

**Inspection 8 October 2019 – Matter 14 Hearing Session
Planning Application 2019/0335 – Grane Village, Helmshore**

Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) Page 24

Introduction

Taylor Wimpey has been negotiating with Rossendale Borough Council since 2012. Grane Residents' Association has been requesting sight of the relevant surveys required for the development since 2017, to ensure the site is suitable for housing. We received a hard copy of Taylor Wimpey's planning application 10 days before the Inspection on 8 October 2019, when we were informed that the application had not yet been validated. We have since been informed that their planning application has now been validated and back dated to 24 September 2019.

On Tuesday 15 October a meeting was held with Taylor Wimpey representatives and the Grane Residents Association committee who raised numerous questions in relation to their planning application. We were told that we would receive their reply by 25 October. Our response to the planning application is required to be submitted to the Council by 30 October and as yet we have not received the information requested from Taylor Wimpey. I raise this only in so far as the playing field seems far from level. The developer with money can set their own deadlines by using delaying tactics, but those affected by the proposed development have a matter of days to formulate their response. It does not matter who is responsible, it remains a far from satisfactory situation. During the period when objections were required to be submitted to the Rossendale Draft Local Plan, we have been required to comply without full knowledge of the relevant surveys.

Mr Hodbod will be speaking in relation to "Flood Risk" and I trust that you will allow me to put forward Grane Residents' concerns in relation to the subject, "Can the site be safely accessed."

H74 Grane Village, Helmshore

- (ii) Can the site be safely accessed? What impact would the proposal have on the local road network, and are mitigation measures necessary? What is Lancashire County Council's latest position?**

Can the site be safely accessed should not only apply to the site to be developed but also to the residents who live alongside Grane Road and the site.

It is readily accepted that vehicle movement to and from the site, likely to be in the region of 800 daily, will be either travelling in the direction of Preston, Manchester or Burnley and the surrounding districts. Grane Road is already a rat run for Preston and Manchester. It is

not unusual for pedestrians to have to wait ten minutes to cross the road and the same amount of time for vehicles to enter Grane Road from adjoining streets.

At the Holden Arms, the junction of Holcombe Road and Grane Road where the majority of the 800 cars will be heading, there is the entry to the cemetery and a tarmac road leading to the farms on the hillside. Three footpaths are close by together with the large Holden Arms car park and Holden Wood Antiques Centre and Tea Rooms, with many motorists visiting these venues. It is clearly accepted but not dealt with anywhere that there will have to be some form of control at this junction, either by traffic lights or a roundabout.

The result of either of these measures will be disastrous for residents in the immediate area. Again experience shows us that temporary lights in this area cause tailbacks of idling vehicles down to the A56 junction and up to what used to be the Duke of Wellington public house. It is rather surprising that Taylor Wimpey has not addressed this matter. The fumes from the increased traffic, both stationary and moving due to the alterations required, will make the current far from satisfactory position, intolerable.

Number of Vehicles

I refer to the traffic survey on Page 32 of Taylor Wimpey's Transport Assessment where they give figures for two, one hour surveys carried out between 07.45-08.45 and 16.30-17.30 hours. It states 4,043 vehicles in 2016 and 3,284 vehicles in 2018. On 5 March 1992 "Save Grane" carried out a survey over a 12 hour period which resulted in a traffic count of 6,952 vehicles. The Department of Transport's Raw Count Data for Minor Roads, over the period 2008-2016, shows figures for a 12 hour period ranging from 12,734 to 13,586. They also supply average figures for the 12 hour period from 2008-2018 which range from 13,668 to 15,741. We believe that these figures show the true hazards that Grane Road, a narrow B Road, experiences.

These statistics are shown on the following page.

Department of Transport

Statistics compiled from Raw Count Data for Minor Roads

Survey Date	All Vehicles Over 12 Hour Period		Average Over Year
4 June 2008	East West Total	7,002 6,584 13,586	15,741
19 May 2010	East West Total	6,478 6,556 13,034	14,279
25 May 2011	East West Total	6,668 6,457 13,125	15,047
23 May 2012	East West Total	6,666 6,474 13,140	14,469
22 May 2013	East West Total	6,549 6,185 12,734	13,739
21 May 2014	East West Total	6,463 6,312 12,775	14,448
20 May 2015	East West Total	6,065 5,619 11,684	13,668
18 May 2016	East West Total	6,710 6,567 13,277	14,842

Average over eight year period 12,919 vehicles per 12 hour period

This equates to 17 cars on average per minute over the whole of 12 hour period

This equates to 1 car every 3 seconds over the whole 12 hour period

Noise

In Taylor Wimpey's Noise Impact Assessment their Executive Summary at the beginning of the document states that in regard to road traffic the assessment has determined that mitigation measures are required to ensure that internal and external noise levels do not exceed the criteria:

- **Higher Specification Glazing** on western facing bedrooms or living room on the first floor of plots 34 and 43.
- **Northern facing bedrooms** or living rooms on the first floor of plots 40 to 43, 49 to 54 and 59 to 64.
- **External ventilation**, Plots 1 to 76, 80 to 84 and 93 to 95.
- **External Amenity Areas** 1m barrier along eastern portion of northern border of site.
- 1.8m barrier shielding the garden area associated with plot 1
- 2.4m barrier placed along the northern boundary of plots 35 to 39.
- 2m barrier shielding garden area associated with plot 34 from north and west.
- 2.4m barriers wrapping round garden areas associated with plots 43, 40, 48, 49 and 58, 54 and 55, 64 and 65 and 59 listed from west to east.

