

## **Wychwood Community Group - Key Planning Considerations**

*Outline planning permission for 900 new dwellings + amenities (ref 14/5671N)*

**Existing S106 and design concept** - Residents signed a legally binding S106 contract limiting dwellings to a maximum of 725 between Wychwood Village/Park. Designed, conceived and marketed as a small residential hamlet in open-countryside, Golf Course and Country Park. Stated increase in Country Park from 14ha to 44ha is a misnomer; most will be green swathes between housing clusters, not open space, resulting in loss of light and detrimental impact on the country park. A new road cuts across the Country Park (contrary to legal land registry covenant in place) reducing safety and attractiveness.

**Non-preferred site within emerging local plan** - Deemed unsustainable for further development by Cheshire East who commented its outlying location means access to existing services and facilities are limited, costs of delivering a sustainable development and other mitigation are likely to be significantly high. More appropriate sites, with fewer constraints, better access to services, facilities and transport network, capable of meeting housing and other development needs exist. Permanent loss of Golf Course.

**Sustainable development** - The proposal is contrary to a principal aim of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework), i.e. reduce the need to travel by private car. Access to/from Wychwood is via a limited bus service. Development must be sustainable, adding shops etc. does not change the requirement of a car to access other facilities - hospital, bank, library, church and railway station. No safe walking route exists linking Wychwood with villages of Weston, Englesea Brook and Betley, increasing a need for vehicular use. Cycling on surrounding (60mph limit) roads and country lanes is a dangerous alternative.

**Regeneration of Crewe** - Existing approved schemes within the Local Plan (Basford East, Basford West and the proposed Crewe Hall Village A) will sustainably meet the housing demand south of Crewe and are directly linked to Crewe town centre with existing and achievable transport networks.

**Road Infrastructure** - Existing roads surrounding Wychwood are at maximum capacity during peak times, this development must be considered in context of other developments approved locally and its impact on future not just current road use.

**Access Infrastructure** - Single (existing) access point from A531 Newcastle Road onto Wychwood Village, known safety concerns re bus access etc. Single access point cannot sustain an additional 900 homes and services, scale of access needed for 'multi-use' vehicles, commercial, construction, retail and residential not considered. Unsafe for any other access points to be made available onto the site.

**Environmental Impact / Wildlife** - Wildlife corridors within this important mixed habitat site will be fragmented. Golf Course and Country Park are existing mitigation for the village development. Included reports entirely miss key and protected species, do not convey level of habitat destruction to Great Crested Newts, Barn Owls, Buzzards, Badgers, Polecats, and bats – nor reflect their numbers and activity.

**Quality of life (Human Rights)** - Residents have endured 10 years (ongoing) building work, on only 316 houses. Potential 30 years further noise, light pollution, dust, dirt, inconvenience and disruption to lives. Health of existing residents surrounded on all sides by building work is potentially at risk.

**High Grade Land** - The land on which the golf course current resides is MAFF grade 2 and 3 high grade agricultural land. Change of use of such high grade land can only be to revert back to the original use for agricultural land or similar use such as a country park or woodland, it cannot be built upon.

**Golf Course** - Loss of a key sporting amenity enjoyed by residents and locals. The Golf Course was previously profitable, one of the most popular in South Cheshire and deliberately allowed to fail through lack of investment / effort by the owner. Irregularities in the accounts balance sheet should be reviewed and considered. Interest remains in its re-opening and ownership locally. It had a Solid membership count compared to neighbouring courses and open to casual 'pay as you play' golfers.