. If this is so then the need for WMQ is not urgent and there is no justification for its inclusion at this late stage. HOWEVER site is now included in SHLAA and will count (200 houses) towards the following 5 year supply.

The overarching concern is lack of consistency regarding compliance with other parts of the plan and whether the site is justified.

Individual areas for concern are;-

POLICY EG3. (Shaping our future.Policy Principles) page 24

Existing and Allocated Employment Sites The policy States

1. **Existing employment sites will be protected for employment use unless**

- Premises are causing significant nuisance or environmental problems that could not be mitigated.

Or

- The site is no longer suitable for employment; and
- There is no potential for modernisation or alternative employment uses ; and
- No other occupiers can be found

Or

- It does not result in the loss of small and start up businesses, unless alternative provision is made.

2. Where it can be demonstrated that there is a case for alternative development on existing employment sites, all opportunities must be explored to incorporate an element of employment development as part of a mixed use scheme.

3. Allocated employment sites will be protected for employment use in order to maintain an adequate and flexible supply of employment land to attract new and innovative businesses, existing businesses to grow and to create new and retain existing jobs. White Moss Quarry is an employment site which not only extracts minerals but is also an aggregate recycling plant.

The concern is that the inclusion of the White Moss Quarry in the Local Plan Core

strategy is not in compliance with policy EG3 and therefore there is no justification to include it.

Section 4 of the Policy and principles Paper. **Stronger Communities (page 32)**

OBJECTIVE 2 is “To create sustainable communities where all members are able to contribute and where all the infrastructure required to support the community is provided.

Section 1.(i)

Ensuring that the majority of new houses is provided in sustainable locations within Crewe, Macclesfield and the Key service centres.

This site is not within Crewe or Macclesfield and is NOT within a key service centre. **The concern is that the site does not comply with this objective and therefore there is no justification for its inclusion.**

Section 5 of policy and principles **Sustainable Environment. (page 48) Objective 3**
“Environmental quality should be protected and enhanced.

Section 1 This will be delivered by :

1. Respecting the character and distinctiveness of places and landscapes through the careful design and siting of developments.
 - i. Maintaining and enhancing the character and separate identities of the Borough’s Towns and villages.

White Moss quarry must be viewed after the restoration of the site as agreed in a s106 agreement of Policy SE3 Environmental issues. It cannot be viewed as a “New Village” it is an extension of Alsager and would change the identity of the Town from being a Town in a rural setting into a huge area of urban sprawl. **My concern is that this site does not comply with this policy principle**

Policy SE3 of policy principles . Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Section 2 (Page 53) “Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a site with one or more of the following national or international designations will not be permitted.” This includes RAMSAR sites.

The site is close to a designated RAMSAR site, (West Midland Meres and Wetland.) This relies on the water table to sustain it. Draining of the quarry area will affect the water table. **This will have a significant adverse impact on the Ramsar Site which is against policy SE3** Policy SE3

Section 3 Of policy SE3 states;-“Development proposals which are likely to have a significant impact on a site with one or more local or regional designations, habitats or species will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances where there are clear

overriding reasons for allowing the development.

The site includes the White Moss Local Wildlife site, a Raised Mire habitat which is deemed irreplaceable.

My concern is that there are no clear, exceptional circumstances for the inclusion of this site and as such the inclusion of this site is contrary to policy SE3.

POLICY SE10: **Minerals** (page69)

“Sustainable mineral development will be facilitated through:

Paragraph 3

“Safeguarding surface won mineral resources to prevent their unnecessary sterilisation and supporting prior extraction where viable.”

House building would sterilise the sand deposits.

The concern is that inclusion of this site is contrary to the minerals policy.

POLICY CO1 **Sustainable Travel and Transport.**

states that :

The council will seek to encourage:

1. Reducing the need to travel by:

- Guiding development to the most sustainable and accessible locations.

This site is 1.5 miles from Alsager Centre, 4 miles from Crewe. It is a site dependent on the car as its main form of Transport. It is site designed for travelling out of the area

The concern is that the site does not meet the criteria laid down in POLICY CO1 and should be discounted.

THE ADDITIONAL SITES CONSULTATION.

1. The Additional Sites Consultation, which included White Moss Quarry

- contained insufficient information on the sites involved.
- There was no evidence base provided.
- It was only a three week consultation compared to the six weeks consultation on the original Development Strategy.

- No justification was provided for the consultation.
- There was no evidence supplied regarding its role compared to previous consultations and responses.
- It showed a lack of consistency with other consultations.