By all means protect the new houses on the site from the traffic noise. Increase the traffic volume by 800 vehicles in and out of the development and what effect will this have on current houses strung alongside Grane Road, which are 2 or 3 metres from the road and will have nothing to ensure they are protected from the noise levels which exceed the criteria!

On the question of fumes Taylor Wimpey, in their document “Predicted Annual mean No2 Concentrate” states on Page 21/22 under the heading Exceedances of AQO (Air Quality Objectives) it is shown that in 6 out of 16 houses, the AQO level will be exceeded. There are 76 houses in the area shown in the survey. If we take the 6 out of 16 and apply it to the whole of the 76, 28 of the 76 houses will be affected.

For these reasons the site is not suitable for housing development because of the considerable detrimental effect it will have on current householders.

Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) Page 23

1. General questions applicable to all sites including H74 Grane Village, Helmshore

(a) Is the site suitable for housing? Are there any specific constraints or requirements associated with the site, or a need to seek mitigation measures to achieve an acceptable form of development? Should these be specified in the Plan?

- **Highways and access** – Further increase in traffic.
- **Flood Risk** – Danger to properties at the foot of the proposed site and downstream, climate change warnings.
- **Green Belt** – The development of the site requires a change to Urban Boundary which is there for a reason. This boundary provides a clear link with the upland habitats and provides a corridor to the Important Wildlife Site adjacent to the proposed site.

(b) Is the proposed site capacity appropriate, taking account of constraints and the provision of necessary infrastructure?

- **Education** – It is our understanding that Primary and Secondary Schools in the area are oversubscribed. This may vary from year to year but there should always be a margin for such fluctuations.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – Current residents have difficulty accessing Doctor's appointments. Closure of Haslingden Baths. Current residents' lifestyles already eroded by increased traffic, noise, air pollution and dust. In a survey of residents undertaken by Grane Residents' Association in 2003, 37% of those questioned had a member of their household with a respiratory complaint. In the latest survey in 2018 this figure had risen to 66%.

(c) Is the site available and deliverable in the timescales envisaged?

- **Delivery** – Potential construction delays – Mr Hodbod has made reference to the potential danger of flooding to Helmshore properties in his statement. Pile driving and potential damage to existing properties is inevitable.

(d) For sites currently in the Green Belt – what effect would the proposed boundary change and allocation have on the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it? Are there exceptional circumstances that justify altering the Green Belt?

- **Landscape impact** – It should be noted that the site sits within the buffer zone of the West Pennine Moors SSSI, which aims to promote Wildlife Conservation not eradicate habitat.
- **Ecology** – Permanent and transient wild life species do not recognise Holcombe Road as a barrier. The land in question is a living thing; it changes with the seasons and week to week. The site is host to a wealth of wildlife including deer, common newts, frogs, toads, badgers, foxes, a large population of bats, both barn and tawny owls, sparrow hawks and red kites which can be regularly spotted. The loss of this essential habitat and wildlife corridor will have a major impact on nature conservation. Because life changes with the seasons they are not there all the time. We live with them and when they move on we await their return next season.
- **Heritage** – The site plays host to the original weigh station and also track beds to the railway line which serviced the quarries of Grane and Musbury, a key piece of evidence of the history of the local area and reminder of its industrial past. The proposal does nothing to preserve this key historic feature either through incorporation into the design or preservation; it simply wipes it from history. We object that this key piece of Grane's Heritage should be cleared away.
- **Site Capacity** – Urban sprawl, previous Inspection Urban Boundary set to prevent creeping development. To increase the size of the village by 131-174 houses is a

recipe for the destruction of Grane Village as we, the residents, know it. Brownfield sites first, people before profits.

- **Other issues** – There are only eight dwellings directly adjacent to the 8.11 acre site, with the majority of residents having lived there for over 30 years. The open aspect of Tor, green fields and open countryside are of great importance to residents. Surely a housing development of this size should be sympathetic to the quality of life of current residents who spend time in their gardens to maintain their health and wellbeing. With the whole of the site at their disposal the developer's plan is to divide the boundary fence between new and established properties with an eight foot fence to mitigate noise levels. By all means design should maximise the benefits for new residents but it should also be sympathetic to the needs of long standing Council Tax paying residents. We believe that requesting a generous buffer between properties is not too much to ask, in view of the fact that a landscaped buffer is proposed between the Courtyard and new houses to be situated lower down the site.

Michael Murray MBE
28 October 2019