

Henbury Parish Council objection to planning application 18/0294M

Henbury Parish Council notes that this application is for access only. We assume that, if the present application is approved, the details of the proposed development would be the subject of further applications. **We would be grateful for confirmation of this.**

The following comments and objections are based on the wider scale aspects of the proposal, such as adequacy of infrastructure and roads and the impact on air quality in the local area. We remark particularly that the proposed development is in an area of special interest to Henbury, since the designation of the site for building has seriously reduced the Green Belt between Macclesfield and Henbury, and is likely to impact on the Cock Wood SBI. We also note that applications 17/4277M and 17/4034M have been made for development on adjacent sites. The issues we address also apply to those sites, and the three should be considered together for the main issues of infrastructure and traffic.

We are also concerned that the three applications do not cover the whole of sites CS40 and CS41. CS41 (LPS18) was stated as accommodating 'around 150' dwellings, however 17/4277M already has an outline figure of 135 units, and 18/0294M a further 31. The area north of 18/0294M, for which no application has yet been submitted, would potentially offer a similar amount to this application, hence the overall total would likely be 200 or even higher when more detailed plans are produced. **It must be the responsibility of CEC to assess the infrastructure requirements of the whole of the planned building areas, and to specify what is needed and how it will be funded.**

We now set out our objections specific to application 18/0294M.

Objection: Traffic. No transport assessment has been provided. Although the number of houses within this application is modest in respect to the total counts in LPS 16/18 they should not be considered in isolation and a combined transport analysis is required for the applications.

It must be noted that traffic on the Chelford Rd frequently queues past the proposed site access towards the Broken Cross roundabout, especially in the afternoon rush hour. A report commissioned by the Parish Council (submitted to ref 17/4277M) shows that the traffic volume at Broken Cross is near critical already, with queue lengths far greater than those reported in the transport assessments for 17/4277M and 17/4034M. There has been no study of the traffic flow, including the effect on minor roads, of the addition of all the houses in LPS 16/18 and Henbury Parish Council consider this a pre-requisite before any permissions are granted.

A transport analysis has been undertaken for Henbury Parish Council for the combined developments in 17/4277M and 17/4034M. This report by DTTC was submitted to those applications, and is also submitted here. As a result, CBO have re-evaluated their transport assessment and the results show that the Broken Cross roundabout, already congested at peak times, will face even greater congestion in the years ahead, with a significant contribution from the developments. Recently a proposal has been submitted for signalisation of the junction, and while it is stated that this will reduce queueing in peak hours a more thorough analysis is required considering all applications and taking accurate traffic inputs including actual queuing levels.

In the wider area, a traffic modelling exercise was undertaken by Cheshire East in 2014 to support the production of the Local Plan. That exercise assumed an increase in housing in and around

Macclesfield of 2200 houses and 250 apartments. It concluded that journey times in the town would increase by 15%. Prior to the adoption of the final Local Plan the housing requirement for Macclesfield was increased to more than 4300 properties. In the context of Broken Cross, there had originally been no planned development in the vicinity of the A537, but this changed in the Local Plan with sites LPS 16/18 and the proposal of 'around' 350 houses. There was then no further modelling done and hence the impact on traffic in the town is not currently understood. With developments underway at 'Bollin Meadow' on the A537 and the planned relocation of the Kings School to the north of Broken Cross, the combined impact can be expected to be far greater than originally anticipated, and modelling should be done to understand just how severe this will be prior to the granting of further permissions.

It must be the responsibility of CEC to survey the present traffic levels in the vicinity of Broken Cross and Henbury, and to assess the effect of the further traffic that would be generated by the development of these, and neighbouring, sites. This is especially important in view of the fact that Broken Cross is an AQMA with no current action plan to address the problem.

Objection: Access. The proposed access will require a new roundabout in the A537, within the extent of the queues frequently encountered in east-bound traffic at Broken Cross. Adding a new junction, with new traffic, to an already overloaded road is unacceptable. **A detailed study of traffic flow has not been provided.**

A further access is also planned for the development on LPS 18, and there are further areas designated for building in the sites CS 40 and CS 41. The cumulative effect of these junctions on the A537 has not been assessed.

