

# **BARNSLEY LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS BY PEGASUS  
GROUP/BARNSLEY WEST CONSORTIUM FOR PHASE 1  
AND 2 DEVELOPMENTS ON MU1**

**JULY 2021**

## **1. Introduction**

In May 2021, leaflets were delivered to a claimed 2,400 homes in the vicinity of the MU1 development on behalf of Pegasus Group as part of a community consultation exercise prior to the submission of planning applications for phase one and phase two of the development of the site MU1. It was thought that the comments submitted by residents to Pegasus would be provided as a statement of community involvement to support the forthcoming planning applications.

Comments and representations to Liberal Democrat Councillors by residents expressed concern that the whole of the unedited residents comments would not be made available by Pegasus but a 'santised' version would be provided which gave an unrepresentative and unduly supportive impression of residents views of the development.

Whilst there is no evidence or suggestion that Pegasus would indeed behave in this way, the Liberal Democrat Group felt it was vital that there was public confidence that the communities views on the MU1 proposals were properly represented along with the planning applications. In order to achieve this, the Liberal Democrat Group produced their own leaflet seeking residents views on the development and distributed it to approximately 1,200 homes in the vicinity of MU1. A freepost envelope was provided to return completed survey forms along with the option to complete an online version of the questions. The survey questions were also made available on the Liberal Democrat web page and Facebook page.

The Liberal Democrat Group undertook to publish all the comments made by residents to retain confidence in the accuracy of the summary of these comments.

## **2. Returns**

A total of 93 survey forms were returned by post or email and 49 online questionnaires were completed, making **a total of 142 returns**.

It is estimated from the information provided that 16 of the online returns were from residents outside the area where leaflets were distributed.

### **3. Results of Yes/No questions**

A number of questions were asked which required a YES or NO response. These questions and their responses are listed below. The total number of YES or NO answers is shown but in some cases, the question was unanswered.

a. Did you receive an MU1 consultation leaflet from Barnsley West Consortium in May 2021?

YES – 92

NO – 23

NOT SAY - 8

19 of the online returns were from outside the Pegasus delivery area so they would not be expected to receive a leaflet (although 2 respondents from Wilthorpe and Mapplewell did claim to have received a leaflet, one of which claims to have returned the completed survey to Pegasus). These were discounted from this part of the analysis.

This left 22 respondents from within the catchment area who say they did not receive a leaflet from Pegasus. Those who say they did not receive a leaflet were distributed across the area but there was a cluster of residents at the top of Hermit Lane and the Southern end of Higham Common Road who did not get the Pegasus questionnaire.

Overall, these results indicate that between 16% and 22% of residents in the Pegasus survey area did not receive the Pegasus survey leaflet (depending on whether the 8 respondents who did not answer this question received a leaflet or not).

b. If yes, did you respond to the consultation leaflet?

The 19 online respondents from outside the Pegasus survey area have been discounted from this part of the analysis.

Of the 92 respondents who say they received a Pegasus leaflet, their responses were as follows:

YES – 63

NO – 26

NOT SAY – 3

Overall these results indicate that of the residents who received a Pegasus survey, and returned the Lib Dem survey, 68% returned their Pegasus survey.

Also, at least 28% of respondents to the Lib Dem survey, had not responded to the Pegasus survey.

c. Were you able to find enough information on the Barnsley West Consortium website to make meaningful and informed comments about the proposed phase one and phase two developments on MU1?

All responses are included in this part of the analysis.

YES – 30

NO – 99

NOT SAY – 14

Overall, these results indicate that of those who responded to this question, 77% felt that they could not find sufficient information on the Barnsley West website to enable them to make fully informed comments on the proposals.

d. Do you think that these proposals are in line with the Masterplan?

All responses are included in this part of the analysis.

YES – 30

NO – 75

These results indicate that of those who responded to this question, 71% thought that the current proposals were not in line with the Masterplan Framework. No reasons for this view were asked for or given.

e. Are you in favour of the link road being built?

All responses are included in this part of the analysis.

YES – 42

NO – 84

These results indicate that of those who responded to the question, 67% were not in favour of the link road being built.

Of those respondents who gave their address as Higham or Barugh Green and responded to the question, 59% were not in favour of the Link Road being built.

