

Mike Amesbury
Labour MP for Weaver Vale



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

29 July 2022

Stephen Young- Chief Executive
Mike Wharton- Leader of the Council
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
Cheshire
WA8 7QF

Our Ref: MA25425

Dear Stephen & Mike,

I am writing to you to express my objections and concerns in relation to the proposed Redrow development in Sandymoor 21/00319/FUL. I have serious concerns over the application and believe that in its present form, it does not provide any value or benefits for my constituents.

Like me, I am sure you are both well aware of the housing challenges in the Borough. The social housing waiting list in the Borough alone is in excess of 7,000 applications. Over half of whom are Band C or higher. The consideration of tenure of properties must be of the highest consideration, to help ensure that current social housing stock has tenant turnover and that residents have the opportunity to achieve home ownership in genuinely affordable homes.

Therefore it is of concern, that with this application, the commitment that 20% of properties must be affordable housing has been abandoned. This is on the grounds that the developer has suggested with such a requisite, the scheme would be unviable. I find it uncomfortable that a Labour Local Authority would succumb to such a condition and abandon its principle of building affordable homes.

This development forms part of the wider development of Sandymoor, as outlined in the most recent local plan. Many local residents have expressed their concerns over greenfield land being utilised for development. Within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), great consideration is given to the protection of green belt land to ensure openness and permanence. The latest local plan has seen the green belt with Halton decreased and based on the NPPF, this must be done only in the most exceptional of circumstances:

141. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.

142. When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.

The sustainability of these developments is something which has gained increased public conversation. Many constituents have expressed that the majority of these applications concern

Halton 5 Office Centre, Suite 4, 2nd Floor, Northway, Halton Lea, Runcorn. WA7 2HF
Tel: 01928 620 061 Email: mike.amesbury.mp@parliament.uk www.mikeamesbury.org

properties which will retail in excess of £350,000. This is out of reach for the vast majority of existing residents. Whilst such schemes will attract new residents, I feel that more must be demonstrated as to how such schemes will help to improve our existing communities and provide a ladder to home ownership for my constituents.

With developments of this scale, it is also imperative that they are built from the ground up with energy efficiency and electric vehicle charging infrastructure in mind. From the plans submitted so far, I am struggling to see that any proposals to install EV charging infrastructure, heat pumps or that the properties meet the latest energy efficiency ratings.

Within these plans, I am also concerned to see the limited consideration given to infrastructure within the Sandymoor area. At present, the community receives a singular sparse bus service, which is regularly subjected to frequent cancellations. The nearby village of Daresbury, which has bus stops currently has no bus services at all. I would like to seek reassurance that funds from any developments in the area, will contribute to ensuring the residents have access to reliable and regular public transport services.

Another considerable concern regarding infrastructure is the lack of consideration given to schooling provision and GP provision too. With the proposed developments, the population of Sandymoor is projected to increase significantly. Whilst I have been informed land has been reserved for a school, no plans have come forward to actually build anything. From conversations with local headteachers in Moore and Daresbury, I am aware that they are already struggling with capacity.

Although there are plans for a veterinary clinic in Sandymoor, the limited discussions on GP provision will mean more residents will become reliant on using existing facilities like Murdishaw Health Centre. Murdishaw Health Centre is located in one of the most deprived areas in my constituency and as a result, sees significant health challenges. For developments of this size, constructive proposals will need to come forward.

I would ask that my comments be formally recorded as an objection to the application. In addition, I would like to access a copy of the comments already submitted, as these cannot be viewed online on the Council's planning portal.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Amesbury', is written on a light-colored background.

Mike Amesbury
Labour MP for Weaver Vale