

BOUGHTON HEATH, VICARS CROSS & OVERLEIGH COMMUNITY FORUM

SPECIAL MEETING FOR HUNTINGTON & GREAT BOUGHTON

Update on the Saughton Camp Development and Associated Road Improvement Works

Held on Thursday 21st July 2011 at Caldley Valley Church, Caldley Valley, Chester

Officer and Guest Speakers:

Stephen Mosley MP	Member of Parliament for Chester
Cllr Mark Williams	Councillor for Huntington, Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC)
Cllr Keith Board	Councillor for Great Boughton, CWAC
Cllr Adrian Walmsley	Councillor for Newton, CWAC
Cllr David Robinson	Councillor for Boughton, CWAC
Alistair Jeffs	Head of Service Policy, Performance & Partnerships, CWAC
Paul Parry	Highways, CWAC
John Evans	Highways, CWAC
Charles Johnson	Commercial Estates Group (CEG)
Victoria Walker	Commercial Estates Group (CEG)
Sven Till	AE Yates/Commercial Estates Group
Michelle Talgam	Chester Area Manager, CWAC
Jan Walters	Chester Community Engagement Officer, CWAC

Welcome, Introductions and Background

Councillor Mark Williams and Stephen Mosley MP

Cllr Mark Williams opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing the officers and guests who would be giving an up date and answering the questions.

Cllr Williams advised the residents that good news had been that the Post Office that had closed in Huntington and relocated to Walkers Garden Centre on a 1 year trial. Whilst at the Garden Centre, the post office would have extended opening hours.

Cllr Williams then gave a brief history of the process that had already gone through in relation to the development and related road works, explaining that the application had been rejected by the then Chester City Council but the developers had taken it to appeal and won. This meant that Cheshire West and Chester Council had no alternative but to allow the development.

Since that had taken place there have been changes in Central Government and in October the new Localism Bill will be passed which will allow local communities to develop a Neighbourhood Plan; this will influence local development. He

encouraged the local communities and Parish Councils to develop a Neighbourhood Plan which could influence any further development on Saighton Camp.

Stephen Mosley MP re-enforced the need for a Neighbourhood Plan and how Central Government support the need for local communities to have more influence on development and planning in their areas. Once these Neighbourhood Plans have been accepted and been to a referendum then local authorities will have no options but to give weight to them when considering planning applications.

Neighbourhood Planning

Alistair Jeffs - Head of Service Policy, Performance & Partnership

Alistair Jeffs explained the process that will be involved in developing a Neighbourhood Plan and how Cheshire West and Chester Council will be supporting local communities to develop them. These plans will be fundamental role in influencing the vision for the future of the communities. Neighbourhood Plans will also impact the community assets and services for the area.

Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been developed it will be distributed to the whole community for a referendum and, if supported, it will become effective.

Commercial Estate Groups Update

Charles Johnson

Charles Johnson explained the layout of the site by use of a map on display. (This map is available on the internet) He explained where the 375 properties will be located and that there is capacity for some 2 storey office accommodation. Provision for a school has been included but this has now been amended to a financial commitment of £791k for provision of local education.

He went on to say that he has no idea where the figure of an additional 500 houses has come from. Before any plans are submitted they will do a full consultation with local residents, after pre planning discussions with CW&C for outline consent.

The developments will be done by Bovis Homes and they will most likely start work on the 375 homes early in 2012.

Highways Update

Paul Parry

Highways Cheshire West and Chester

Paul and Sven gave an update on the roadworks around the roundabout explaining that they had experienced some issues regarding services but these had not caused any delay or changes to schedules and the project is on target for a November completion.

Questions and Answers

Q1. Why do you not work week ends?

Response

Work is scheduled to have the least impact on traffic and residents living close to the roadworks. There are no roadworks during peak travel hours so work is restricted to 9.30 to 3.30 when traffic needs to be reduced to one lane. Weekend work is not usually carried out so that noise does not disturb local residents, although there will be some weekend and night work to do some essential work that must be done with the lowest level of traffic. The first of this work will be this weekend when the slip road will be resurfaced. Work is scheduled to achieve a balance for everyone.

Q2. Whilst we welcome the Neighbourhood Plan, does that mean if we ask for a slip road for the A55 we will get one?

Response

If it is in a Neighbourhood Plan and a planning application is put forward that does not take into account the Neighbourhood Plan it will be much more difficult for the plans to be approved. National Government are moving the emphasis onto neighbourhood planning

Q3. Disgust at the trees being removed without advising local residents. Will there be any new trees on the roundabout and if so will local residents be consulted?

Response

There will be areas within the new roundabout scheme that will be planted and there is no reason why there cannot be a local influence if a representative of what they want is made the Council's planning office

Q4. Will Caldly Valley Road be resurfaced and will this include a noise reduction surface?