In the absence of proper surveys and analysis of these traffic problems, the DTPC study for Henbury Parish Council shows that significant queueing is indeed expected at this junction. In the 2022 timeframe with only the 17/4034M development and using the flows submitted in 17/4034M, an *average* queue length of 55 vehicles is predicted in the morning rush hour, with a delay of 262s, accessing the Broken Cross roundabout from Chelford Rd. Taking the 2017 measured DTPC flows together with 17/4034M and 17/4277M development flows, and using the DTPC validated ARCADY model, a morning queue averaging 80 vehicles is found and a delay of 412s. This therefore puts the access roundabout to the development in the actual queue itself and confirms that egress traffic from the development will experience heavy delays and congestion. The addition of yet further properties in 18/0294M will only exacerbate the situation.

Access for sustainable transport modes is not considered in the required level of detail. Cycle access to Chelford Road is on to a congested section of road which, eastbound, crosses an AQMA with pollution levels above designated EU safe limits. This is the direction in which most journeys would proceed. The traffic levels are commonly such that cycling would be dangerous and this is not considered. Pedestrian routes towards Macclesfield and its schools are also a problem. If the pedestrians cross the Broken Cross roundabout then they will pass through the Broken Cross AQMA and subject to the illegal NO2 levels. Again, no consideration is given to this.

Objection: Infrastructure. The outstanding planning applications on the LPS16/18 sites cover 398 properties, and none deal effectively with the question of infrastructure. Each application must be

considered in combination with the other proposed developments when assessing local infrastructure, which includes schools, health care, utility supply etc.

Regarding school places, and based on CEC calculations for the 17/4034M development, these combined developments are expected to generate:

- 76 primary including SEN
- 60 secondary including SEN
- In total 5 SEN students

Clarification on where these children will find school places is sought as it is understood that the most local schools, i.e. Whirley and Fallibroome, are already full. Failure to accommodate pupils in the immediate schools will exacerbate the transport problem at Broken Cross and resultant air quality problems.

No comments are made in the assessments about required utility supply, i.e. water, sewerage, electricity, gas and communications, and this needs to be reviewed. It is doubtful that the existing utility supply in the area will cope and hence a major infrastructure expansion may be required, if an impact to the supply to local residents is not to be expected.

It also must be asked whether any consideration has been given to the impact on supporting resources, such as doctors' surgeries, hospitals and the emergency services (including the impact of exacerbated traffic congestion levels). Again, building the houses first and expecting the existing services to cope with the additional pressure is a fundamentally flawed approach, and one which CEC must address.

Objection: Air Quality. The application is significant as it will feed traffic into and out of the local AQMA at Broken Cross. There is no Air Quality Assessment provided.

The recently published DEFRA report "*UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations*" states that: "*It is vital that action is taken in the shortest time possible to improve air quality in those areas where air pollution is above the legal limit.*" To achieve this, CEC are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan for the AQMA to detail the measures that will be taken to meet the relevant air quality objectives, and this has not yet been done.

The NPPF states that:

"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

[...]

*preventing both **new and existing development** from **contributing to** or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by **unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution**....."*

No permissions for local development should therefore be granted until such an action plan is available and the impact of all combined development (including any extra houses yet to be included in planning applications for LPS16/18) rigorously tested for compliance. It must be assumed that the Broken Cross AQMA will indeed be adversely affected by air pollution as a result of this development, as no evidence to the contrary has been submitted with the application.

The Broken Cross roundabout area is the location of numerous businesses accessed on foot by the general public (Tesco Express, bookmaker, florist, hairdresser, two public houses, garden machinery

business, petrol station, paint supplies, chiropractor, sandwich shop) and is also a part of a major walking route to local schools (especially Fallibroome), therefore poor air quality affects many people locally as part of their daily routines.

Objection: Ecological

The site is mostly marshy grassland on peat. It is part of the area named 'Longmoss', the name being indicative of the ground conditions.

The TEP Ecological Assessment Section 3.1.1 erroneously states that "*Cockwood, Hendury (sic) SBI lies approximately 430km (sic) south-west of the site, south of Chelford Road. Cockwood Hendury (sic) SBI is primarily designated for its ancient woodland habitat.*" The SBI is actually 150m to the south-east and water draining from the application site continues as Bag Brook through the ancient woodland.

