

WETHERAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WITH GLADMAN LAND
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th November 2018
At 11.30am at Wetheral Community Hall

PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllr. Earp, Cllr. Hughes, Cllr. Round, Cllr. Poole, Cllr Higginbotham, Cllr Higgs.

FROM GLADMAN LAND: Lucy Wilson (Project Planner), Edward Harper (Project Manager), Alistair Thorne (Graduate Planner).

Declarations of Interest:

Cllr. Earp declared an interest as a member of Carlisle City Council, Development Control Committee.

Introduction:

Gladman representatives began by confirming that they are preparing an outline planning application for up to 90 houses at Scotby, on a site opposite Alders Edge, known as Townhead Farm. Maps of the proposed development were shown to Councillors. H&H Land is acting as the agent for the landowner. Gladman stated they are duty-bound to submit a public consultation document along with the application, and that other reports would also be included, such as ecological surveys which were conducted over the summer, and winter bird surveys. The highways network and access strategy have been looked at. A full heritage and archaeology report will also be submitted with the application.

Questions & Comments from Councillors:

Q: There are concerns regarding the impact the development would have on the Scotby conservation area.

A: Following reports, Gladman has pulled in the boundary of the application from the south. There would be no development on the highest ground. Tree surveys have been done on-site and most trees would be retained if the development was approved. There is one tree with a TPO (Tree Preservation Order) on it. Some hedgerow would need to be removed for visibility splays. Ecological surveys have shown that the nearby area provides habitats for bats and squirrels, but there was no evidence of any protected species on-site. There will be buffer planting. Gladman has considered the number of listed buildings in the area, and these are shown on the maps as orange circles.

Q: As the Hartley Trust Playing Field/playing area is within 200yds of the proposed development, if the application is successful, it would be more advantageous to improve this facility than to build an additional one.

A: Gladman would look at this, but it is generally expected that, for a development of this size, a play area would be included on-site.

Q: One of the plans appears to show both a SuDS (sustainable drainage system) and an attenuation pond. Is this correct?

A: There is only one attenuation pond, intended to be placed at the lower elevation of the site. The site is a Flood Zone 1 location and won't exceed existing greenfield run-off. Water would be retained on-site during peak times.

Q: Why is the access situated onto a narrow road with a corner, as opposed to further back along the road? This creates a road safety issue for vehicles and additional risk for pedestrians using the already narrow footpath.

A: An expert assessment has found that the access shown on the plans is in the optimal location. Gladman representatives have met with City Council planners and discussed traffic calming measures.

Q: What is locked into the outline plan?

A: It depends on the conditions imposed by the City Council, but the red line showing the outer edge of the site would be locked in, as would the main site access.

Q: There are concerns that, if the outline application was approved, this could open the door for further plans for additional houses.

A: Gladman has assessed the rest of the land and has decided not to apply for a larger number.

Q: Why was 90 chosen as the number? This is a very large development for a site in the centre of a village and seems disproportionate.

A: Gladman has looked at the capacity of the site and the local need for the number of houses that needs to be delivered. They believe the site and village can accommodate 90 homes.

Q: This site represents a considerable increase in number of homes, in context of the local plan.

A: The initial intention was for over 100 homes but, following an assessment of the site, it was reduced to a maximum of 90 to strike a balance between efficient use of the land and an appropriate density. The plan is for 33 houses per hectare.

Q: Are there plans for any bungalows? The current balance of houses is not right in the Parish as a whole. There is an incorrect balance of bungalows, affordable homes etc., meaning that older residents who wish to downsize but still remain in their village are often unable to do so due to a shortage of suitable housing, and are often left stuck in expensive homes which are too large for their needs.

A: The plan has not progressed that far. Gladman does not fix housing types at this stage, due to the changing market, but local need will be considered.

Q: What is Gladman's reaction to the public comments received and the evident strength of feeling from residents?

A: There has not been much to go on so far. Many comments are just saying, "No to more development," or similar. However, the public comments will be responded to, in the planning application, though there will be no engagement from Gladman with individual residents.

Q: This site has previously been dismissed as not being suitable for housing in the local plan due to "unacceptable landscape aspect". If this development was approved it would mean that the view from the centre of the village was onto 90 houses instead of the current open countryside.

A: Other sites were considered more suitable at the time of the plan. Some of those sites have not moved forward for various reasons, and assessments of suitable sites can change over time. Because the site has not been required previously does not mean it isn't needed now. Gladman has met with the City Council which has indicated that it is open to considering development on this site.

Q: A lot of work goes into the local plan and ensuring the numbers match up with housing need. It seems that this is being ignored and that there is therefore little point in the plan.

A: There was never a full assessment of the site through the planning process. Time moves on, government numbers change etc.