Response

Part of Caldly Valley Road will be resurfaced but it will not be with a noise reduction surface. The volume of traffic will not affect the noise from the current level.

Q5. Crossing Caldly Valley Road is already extremely difficult and dangerous due to the volume and speed of the traffic with few gaps in the traffic especially at peak hours when children are trying to cross for school. Will a new crossing be installed?

Response

Although one is not planned, the MP responded that a review of this is needed

Q6. Junction to Gorse Way from Sedum Close does not meet requirements. This has been highlighted in the past and not been adequately responded to, despite a letter

being handed in at the last meeting.

Response

The junction does meet the current required standard. (An independent survey of the junction was handed into the officers – copies of which are available on request)

Q7. Traffic survey has shown an increase of 85% in traffic going north and 35% going south. In view of this could a 20mph be imposed with a speed camera and safe crossing?

Response

There is a motion tabled for Full Council for Thursday 28th July when a Chester wide 20mph for all urban roads will be considered. If this is passed then Caldly Valley Road will be included in this.

Q8. On the Saughton Camp website, CEG list 3 phases for the development. Phase 1 for 103 houses 57 of which are occupied, phase 2 for 375 3-4 bedroom houses plus a school and business units. Phase 3 consists of 50% of the site. If this site is to be developed with an additional 500 properties will there be an entrance road from the A41 if there is not to be an A55 slip road?

Response

There are no plans for phase 3 at the moment and it is not known where the number of 500 for houses has come from. There are no plans currently for an A41 link road as there are no proposals for the site

Q9. Why has the grassed area on Caldly Valley Road been used as a compound for storage for the cycle lane development?

Response

Highways land has to be used for storage during roadworks and this land does belong to the Council / Highways Dept. It is the closest to the works taking place so it makes sense to use this land to avoid the least disruption

Q10. If the Localism Bill does not come into effect until the Autumn what is to stop CEG putting in a planning application before then?

Response

Absolutely nothing but they will have to undertake a period of consultation which will take time

Q11. Caldly Valley Road has a 7.5 ton limit which is not enforced and why are construction vehicles allowed to use the road?

Response

The 7.5 ton restriction has an exemption for access, therefore large vehicles that are taking legitimate access to a destination within the weight limit are allowed. If vehicles are using it as a through road and not for access it is a Police issue; but it is difficult to enforce as the Police would have to follow the vehicle the full length of the restricted area to prove it was not being used for access.

Q12. Can the results of the last traffic survey before the application be made available?

Yes they can.

Q13. In the introductions, reference was made to issues with main services. Can more information on this be provided?

Response

The issues have been with the water mains. A relief valve has been installed and some pipes have been replaced. There are no issues which will affect services to residents and it is not anticipated to disrupt services or affect supply

Q14. There are already issues with traffic at the top of Sandy Lane and Stocks Lane. The increase in traffic will just intensify the problems. Part of the problem is due to the parking at the top of Sandy Lane which causes problems. Can anything be done about the parking in Sandy Lane and Stocks Lane?

Response

If parking is restricted it will have an impact on local residents' ability to park and access to shops which could be an issue but it can be looked at.

Q15. How will the phasing of the traffic light system work and will the A41 to A55 have a through road?

Response

There will be a phased approach to all the lights except the A55 which is a through junction. Access from the A41 to the A55 North Wales may have one stop light depending on phasing. All plans are on the internet.

Q16. Could some form of sheltered housing be included in the phase 3 as there is no sheltered housing in Huntington and the opportunity to include it in phase 2 has been missed?

Response

This needs to be clearly stated in the Neighbourhood Plan for any future development

Q17. Was due process correctly followed in relation to the appeal. We have been told

tonight that we can do nothing about the A55 slip road as we are passed the statue of limitations for appeal but there were no meetings with residents in relation to the appeal. If due process was not correctly followed for the appeal, then should a review be requested?

Response

There were several meetings over the past 4 years and at some meetings no one has turned up. All documents relating to the meetings can be found on the website. Meetings were widely advertised on the website, in the local press and by letters being sent out. The Council always opposed the plans and meetings were attended by the then MP Christine Russell. The A55 is the responsibility of the Highways Agency and not local highways so there would have to be a fundamental change in policy for any amendments to take place now.

Q18. Why has the traffic from Vicars Cross for the A55 not been routed through Mickle Trafford if the new roundabout has a through junction for the A55?

Response

Traffic is currently routed through both junctions of the A55 to spread the load and this will continue

Q19. The roundabout is at capacity now and can only just cope, with the extra traffic it will not be able to cope and more traffic will be backed up further down Caldby Valley Road which will increase the risk to pedestrians trying to cross the road?

Response

With the changes to the roundabout the road will take the extra traffic and will not be at capacity

Q20. The numbers attending tonight are due to local residents copying hand delivering leaflets to each house in the areas. Tonight has shown that it is not sufficient to put meetings on websites, put up posters in adverts in papers for people to know about meetings and have the opportunity to attend. Can assurance be given that in future that for meetings of importance such as planning each house will have a hand delivered notice?