The document states "*The western side of the site contains a small area of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland comprising self-seeded silver birch *Betula pendula* and crack willow *Salix fragilis*, both species are early mature in age.*" Since the assessment was done all these trees have been removed by the landowner, causing biodiversity loss and a removal of healthy trees that assisted drainage. CEC Nature Conservation note that this area of woodland "***is likely to qualify as S41 habitat 'Lowland mixed deciduous woodland'***", which should be protected through the local plan – so its removal is clearly contrary to the objectives of the plan and it is hoped that CEC take appropriate action in this regard.

The TEP report also states that "*The marsh habitat is likely to qualify as Section 41 habitat of Principal Importance (NERC Act, 2006). In particular S41 habitat 'purple moor grass and rush pasture' with also some more limited affinity with S41 habitats 'lowland raised bog' and potentially 'lowland fen'. It is unlikely there will be a design solution to avoid net loss of this habitat on site therefore offset mitigation will be required to satisfy National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).*"

The loss of this habitat will be very significant, at least at a local level. This is recognised in the Cheshire East Nature Conservation response:

*"..Habitats of these types received protection through the Local Plan. I advise that the loss of habitat will result in a **notable loss of biodiversity** on the site. At present **no mitigation proposals** to address this impact have been submitted."* This also mentions that "*The habitat also meets Local Wildlife Site selection criteria and accounts for around 60% of the site.*" indicating that the site qualifies for SBI designation.

Cheshire East Policy SE3 states:

*The borough council will seek to conserve, enhance and interpret nature conservation interests. Development which would **adversely affect nature conservation interests will not normally be permitted.***

*Development will not normally be permitted which would adversely **affect grade B and grade C county sites of biological importance.***

*Development proposals which involve the loss of ponds, **wetlands**, heathlands, ancient woodlands or **ancient grassland** together with newly created habitats **will not normally be allowed and their conservation will be encouraged***

Developing this important area of biodiversity would therefore be contrary to the Cheshire East policy SE3 and rather than being developed the site should be correctly classified as a local wildlife site and protected.

Objection: Drainage

The area is classed as a 'critical drainage area' by CEC. Government flood risk maps show that around 50% of the site is at risk from flooding, at the low, medium or high levels. The land acts as a major absorber of water being primarily peat, and the developer's proposal is to cover 45% of the land with houses, roads and hard-standings.

The Geo Assessment report states that "*..significant cut fill works will be required associated with the **bulk removal of the peat** and silt deposits in order to prepare the development platform.*" confirming that large-scale removal of the water-absorbing peat will be necessary. The actual peat depth is not confirmed since measurement is clearly problematic on such a site: "*The base of the PEAT and SILT strata was not proven in a number of locations within the eastern sector where the **depth exceeded 5.45m bgl**. The very soft nature of the shallow soils would preclude the use of a larger drilling rig unless a suitable working platform was utilised.*" Hence until this is done the impact on local hydrology is unknown.

The run off from the site, when combined with that from 17/4277M, is proposed to feed the stream which passes underneath the gardens to the west in a culvert and on to the Cock Wood SBI.

An expert drainage assessment is required, using the required geo assessment data. This would need to confirm that the stream/culvert has sufficient capacity, that any attenuation tanks are both realistic and effective, and that there will be no detrimental impact on the Cock Wood SBI and the Bag Brook (satisfying policy SE3).

Henbury PC therefore strongly objects to the proposal for access to the site. Reason: effect on traffic and air quality, the lack of essential infrastructure, ecological impact on this and neighbouring Local Wildlife Site and impact on drainage in a critical drainage area.

Approval of this application would be completely contrary to the statement in the 2018/2019 Pre-Budget Consultation:

Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place

Cheshire East's rural and urban character is protected and enhanced through sensitive development, environmental management, transport and waste disposal policies.

This application does not represent sensitive development and has a negative impact on the local environment and transport infrastructure, which further affirms the previous conclusions.

Attachments:

- i) Report by DTTC containing:
 - Local plan context to local plan sites LPS16/18
 - validated modelling of traffic queuing/delay through the Broken Cross roundabout
 - review of transport documentation in planning applications 17/4277M and 17/4034M

- ii) Report by DustScan containing:
 - a review of the air quality aspects of 17/4277M and 17/4034M which is also applicable to 18/0294M
 - results of the air quality modelling exercise related to the Broken Cross roundabout.

- iii) Flood risk map