

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 3 MAY 2022

Item 6 – Land East of Hill Road South, Chelmsford

Siobhan Pierce

I am an allotment holder at Hill Road South Allotment site. Although I welcome the proposed housing growth and overall improvements in the Chelmer Waterside area, I have many concerns regarding the relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System (GPRS) which have been detailed in the planning objections already submitted to the Council. These concerns relate to increased noise, odour, environmental risks and particularly potential contamination of the soil. I do not believe that the mitigations cited in the report are sufficient for allotment holders to safely grow food without concerns of contamination.

Can the council confirm specifically how many other alternative sites were considered for the GPRS, what was their location and what reasons were they rejected. Did the council carry out a detailed site viability and risk assessment for these locations, and can this be shared with the public.

Surely the City Council must consider that placing a Gas Pressure Reduction system on an allotment site, adjacent to residential housing defies common sense. Therefore a robust, detailed and thorough site viability appraisal should have ultimately rejected this proposed location.

Daniel Plewinski

In the latest planning committee document from the 3rd May, section 6.26, it states in relation to the Hill Road Allotment site that 'the ambient noise level is around 51dB (measured from centre of allotments)'. This is used to justify the added noise of 41dB 15 metres away from the GPRS as having a minor effect on allotmenters; the calculated value will be an increase of 0.4 dB which is below the 5 dB increase limit recommended by the British Standards Institution (BS 4142: 2014). However, there is a shortcoming in the data used. The centre of the allotment site is not closest to the GPRS. The allotment plots that are nearest to the GPRS (on the east of the site) are further away from Byron Road, Hill Road South and the bungalows on Byron Road compared to the centre of the site. These allotment plots are also shielded due to being at a lower elevation and being surrounded by more trees. Therefore, the impact of noise on allotmenters nearest the GPRS cannot accurately be determined with the current data. The ambient sound pressure level would need to be taken at the nearest allotment plots for this information to be known. Does the planning committee therefore recognise that the noise impact on allotmenters nearest the GPRS is not accurately known? If the noise impact is not known, will the vote be deferred until this is known so that no unreasonable adverse noise effects are imposed on allotmenters?

Hill Road Allotment Holders Association

We welcome the focus on the development of Chelmsford City Centre however the proposed relocation of the gas pressure reduction station onto the site of Hill Road Allotment site will have a significant and disproportionate impact on allotment tenants. We have many concerns, in particular noise, odour, disruption and pollutants. Allotment tenants are growing food to feed their families; can the committee provide complete reassurance that this food grown will be 100% free from any and all contamination? Hill Road is a statutory allotment site and is therefore protected under Section 8 of the 1925 Act which is not referenced within the Planning Committee Report. The National Allotment Society have not been engaged throughout any aspect of this planning process. Furthermore, there is no precedent for developing allotment land in Chelmsford and we are concerned that this will create one and thereby justify the use of protected allotment land on other sites for future development in Chelmsford. It is correct that the specific area of land proposed for this development site does not currently have allotment plots on. This is because the Council have taken the decision not to use this land to create plots despite excess demand for allotment plots at this site (there are over 40 people on the waiting list). We request that the application be refused permission. Its impact on allotment tenants cannot be dealt with satisfactorily by using conditions or obligations.

Lucy Roper

I am a resident of Lockside Marina which is immediately adjacent to the site of the GPRS. The GPRS will have a significant adverse impact on residents, not only in terms of noise, odour and disruption but also visually. My first ask is that the Council recognise this impact and consider an alternative site for the GPRS. My second ask is that if this development does go ahead despite this obvious impact, can the design of the GPRS be reviewed: - Can the design of fence and screening ensure that hedgehogs and other wildlife cannot get trapped within the enclosure. - The Planning Committee Report states that the GPRS will be "utilitarian" and that the design will be purely functional, despite the fact it will be visible 24/7 by residents on two sides as well as above. Could the design of the GPRS be reconsidered with this in mind to ensure that it blends in to the surroundings as much as possible and simulate the neighbouring Aspyre development, as per the design for the Site 2 within the plan (the District Governor).