Q: The building of three large estates in Cumwhinton has had a noticeable impact on the frequency and speed of traffic through the village. There are concerns that this would happen

in Scotby if this development was approved. The development and resulting traffic would exit onto narrow country roads which were never designed for large volumes of traffic. The roads are becoming overloaded by all the new developments in the area.

A: Gladman has sought advice from independent experts and has been told that the roads are within capacity, including the traffic anticipated from other developments in the area which have already been approved.

Q: The roads are used by large farm vehicles and in many places are too narrow for a bus and large vehicle to pass one another. The impact on the roads gets worse with every new development, and the roads can be chaotic during peak times. A recent expo event at the auction mart resulted in between 2,000 and 3,000 farming-related vehicles being on the local roads.

A: Gladman has considered the big picture with Highways and has calculated the traffic model and done speed surveys. The conclusion is that there is some capacity in the roads and that traffic is below capacity. Gladman will ensure Highways' requirements are satisfied and will work with them. It may be that they are required to make some junction improvements as a condition of the development. The final decision rests with Highways.

Q: There is little or no existing Gladman development in this area, and Councillors know nothing of the quality and type of homes.

A: Gladman itself would not be carrying out the build and does not have any standard housing designs, being more focused on outline planning permission, office buildings and retirement apartments. If the outline plan is successful, the land will be sold to a builder who will be responsible for the housing design.

Q: Is Gladman therefore just an intermediary?

A: Gladman is a promoter to the outline stage.

Q: The proposed Garden Village, with up to 10,000 homes, was intended to stop the overdevelopment of villages. In light of this, why is this development necessary?

A: The Garden Village is a long way off, with the houses not being delivered until around 2025. There is housing need to be met in the meantime and the City Council needs to find sites for this. The local plan has a policy for windfall sites that would slot into the planning policy prior to the Garden Village delivering on its houses.

Q: Is the City Council classing this as a windfall site?

A: Yes.

Q: Windfall sites are not usually as large as this one.

A: There is no cap on the size or scale of windfall sites.

Q: The school in Scotby is oversubscribed and there is not enough space for the children already living in the village.

A: Gladman is prepared to contribute to the expansion of the school, or to whatever solution is deemed suitable, by means of Section 106 money.

Q: Any 'solution' would likely be bussing children from one side of the city to the other. This is not suitable for a village location where local people want to send their children to the school in their own village.

A: The overcapacity of Scotby school has been discussed and Gladman will work with the education authority on this.

Q: Does Gladman have any plans to make a public presentation for local residents to attend?

A: Not at this stage. Gladman has done such presentations in the past and has found little value in them.

Q: Does Gladman believe there is no value in listening to local residents? They might have good feedback which could be useful.

A: It is very difficult to have a constructive and positive dialogue at such events. Often, residents have made up their mind and don't want to listen. Gladman is interested in local views but will not be holding a public event.

Q: What is the timescale for the planning application?

A: Gladman expects to submit the application in around one month.

Q: If the outline application is approved, what would be the timeline for construction to begin?

A: It is expected that the decision from Carlisle City Council would be made by around February 2019. There would then be the S106 agreement to finalise and the local agent would commence marketing of the site. If there is interest from local builders, then following the discharge of conditions there would be an application for full consent. This would take a few months more. Similar developments have commenced 18-24 months following the initial outline application.

Q: Why do the plans show the open space at the back of the development? If it was placed at the front this would lessen the visual impact of the housing, should the application be approved. It would mean the play area was visible from all sides and that the road could be widened. The open countryside and Pennine view from the village centre could be maintained.

A: Gladman will check with the master planner but this might be tied up in the access strategy.

Q: Is Gladman aware of the difficulties residents have had in accessing the website to submit their comments?

A: There have been no issues previously, but any difficulties could be related to the sudden increase in the volume of traffic. The same system has been in place for some time and is fully operational.

Q: Will there be a cut-off point by which time residents must submit their comments to Gladman?

A: No, but only those received by the time the planning application is made will be sent to the local authority in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Q: Will personal details of residents (received through online comments or via a petition) be redacted, to take GDPR into account?

A: The personal details will have to be redacted because of GDPR. Gladman will ensure the City Council is aware.

Q: How much affordable housing would be included in the development?

A: 30%, which is policy compliant.

Closing:

As there were no further questions or comments from Councillors, representatives from Gladman requested that Councillors give some thought to provisions that might be made via a S106 to deliver benefits to the area, such as sports and leisure facilities, contributions to the village hall or school.

Conclusion:

The attending Councillors were disappointed by the somewhat dismissive attitude of the representatives of Gladman Land. The Councillors felt that the meeting was effectively just a tick-box exercise so that the company could say that efforts had been made to engage with the Parish Council, rather than as any genuine effort to take local views into account.