As such it does not comply with the Statement of Community Involvement Document

2. The selection of sites considered in this consultation included sites which had previously been consulted on in the development strategy. Sites 8.12 South East Crewe, Site New settlement 2,(South East Crewe) and new settlement 2a. South East Crewe. The results of the Development Strategy consultation was, for all sites there were 148 responses of whom 126 opposed the sites and only 6 supported.

What was the justification for including these East Crewe sites which had already been consulted on.

3. By including these sites which are close to the Quarry it could be seen as giving bias to the consultation making the consultation flawed. The results of the Additional Sites Consultation appear to show a majority in favour of the quarry However on analysing the results, we find that 15 who supported the site described the site as Brownfield. 9 supported it as preferable to Duchy Land, 4 gave conditional support only if part of the Alsager Allocation, at least 2 were from Parish councils and 1 was from a developer of the neighbouring plot. This means that if we excluded respondents who were wrong in their understanding and those who only supported it as a preference plus those whose support was conditional, only 10 people were in favour of the quarry in its own rights. With 27 opposed this is hardly sufficient to include the site.

(For the record (a) Alsager Town Council strongly opposed the development of White Moss Quarry at this consultation)

(b) Cllr Derek Hough opposed the Additional Site Consultation)

This does not represent a significant approval and cannot be regarded as justification for inclusion.

EFFECT ON ALSGAER.

White Moss quarry site is an extension to Alsager NOT a new settlement.

- The quarry was not included in any specific Alsager consultations and is not included in the Alsager Town Strategy.
- As an additional site it increases the Alsager allocation from 1,000 houses to nearly 2,000. This does not comply with the suggested 4 to 5 % increase for

Alsager contained in the Development Strategy

- Although some minor changes could be achieved the current infrastructure of Alsager could not cope with 900 extra in addition to the 1,000 houses already included in the Town Strategy without completely changing the character of the Town.
- Alsager currently has over 500 houses at appeal.
- The land between Close Lane, Alsager and the quarry will be very difficult to defend from infill sites. In fact there is one application already in for a neighbouring, infill site. (Estimate additional 250 houses). Thus there is a possibility of Alsager being asked to cater for an additional 2,600 houses. This is urban sprawl.
- This site will have very little or no beneficial effect on Alsager Town Centre.

This does not comply with the Hierarchy of Towns, concentrating development in main Towns and **within** Key service centres. It does not comply with the aims of retaining individual Towns identity.

Therefore the inclusion of the quarry site cannot be justified

SHLAA At appeal on Hassall Road Alsager the applicant, Seddons Homes, claim that CEC officers agree that any new settlement site will not be included in the current 5 year supply. It has however been included in the SHLAA for inclusion for subsequent years. **The previously recognised path was that the site would be included in the 2014 SHLAA to assess the need to include the site to meet the rolling 5 year supply.**

The inclusion of smaller sites will increase the total numbers and is a legitimate method within the NPPF.

The 5 year housing supply cannot be used to justify the inclusion of this site

Dualling of the A500 The Duchy sites were included to facilitate the Dualling of the A500. This involved land ownership. It does not apply to this site. Improvements to J16 have already been funded by developers of already approved sites and Government "Pinch Point" money.

The substitution of this site for the Barthomley site cannot be justified on infrastructure grounds

Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle Borough Council have objected to this site. There is a long standing commitment to restraint in South Cheshire to aid Potteries Regeneration.

Their opposition still stands. If we include this site there is a danger that our whole plan will not be accepted as sound due to the very important "Duty to Cooperate".

ADDITIONAL COMPLICATIONS OF THE SITE.

1. An application to develop the site is already at fairly advanced stage. The inclusion of the site would have an effect on the outcome of this application.
2. Part of the site was the subject of an adverse Ombudsman's report. This is currently being investigated further at an independent enquiry.
53. When assessing the advantages/disadvantages of the site for Alsager we must recognise that the site is in fact largely within Haslington. Any Council tax paid will go to Haslington leaving Alsager residents to pay for the increased usage of our amenities.

CONCLUSIONS.

Strategic Location is preferable to a status than allocating the site as a Strategic Site. However even inclusion as a Strategic Location would give the impression of an approval in principle. Unless the concerns can be allayed between now and Full Council then it may be better to await the outcome of the Imminent application. The site will still be in the SHLAA and can be brought forward at any time in the annual review.