Brian Green

We note that the Ecology report submitted by MKA Ecology which was undertaken in March and April 2022 on behalf of Strutt & Parker has been heavily redacted on 6 pages when accessing via the Council Planning Portal. When speaking to MKA on 27th April they were somewhat surprised that their report on the Planning portal had been redacted. MKA have forwarded my request for an unredacted version of the report to the Planning dept. The redactions appear to be regarding where bats and reptiles are mentioned. We also note that the MKA Ecology report conflicts in some areas with the Strutt & Parker summary report, notably the mention of further surveys being undertaken in May, August and September as mentioned on page 28 of the report, Summary of Recommendations. These further surveys should be completed prior to final planning approval, which is not mentioned in the Strutt & Parker report. Can the Council give assurances that the redacted parts of the above report do not contain information that would be in conflict with the The Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 or The Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994. Which requires all Government depts to have regard for biodiversity when carrying out their functions and to be aware that these sites are protected. As a result of the above anomalies, we respectfully request that the Planning approval decision is deferred until the above investigations have been completed. We would also respectfully request that we can see the original report that

has been redacted and your assurance that any new investigations and survey results are also made available.

Denise Green

During the original Chelmer Location Review Study which was undertaken on behalf of Cadent 7 potential sites were identified of which 4 were discounted due to land ownership of the 3 remaining sites the Allotment area has been chosen although the report concluded that there were concerns regarding noise to local receptors, flood risk and environmental sensitivity. Where were the other two sites and why were discounted as unsuitable. The reasons for them being discounted should be in the public domain for transparency. Would the Committee be willing to share their knowledge regarding this issue. An example used for noise and odour issues was a GPRS installation in Ardleigh. I have further investigated with the Ardleigh Parish Council and have established that this installation is in Spring Valley Lane and the Parish Council have confirmed that this is a single track lane and sparsely populated therefore resulting in minimal disruption from noise or odour for residents. Can the Committee share any other GPRS installation that is in a more populated area than Spring Valley Lane and have clear feedback regarding smell and odour from residents.

Linda Elton

We live in Lockside Marina and, not only will our property depreciate considerably because of the above, but also our day to day living will be effected. The predicted noise levels will be up to 39 dB and also there is a predicted odour risk for residents which is totally unacceptable. Both the bedrooms in our apartment face the allotments and we always have our windows open slightly during the night which we will be unable to do if it allows the odour to permeate our apartment which it will most certainly. We understand that several trees will be removed causing a drastic disruption to wildlife living there and also views. Our bedrooms currently look out onto trees and greenery not a 59.4m length gas works! May I ask would anyone wish this to be the view from their homes? We have already had to put up with a large taylor Wimpey construction on one side and now there are plans to build the GPRS on the other. Under the Allotments Act 1925 Councils can only develop statutorily protected allotment land with the permission of the Secretary of State, and only if strict criteria are met. We have written to our MP regarding this and are currently awaiting a reply.

Agenda Item 7 – Broomfield Mill, Mill Lane, Broomfield

Peter Marriage, applicant – to be put in person

This planning application is for a very small amount of building but it is complicated in that it involves 2 buildings listed as of local interest and is in the flood plain in Broomfield.

Because of this we paid for formal pre application advice and we have taken this advice into account in our application and have supplied all the information requested. No mention of Broomfield Mill being zoned as functional flood plain was made yet this is now being treated as the only but fundamental objection to our proposals.

You are being asked to refuse our application because the city council have incorrectly zoned our house and garden as being in the functional flood plain (Flood zone 3b). There has been a mill on this site for at least 1000 years and a mill is recorded in the Domesday Book. Our family built the present house about 200 years ago and have lived in it continuously ever since and it has never flooded. Some small areas of no consequence at

the edges of the site may flood in a 1 in 20 flood but most does not and the important areas are safe from a 1 in100 flood.

The zoning of Broomfield Mill as functional flood plain does not meet any of the criteria given for this in the National Planning Policy Framework or the associated technical guidance and the zoning should be modified as provided for in the City council SFRA

On the matter of lost flood plain. Our FRA does not identify this as a problem and this point has only been raised in the last few days. However we own over 100,000 sq meters of flood plain round the house and the new building area on our plan is 67 sq meters. This is 0.06% of our flood plain area and in terms of volume is much less. If required this volume can easily be replaced elsewhere on our property.