2021/93689

On 03/11/2021, 928 identical copies of the attached letter (each individually signed) were submitted.

To: Kirklees Council Planning & Development Service

Cc. – Thomas Fish, Mark Eastwood MP, Cllrs Masood Ahmed, Jackie Ramsey and Nosheen Dad. Leader of Kirkless Council Cllr Shabir Pandor, Mayor of Kirklees Cllr Mumtaz Hussain.

RE: Planning Application Number 2021/49/93689/E

I object to the above-mentioned planning application. My reasons are provided below:

- The proposed construction access off Ravensthorpe Road past Ravenshall School would result in a severe impact on highway and pedestrian safety including on children.

  Currently, during drop off and pick up times, there is a high volume of traffic and congestion with vehicles parking on side streets and on junction corners. There is a significant amount of traffic outside of these hours too with Ravensthorpe Road being a major route connecting the areas of Savile Town, Thornhill Lees and Ravensthorpe. The proposal to use this access route would result in a significant adverse impact on immediate and nearby streets (which fall under either Ravensthorpe Road or Lees Hall Road). The new construction traffic will be a major addition to the congestion that is already present. Large vehicles and building plant entering and leaving the proposed entrance and exit throughout the school day will cause a detrimental impact on all the users of that facility including the children, parents and other local residents. The impact is not considered to be short term and given the size of the proposed development could last a number of years.

  Given these negative impacts on the adjoining properties and local residents, it is extremely premature for the Applicant to charge ahead by proposing such significant works without a more feasible and less disruptive access route.

- Ravenshall School is an outstanding establishment and an important asset to the local community and the facility users. The school provides for complex learning difficulties as well as other special educational needs such as behavioural issues including children with autism spectrum disorders. A number of students have very complex learning needs impacted by sensory and physical impairments.

  The proposed construction access which is adjacent to the school entrance will have a major impact on those children due to the increased level of noise and pollution. This will cause distress and anxiety for the children and have a knock-on impact on the school and parents. Dust from the site and passing by construction vehicles can seriously damage the health of our children, who are from the most vulnerable in society and already have a long and possibly difficult life ahead.

  It appears that these issues have not been considered by the Applicant. Instead, the Council's haste suggests construction phasing and financial targets have been given greater priority without a care for the impact created by the development on local facilities, children and communities.

- The proposal will impact residential neighbours (adjoining streets, cul-de-sac and the main roads all of which fall under either Ravensthorpe Road or Lees Hall Road), passers-by and commuters. There is a question of where builders would be parking their vehicles. Local residents do not agree to parking on street, limiting parking for their own vehicles outside homes. Parking outside the school would cause significant congestion on an already busy cul de sac.

- The Illustrative Masterplan (ID 896579) shows that the permanent access for the development is intended to be provided by constructing a new access from the Forge Lane/Lees Hall Road roundabout (denoted by a red arrow), utilising the current location of the Masjid Abu Bakr and Lees

Hall Playgroup (both of which are located at 555 Lees Hall Road). Any development and works should be conditional upon that access being the one used, as this would cause many of the issues raised in this objection to reduce or never arise in the first place.

The mosque has proactively and consistently engaged the Applicant and other interested parties to facilitate relocation of the current community facilities located at the address. However, the Council has not been forthcoming. In fact, the mosque and playgroup were content with a previous proposal formulated by Miller Homes (of which the Council was aware). The Council has now taken that proposal off the table at this late stage and has not suggested an alternative or provided any good explanation.

It should be acknowledged that the current situation and the Council proposing construction access past Ravenshall School has been created entirely due to the delay and procrastination of the Council and not by the Mosque, the Playgroup or the local residents. The mosque's representatives are trying their utmost to engage and have meaningful negotiations with the Council and its representatives. We can only hope that the Council will work with the communities they are intended to serve.

- This application has been submitted by the Council with total disregard for the community consultation (close date 1 August 2021).

  That consultation was extremely flawed for a number of reason – it was not effective, meaningful, inclusive or fit for purpose. The approach was rushed and failed to properly consider Paragraphs 39, 40 and 41 of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF; and we reserve our position in respect of it. Nevertheless, the Council's own consultation feedback confirms that the planned (albeit as yet undefined) relocation of Masjid Abu Bakr and Lees Hall Playgroup was the key issue with over 60% of respondents raising it. Instead of addressing these concerns and engaging with the Masjid and Playgroup in a meaningful way, the Council is bulldozing ahead by submitting a planning application with a proposal to use a narrow cul de sac that is not fit for purpose by any reasonable assessment. This approach shows a complete indifference to local residents, the Ravenshall School, the special needs children as well as the Masjid and the Playgroup.

  It is abundantly clear that there is increasing anxiety in the community regarding the uncertainty surrounding the relocation of Masjid Abu Bakr and the Playgroup, two very important community assets.