



# ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

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## **Extraordinary Full Council meeting to discuss the response from Alcester Town Council to the latest application of the Allimore Lane North development 15 April 2013 7:00pm Globe House**

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT DISCRETION OF MAYOR**

1. Roger Pamment – With reference to the amended documents they are still riddled with misleading and inaccurate statements. The most notable change to the masterplan is with the elimination of the westerly path around the outside of the site. He recognises that this is because they had added in another attenuation pond in the south east corner, which is a welcome addition. However with the layout now squeezed towards the bypass the houses there will be subject to a considerable amount of noise. To counteract that the developers have reversed the layout of the houses and plan to install mechanical ventilation systems which will lower the noise inside the houses providing the windows are kept closed, which he considers unacceptable. He feels the applicants have paid scant attention to local opinion and suggests a more reasonable layout would be to reduce the number of houses.  
With reference to the applicants statements regarding the 525 jobs it claims will be made available it is unclear if those jobs will remain after the construction and there is no guarantees they will be using local people and companies.  
With reference to the lower boundary he accepts that that they have now placed a buffer zone, but questions how they can ignore the government ecological expertise and reduce the 50m buffer zone to just 20m.  
With reference to the applicant's claims on how close the local schools are, he feels that Alcester Grammar cannot be included in that measurement as it is selective in its intake of pupils. Therefore measurements that Mr Pamment took himself show that the catholic primary school is 1200m and the Catholic secondary 1500m away.  
Mr Pamment also measured the distance to the new Health Centre, measuring it as a 2.28 mile return trip which he considers to be too far, especially for elderly residents and will increase the use of cars in the town. He also made reference to the fact that there was a statement to say that the health centre is oversubscribed by over 2000 patients already, before the proposed increase in population.
2. Andy Mann – spoke on behalf of the Eclipse Road Residents Association, and was in agreement with the statements made by Roger Pamment. He also added that with reference to sustainability the new documents still did not address this adequately. The reptile surveys which WCC had requested, had

not been done by the applicant. He also made reference to the fact that the south boundary was a poor reflection of the requirement of the 50m buffer. With reference to the NHS services Mr Mann also stated that according to a letter from the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS the new Health Centre is currently oversubscribed by 2150 patients and questions how it will cope with the potential increase of another 800 patients.

With reference to the new masterplan, he feels the deficit of 14Ha public open space has been ignored, and there is poor design on the area nearest the bypass.

With reference to the access, there is no mention of the highways agency in the reports and he feels that the parking arrangements will not be acceptable to the highways departments.

In conclusion he feels the revised proposals are no improvement and the development is still a huge over-development and way off from the core strategy, which although it's not been officially adopted, was still a community developed document and should be taken into consideration.

3. Cliff Hayward also spoke regarding the process, considering it undemocratic in the way that the developers are forcing the development through in a window where the core strategy is still being processed and therefore the community cannot have their opinion counted.

Members of the public were reminded they may not take part in the Town Council meeting itself.

### **Present**

Councillors L Cumberbatch (chair), Y Hine, J Kenyon, S Adams, J Bunting, Y Morrisson, A Brown, N Knapman, E Payne  
Clerk to ATC C Wright and his assistant

### **130401 Apologies**

Councillors M Gittus, C Neal-Sturgess, M Cargill, J Styles.

### **130402 Declarations of Interest**

*Cllrs YH, JB, CNS declared a pecuniary interest in the agenda item due to them being involved with the Newport Foundation who stand to gain from the proposed development on the Allimore Lane North site. However they were allowed to comment at the meeting tonight as no vote was being taken.*

### **130403 Response from Alcester Town Council – Allimore Lane North**

**Developments** from Bloor Homes, Gallaghers and Pettifers Ref. S/11/0267/OUT and S/11/02895/OUT

Cllr Cumberbatch drew attention to the list of amendments as listed by SDC, and reminds Cllrs that previous comments were not to be repeated, only to make additional comments on the addendums and alterations to the supporting documents and masterplan for the outline applications.