Response

Assurance was given by Head of Service Policy, Performance & Partnership

Q21. There is a problem with drainage on Chester Road now, how will this cope with the extra houses?

Response

This has been raised several times at CEG meetings. Welsh Water have now been out and inspected the drainage system and found it to be clogged with fat deposits. The drains have

now been cleaned and there should already be an improvement. This added with the plans to have surface water drained into Caldry Valley Brook through a lagoon system means the main drains will only be taking foul drainage and will be able to cope with the capacity.

Q22. Is this the reason why there has been an increase in rats in the area?

Response

The increase in rats is not as a result of the development but will be looked into by environmental health

Q23. Phase 3 will happen sooner or later, what will happen to the traffic then if it is going to be at capacity with a 20% increase, once phase 3 has been developed it will be at 50% and not able to cope. Would it not make sense to do some changes to the road structure now?

Response

As part of the pre-planning discussions it will be the responsibility of CEG to prove capacity can be met or offer a solution.

Q24. Can the Traffic Impact Assessment be sent out for public reference. If crossing is installed now it will save money in the long term as phase 3 will happen?

Response

The complete set of planning documents including the Transport Assessment can be found on the online planning website.

Q25. Why are you not able to give an indication on phase 3 when it was discussed in a meeting 2 weeks ago and why has a scoping assessment for 500 houses been done if you do not plan on building them. No developer buys land if they do not have some idea of what they can build on it?

Response

There have been no discussions on what type of house can be build and therefore no number can be stated. Although phase 3 consists of 50% of the site a large amount of the site is SSI and this will also impact on the development, plus there will be full consultation

Q26. While it is appreciated that CW&C are only doing what they have been instructed to do following the appeal, a way forward for the future should be considered. This could be a consortium of all Parish Councils to show opposition and the need for a slip road to the A55. The Highways Agency who are responsible for the A55 should be lobbied for this now and support is requested from Councillor Mark Williams and Stephen Mosley MP?

Response

Both Cllr Mark Williams and Stephen Mosley MP agreed to support this line of action

Q27. When you approach the roundabout in winter you are blinded by the low sun. In the past the trees provided some shade from the sun, now the trees have been removed what is to be done about this as drivers being blinded by the sun will not be able to see the traffic lights and there will be an accident?

Response

It is not considered that this will give rise to an accident issue. The traffic signals themselves will be highly visible

Q28. With the increase in the number of family homes will the local school be able to cope as many schools are already at capacity with many people not being able to send their children to their local school?

Response

This should be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan but it is known by CW&C that some primary schools cannot accommodate all the local children and they are then forced to travel.

The following comments were made

- Sainsbury statement was read by Stephen Mosley MP. Sainsbury have advised that if they expand their store the only entrance and exit will be via the mini roundabout and not directly on to Caldley Valley Road
- The attendance tonight demonstrate that the residents are opposed to any further development and this should be remembered when considering any further plans
- The attendance tonight shows how much residents want a safe crossing on Caldley Valley Road
- Residents feel that the speed on Caldley Valley Road is too high for both pedestrians trying to cross the road and for motorist to try and get out of the side junctions.
- The additional 375 homes without an additional relief road to the A55 is madness and no further development should take place unless CW&C give assurance that there will be a relief road to the A55 and an arterial road to the A41
- There is only Stocks Lane and Sandy Lane to take the traffic into Chester and these roads are at capacity at peak hours and will not cope with any additional traffic
- The next Huntington Parish Council will start at 7.30 when the Neighbourhood Plan will be discussed anyone who wants to get involved should come along. The location will be confirmed but it is hoped it will be in the Church
- A large amount of traffic uses this route to get to the Chester Business Park and this is not taken into consideration when assessing traffic

Cllr Mark Williams closed the meeting by reiterating to Charles Johnson of CEG".....Charles unless we address these highways issues and full consideration is given to the Neighbourhood Plan that is being developed - I will strongly oppose ANY further development on Saughton Camp other than what has already been approved...."

Cllr Williams thanked everyone for taking the time to attend and give their input and inviting everyone to attend the next meeting scheduled in conjunction with Great Boughton and Huntington Parish Councils for :-

Monday 19th September 2011 starting at 7.30pm at the Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School, Vaughans Lane, Great Boughton, Chester, CH3 5XF

Background Information:

Planning and Highways documents for the Site off the former Saughton Camp, Sandy Lane, Huntington, Chester

A site plan is attached, showing the extent of the site and the areas to be used for the various approved mixed uses.

All of the documents are available under the following link;
<http://www.ukplanning.com/chester/search/index.htm;jsessionid=0DE1BA2A76FFF7902EA5B1EB67D4BAB2.wam1>

The application reference number is 08/02000/OUT.