

From:

To:

Subject:

Comments on planning application 2021/91150 rear of, 66, Child Lane, Roberttown, Liversedge, WF15 7QG

Date:

04 May 2021 21:30:20

Dear Sirs

I wish to lodge my comments in relation to planning application number 2021/91150 (66 Child Lane).

- Kirklees Council website states that public consultation in relation to this application ends on 6 May 2021. We received a letter from Mathias Franklin, Head of Planning and Development at Kirklees Council, stating that the period ends on 17th May 2021. The discrepancy is concerning. Presumably, all comments received before 17 May 2021 will be considered.
- The application refers to the removal of the hawthorn hedge which surrounds the property. The boundary hedge with our property is shared and therefore cannot be removed or grubbed out without our consent. We do not give consent.
- The application refers to the removal of around 13 trees. It does not specify which trees. The ash trees to the northern boundary of 66 Child Lane belong to our property. They cannot be cut down without our consent. We do not give consent. With ash dieback threatening 80% of ash trees across the UK, these healthy trees should be preserved and not damaged by any proposed construction.
- The Local Plan provides for the protection and improvement of local air quality. The planning proposal would have a detrimental impact on the air quality for the neighbouring properties to 66 Child Lane. Child Lane and the surrounding roads, particularly the A62, are extremely busy with daily queuing traffic. Studies have shown that a combination of hedges and trees reduces the spread of air pollution from roads (University of Surrey). The planning application proposes not just to increase the vehicle use of 66 Child Lane from 1 vehicle to a minimum of 12 vehicles, but to remove the extensive hedging and a significant number of mature trees. The resulting impact would be increased pollution and a reduction in local air quality.
- The Local Plan provides that developments should achieve safe and suitable access to the site for all people, and the residual cumulative impacts of development should not be severe. In addition, the proposals should avoid a detrimental impact on highway safety. The proposal cannot achieve those requirements. A planning application for 3 houses on the property was refused in 2004 because it would have had a significant detrimental

effect on highway safety. An appeal against that decision was also refused. Visibility to the south at the exit to the property is very restricted because of the bend in Child Lane. There are houses on the opposite side of the road, and road junctions with Melton Way and Fountains Drive also relatively near. Highway consultants, instructed by the owners of 66 Child Lane in 2004, carried out a radar survey finding that the 85th percentile wet weather speed for passing vehicles was around 28.9mph northbound and 29.0 mph southbound. National guidance recommended sight lines of 2m x 70m in such circumstances. The inspector found that a sight line of only around 2m x 45m to the south was achievable at the speeds recorded. There does not appear to have been any survey carried out since, but the traffic on Child Lane has only worsened since 2004 in terms of quantity and speed. The proposal would result in at least another 12 vehicles entering and exiting the property with the associated increase in the hazards to neighbours when entering and exiting their properties, to other road users, and to pedestrians. The proposal to move the gate further into the property, and to add a new exit for the existing bungalow to the same stretch of road, just a number of metres away from the current exit, would not alleviate the problem. A second exit would simply increase the risks to everyone using this stretch of road or pavement. In addition, the trees to the front of 66 Child Lane are the subject of a protection order. The proposal to include a second access and increase the width of the current access would risk damaging these trees, if not require their removal.

- A key objective of the Local Plan is to protect and enhance the integrity of the natural environment in Kirklees. Another is to promote development that helps to reduce and mitigate climate change. The development of this greenfield site would represent an environmental loss in contradiction to those objectives. Despite the property's relatively small size and its suburban location, it is a haven for wildlife in an area of largely small gardens and where many lawns are being replaced with paving and hedges with fences. The property supports at least 20 different species of birds, together with bats, hedgehogs and aquatic life including newts. Such biodiversity is indicative of the range of invertebrate species that the property also supports. The planning application states that there are no priority species on the land. However, there are at least 3 bird species and 1 mammal listed on the bird and the territorial mammal priority lists respectively. In addition, swallows feed over 66 Child Lane and nest on our property. (There may also be swallows nesting on 66 Child Lane.) These birds are a Kirklees local species of principal importance. The bats are a protected species. The particular species of bat and the species of newt on this property are not known. It is possible that they could also be on the priority lists. The mature boundary hedge, being predominantly hawthorn, is crucial in supporting the wide diversity of species by providing shelter, nest sites, food resources and corridors for movement. (Woodland Trust – hawthorn hedges support over 300 different types of insect.) These benefits are increased by the number and variety of mature trees and the two ponds which are sufficiently large to provide a home to wildfowl as well as amphibians. Hedges and trees are essential for carbon sequestration. The damage done to biodiversity by grubbing up hedges has been recognised for some years to the extent that the agricultural sector can seek government grants to re-plant them. The proposals look to remove this hedge, 13 trees and to fill in the ponds (with no reference to the existing life in those ponds). The building density of the proposals, which includes a driveway along the length of the property and numerous parking spaces, leaves little room for any green space at all. The land will be largely covered with artificial surfaces. There will be no food sources for wildlife or spaces to nest and shelter. The wildlife will be lost in its entirety.

The impact will also be felt in the surrounding area because no other individual garden can absorb the wildlife that this property supports. It is recognised that wildlife cannot exist in tiny pockets. 66 Child Lane is obviously a very successful and long-established part of an existing green infrastructure and ecological network within an area of increasing development. It cannot be replaced. The loss would be significant because of the number and range of species involved, and mitigation would not be possible. In granting planning permission, the council would be significantly reducing biodiversity in the local area, rather than halting or reversing its long-term decline. It would also be increasing the contribution the District makes to climate change by removing more hedges and trees. Both would be in contravention of the objectives under the Local Plan.