Cllr Knapman began by stating that public comments made tonight are correct, especially regarding the mechanical ventilation and sustainability issues, and should be incorporated in the council's comments. Cllrs Morrison and Payne also voiced their support for these comments too.

Cllr Cumberbatch pointed out however that he had received information regarding the Health Centre, that the Centre had the capacity to expand and could recruit more GP's to cope with the increase in population.

Cllr Bunting stated that he had walked in the area, and was concerned with the level of noise from the bypass and the changes in the masterplan which put the houses closer to the bypass was a concern. He also felt that the mechanical ventilation was no substitution to being able to sit in the garden, and was concerned that these houses would then become the "affordable homes" which is not an appropriate compromise.

Cllr Kenyon made reference to the water discharge into the river and questioned why it was so far, and a copy of the water discharge map from the applicant's water report was circulated.

Cllr Cumberbatch made reference to the report written by Cllr Sturgess, which he read out and stated that he felt this was strong enough to say that we are still in the same position as before. He also stated that ATC had asked the applicants for a list of things to be done and we are still not satisfied.

Cllr Brown raised the point about developments in Redditch and their likely impact on the Alcester rivers, however although this is a serious possibility Cllr Cumberbatch reminded councillors that they can only comment on how things are in front of them now.

Cllr Bunting commented that when the Conway estate was being built in 1953, their flood reports at the time suggested that Gunnings Bridge was acting as a break and therefore should be taken down and replaced with a single span bridge. The Allimore development plan to have their surface water enter the river Arrow before Gunnings Bridge which will add to the burden during times of high water and could potentially cause a serious flooding problem.

Cllr Morrison stated that ATC still do have issues regarding surface water drainage, therefore if we do base our additional comments on Cllr Sturgess's report we should -alter the wording to stress that fact.

The Clerk for ATC, C Wright, then spoke to Councillors regarding figures he had been given at a recent meeting with SDC. Firstly regarding education, currently St. Nicholas Primary school has 361 pupils, however only has places for 350. Although they can increase the classroom size from 25 to 30, there are common aspects, such as the main hall which are not big enough. Alcester Academy is also in a similar position with shared aspects undersized for the expected increase in population, however they are currently under-subscribed but this is felt is due to a lack in facilities and issues within the school not purely because of there being not enough pupils locally. Under the section 106 £447,000 has been allocated for education to Warwickshire County Council. ATC are challenging this with Warwickshire County Council who in a recent meeting with ATC were taken to the two schools, they accepted that St. Nicholas would have a problem but due to Alcester Academy's current pupil intake refused to accept that they would have a problem.

Other section 106 money allocated included: £60,000 to the Library, £400,000 to the NHS to increase capacity, £200,000 to the local police force, Highways will receive a sum too although they have not submitted their requirements yet.

With regards to the public open space, the applicants have now added the required on-site play areas, hence the loss of the outside path. According to SDC planners, there is only a need for improved youth rugby and youth cricket facilities off-site, again highlighting our need for a core strategy for the town.

ATC still consider the applicants provision of an allotment site on the southern half of the development site as not satisfactory, and are seeking funds to use for the provision of community facilities.

Cllr Cumberbatch reiterated that these were details from the meeting with SDC and informed Councillors that solicitors have been involved and SDC are to consider the points made by ATC.

Cllr Adams questioned the WCC opinion of Alcester Academy although C Wright replied that they had dragged WCC down to the school to see for themselves and would be taking it further.

Cllr Kenyon asked if the Highways authority are aware of the problems at St Nicholas school regarding parking especially as this increase in population will make the situation worse.

Cllr Payne asked for clarification that the attenuation ponds would not be classed as open spaces, which they won't be.

The Clerk then spoke about the open spaces management for the future, stating that there are three available options. Firstly the District Council could take on the management, which they have refused to do. Secondly ATC (using the 2006 formula) could be given a lump sum to cover 20 years of maintenance costs, and would have to bear the costs after this. Thirdly a 10 year lump sum could be given to a ground maintenance company and after the 10 years it would be given to the residents of the development to pay for the upkeep of the open spaces.

Cllr Payne stated that ATC shouldn't be taking on more especially after the capping of the council funds, therefore it is his opinion that it be given over to a management company.

