



Yasmin Qureshi

Member of Parliament for Bolton South East



Formal Objection to Planning Application Number 00997/17 Land at, and adjacent to Hulton Park

I have received numerous representations from constituents who object to the above planning application, and my staff I have met local residents. I have listened to their concerns and now set forth my objections to the proposed development at Hulton Park.

Traffic and Transport

I have very serious concerns about the impact this development would have on traffic in the vicinity of Hulton Park. Any development at Hulton Park, be it housing or leisure, would put extra pressure on the surrounding roads and cause significant traffic congestion.

There is already a very high volume of traffic at peak times (7:30am - 9:00am and 4:00pm to 7:00pm on weekdays), leading to congestion, queuing, standing traffic and delays on the following roads:

- A579 Newbrook Road/Bolton Road
- A6 between Four Lane Ends and Chequerbent Roundabout
- A6 between Four Lane Ends and Junction 4 of the M61
- A58 From Hunger Hill to Chequerbent Roundabout A58 From Chequerbent Roundabout to Park Road and often as far as Cricketer's Way and Wigan Road in Westhoughton
- Traffic backs up on the M61 where traffic coming off at J5 cannot exit onto Snyderdale Way, causing queues up the slip road and onto the carriageway itself
- The junction with Platt Lane and A58 Park Road in Westhoughton is a particular problem which also causes significant traffic congestion during rush hour. The housing application proposes to add in a link to Platt Lane, which would only exacerbate this problem.

Transport for Greater Manchester has stated that these roads are already operating beyond their theoretical maximum capacity at peak times. It is clear that the roads can't cope with the current volume of traffic, so it certainly won't cope if this development goes ahead. The proposed development of up to 1036 residential properties would add at least that many vehicles to the roads. This is in addition to the traffic generated from other proposed new-build housing estates in the vicinity, which I estimate will total around 3,500 dwellings, would only worsen this problem with more people commuting on a daily basis.

Peel anticipates that, should the Ryder Cup take place at Hulton Park, there could be in the region of 60,000 spectators per day and that at a normal golf tournament, there could be more than 30,000 spectators per day. That is simply unacceptable

and unsustainable and would bring the entire area to a standstill. Not only would it cause significant traffic problems, there would also be a highly detrimental impact on air quality and on noise levels in the area.

Parking

Whilst the plans describe 150 parking spaces for the hotel and a further 150 for the golf academy, there is no mention of parking for spectators and users of the golf course itself. There is wholly insufficient provision for parking - even if only one tenth of the spectators use private cars and they use the aforementioned 300 spaces there still wouldn't be enough parking spaces to accommodate them. Residents are extremely concerned that their housing estates will not only become rat-runs, but will also be used as overflow parking for the proposed development, which would lead to further traffic problems and also safety issues.

Road Safety

The increase in traffic and associated parking problems pose a potential road safety risk, both during the development phase and also once the golf course is open to the public. How will large vehicles, such as emergency vehicles and refuse collection waggons be able to navigate the residential roads safely if there are vehicles parked on both sides of the roads? Where will the workmen park their personal and work vehicles during the development phase?

Public Transport

The railway line between Wigan and Manchester has stations at Daisy Hill, Hag Fold and Atherton. At peak times, the trains are full and the car park at Daisy Hill is full by 7:30am. There is already a problem with cars parking on Leigh Road close to Daisy Hill station, causing traffic congestion and also a danger to both road users and pedestrians. It would appear that no extra provision for public transport has been factored into the plans nor, indeed, for any of the other major house-building schemes in Atherton, Westhoughton or Hulton.

Local Services

It would be wrong to consider the impact of this application in isolation from other current and proposed house-building and industrial projects in the vicinity of Hulton Park. Local services, such as schools and hospitals, are already struggling to cope with the current demand. If additional housing were to be created at Hulton Park, this would push these services further towards breaking point. New hospitals and schools will not be built to accommodate the residents of the proposed new



properties, so all this development will do is put further pressure on our already-overstretched services.

Housing

The housing part of this application appears to concentrate on properties which could not be described as 'affordable' under the government's criteria of costing no more than 80% of the average local market rent.

Whilst these proposals include new housing, there will also be a loss of existing housing, should this development go ahead, including the historic Hulton Cottage and the cottages, farmhouses and associated farm buildings. I do not support this loss of rural businesses and I am very disappointed that Peel gave the tenant farmers notice to quit before the plans were even submitted to the Council.

Green Belt and Historical Considerations

The Hulton Park site includes a Grade II listed park across most of its extent, and the Pretoria Pit Memorial, which cannot be moved. This area is of significant historic importance to the local community, and I believe that these specific features are protected under law.

In 2011, as part of the Local Development Framework consultations, the Planning Inspector came to a conclusion on the possibility of developing on this area of Green Belt land. In his report, he said: "No major change is proposed for Westhoughton, and so the Green Belt and Protected Open Land around the town will be retained. Any development on this open land would contravene national and local policies for its protection, and would undermine sound spatial strategy. This approach accords with the views of local residents who consider that development in the town has outstripped the infrastructure upon which it relies." There is no reason why this assessment should be disregarded now.

This Green Belt land is further safeguarded, under Policy OA4 of the Local Development Framework (2011), which allowed some Green Belt land at Cutacre to be utilised for economic developments but protected the rest.

This area of Green Belt in particular should not be built on, as an LUC Green Belt assessment, prepared alongside the GMSF Consultation Draft, found that it had strong ratings against each of the 5 purposes of Green Belt land. It also confirmed that Green Belt Land should not be released unless there is no other land available to accommodate future development needs.

There are plenty of non-Green Belt areas that can be built on in Bolton, including brownfield sites, and disused housing, which could be restored. There are disused

mills which could be turned into apartments, and even sites where mills have been demolished and the land has lain to waste for decades. These sites would be preferable to further deletion of Green Belt, which would go against the Local Development Framework of 2011 and the wishes of the local residents.

Developers prefer Green Belt because it is cheaper to build there, but we should ensure that all possible brownfield sites are cleaned up and redeveloped before any Green Belt land is even considered.

Geology

It is well-known that the land in and around Hulton Park was, in the past, subject to extensive mining activity, not only from the known collieries, but also from primitive 'bell-pit' mines. I am led to believe that the maps of the known bell pit mines have been lost. Residents have expressed concern that the land may simply be unsafe for building.

Residents have told me that there are already problems with flooding in the area, and they believe that the building of this high number of houses will make this situation much worse. They are also concerned about preserving the structural integrity of the Thirlmere aqueduct which runs across the northern part of the estate.

Flora and Fauna

Although the land is in private ownership, Hulton Park is a highly-valued area of open land, with a network of public footpaths. It is proposed that the footpaths be diverted and, in some cases, incorporated into a new 'Hulton Trail'. It is often said that trees are the lungs of the earth. As part of the development, I am told that there would be a loss of almost 24 acres of trees, 415 acres of grassland and almost 3 kilometres of hedgerow. I simply cannot support this destruction of valuable wildlife habitat.

Conclusion

There are several golf courses in the Bolton area and I do not believe that another one is needed. I do believe that this application is simply a means to obtain permission to build houses on the land.

I do not believe that the proposed development would provide sufficient benefit to the local area in order to allow it to go ahead. I do not believe that it is necessary to build residential properties on this site in order to support the leisure development -



there are more than enough brownfield sites in the Bolton and Wigan boroughs to provide for housing development.

There is a great weight of opposition from local residents and I am in agreement with them that this application should be refused.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yasmin Qureshi". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Yasmin Qureshi

Member of Parliament for Bolton South East and Shadow Justice Minister