The Clerk then reminded councillors that ATC currently manage the Eclipse Road entrance after the management company for the development company disappeared after their time and it was never taken on by the residents.

Cllr Bunting also backed this up and pointed out that with the changes to the masterplan to include the green area around the Eclipse Road area the charges to residents by a management company will go to the current Eclipse Road residents too. He also pointed out that very often these sub-contractors might not be as careful in their job and there has been occasions where they don't pick up the grass cuttings which then get washed into the drainage system, cause a blockage and then potential flooding issues. Therefore he proposes that ATC do consider taking the management of the open spaces on, especially considering that we will have new rate payers to help cover the costs to ensure it is done effectively.

Cllr Knapman then pointed out that if ATC take on the responsibility of looking after the grass cutting on the attenuation pond would they also have to take on the legal responsibilities as well, especially considering as they are not fenced off when they are full they pose a serious risk of an accident occurring.

Cllr Cumberbatch commented that all of these questions and comments regarding the attenuation ponds will be taken back to SDC.

The Clerk will also collect figures for the area to be cut and work out how much it will cost to compare to the lump sum figure that will be made available. As well as to check on the legalities especially regarding the attenuation ponds.

Cllr Cumberbatch concluded the meeting by saying that ATC are still at the view that the previous comments still stand and these amendments have not satisfied any of the concerns raised, ATC will be submitting a further comment to SDC based on Clive's report.

## **ATC Response as submitted 22/04/2013**

Alcester Town Council (ATC) contests the validity of the new Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for Alimore Lane prepared by Halcrow Group Ltd. as it is flawed with respect to the foul water drainage and ATC still has issues with the surface water drainage. Alcester is prone to flooding, and the main town drains are combined sewers, combining both surface water and foul water. Although it is proposed that the surface water run-off from Alimore lane will discharge in to the River Arrow, the foul water will be channelled down the Birmingham Road to flow through the Town main drain to the Stratford Road pumping site: it is this flow which is of concern. The new Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) conducted for Bloor Homes by Halcrow Group Ltd. is superficial and does not include the depth of information required. It makes assertions that there is no flood risk based on third party evidence, without giving the evidence. It asserts that the additional foul water load is "insignificant" (although being in excess of 10%), and when it does give the supposed supporting evidence from STW (Appendix A), that evidence is out of date. The letter, dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011, carries the caveat (last paragraph) that the "evaluation is only valid for 6 months after the date of this letter", that means it only covers the period up to March 2012.

In section three of the FRA on Foul Water (third bullet point) it states that "the big tank was not 97% full before Christmas" – this is wrong! ATC has irrefutable evidence that on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 2100 hours the tank was completely full, as was observed by a Council member. At this time the tank had no reserve capacity.

There were a number of problems commissioning the tank, such as software issues and pump failures, and the tank was full to capacity on two previous occasions, as notified by STW to ATC. These difficulties were apparently resolved in a satisfactory manner. As was reported to ATC, part of the commissioning process was to adjust the level of the weir from the drain into the tank. There has not been any report back on this aspect of the operation of the tank. The tank was also completely full during the severe inundation on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 and it is not known why. The tank may not have been tuned properly, i.e. the weir height may be set too low, or the tank may simply not have sufficient capacity; these issues need to be resolved in a transparent manner.

With respect to surface water drainage it is stated that the surface water discharge attenuated to green field run off is stored and discharged to STWL surface water sewers however these then discharge into an ancient ditch, originally part of the Ragley Mill Works, behind a residential area and Alcester Grammar School. Flooding has already been observed in this area and ATC don't feel that this has been adequately assessed to be able to take all the attenuation needs.

ATC would like a thorough new flood risk assessment by STW and the Environment Authority, taking into account the recent developments, and operational issues, which have arisen since the original planning application was made. Also ATC would wish to see the operating statistics of the tank from STW for, 36 hours prior to, and after, the inundation on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2012.

This additional information is necessary to give the residents of Alcester confidence that both the foul water drainage system and surface water discharge system can cope with the increased load from both Alimore Lane developments, with a suitable factor of safety.