Of those respondents who gave their address as Pogmoor or Gawber and responded to the question, 67% were not in favour of the Link Road being built.

Of those respondents from other areas who responded to the question, 74% were not in favour of the link road being built.

f. In principle, do you support the MU1 development?

All responses are included in this part of the analysis.

YES – 14

NO – 115

These results indicate that of those who responded to the question, 89% were not in favour of the MU1 development.



#### **4. What residents approve of about phase 1 and phase 2 proposals**

16 residents failed to answer this question at all.

79 respondents said they approved of nothing in the plans.

18 respondents were in favour of the link road proposals, with some adding the caveat that it must be built before anything else.

8 respondents were in favour of some new housing but some with caveats that the numbers should be limited and with support for affordable housing.

8 respondents were in favour of the new school proposals

5 respondents approved of the communal green spaces proposed

3 respondents approved of the plans to attract new business/employment, especially near to the motorway

3 respondents approved of all the proposals

2 respondents approved of the better infrastructure proposals

2 respondents approved of the proposals for new shops

Other respondents expressed approval for:

- Broadband
- SUDS ponds (if adequately managed)
- Green corridors
- Closure of Hermit Lane as it was a rat run
- Development of what they described as unproductive land
- Community buildings

Even when given the opportunity to make positive comments about these plans, the overwhelming response from residents was to express total disapproval for them.

A number of residents did indicate aspects of the plans that they did approve of, the most common of which were the provision of the link road as a means to remove HGV's from Higham Common Road (although the majority of residents did express disapproval for the link road in the earlier question). The other aspects of the plans that gained the most but limited approval were the provision of some housing (including affordable housing), the provision of the new school and the provision of green spaces.

## **5. What are residents concerns about the phase 1 and phase 2 proposals**

This question was not answered by 9 respondents.

3 respondents said that they had no concerns about the proposals.

The other 130 respondents expressed a variety of concerns in a narrative form which have been summarised as far as possible below, whilst still reflecting the range and scale of the concerns expressed.

### The most frequently expressed concerns

- Reference to the redesignation of green belt land or loss of green space. 61 respondents
- Concerns about increased traffic congestion due to the development. 44 respondents
- Loss of wildlife and habitat. 37 respondents
- Increased air pollution due to the developments. 31 respondents
- Inability of the current or new infrastructure to cope with the strain due to the development. 23 respondents
- Increased noise in the area during the construction and operational phase. 20 respondents
- Pressure on local health provision and lack of new provision. 16 respondents
- Too many houses are being built in the area. 16 respondents
- The plans to place 3 storey houses adjacent to bungalows. 14 respondents
- Changes to village identity and general urban sprawl. 14 respondents
- Concerns about flooding caused by the development. 13 respondents
- Too many large, industrial 'sheds' which may not be needed. 11 respondents
- Inadequate capacity in local schools, including secondary schools. 10 respondents
- The long period of disruption to be caused by the construction phase. 10 respondents
- The adverse effect on the mental health and well being of residents. 9 respondents

There were many more concerns expressed that are not listed above so for the sake of completeness, all concerns are described below under relevant subject area headings.

### Environmental concerns

Environmental concerns were the most common ones raised. Whilst the most common concerns were the loss of green belt/green space, increased traffic, loss of wildlife and habitat, increased air pollution, noise pollution and flooding the following concerns were also expressed by smaller numbers of respondents.

- Dust pollution
- Light pollution
- General environmental damage
- The negative impact on the Councils zero carbon strategy
- Loss of biodiversity
- Not enough green space provision in the plans
- Loss of hedgerows
- Loss of trees
- The apparent lack of mitigation measure for noise or pollution, contrary to the Masterplan promises
- Effect of construction traffic on Higham Common Road
- Effect of long construction period on noise dust and pollution

## Placemaking concerns

Residents expressed a variety of concerns about the consequences of the development on their villages and about the standards they wished to see in the development. These were:

- Inability of the current or new infrastructure to cope with the strain due to the development
- Failure to provide sufficient additional healthcare provision
- Failure to provide additional secondary school places
- Concern about a faith based primary school
- Lack of public transport provision
- Loss of the identity and nature of the villages due to this urban sprawl
- Too many houses are being built in this area
- The large size and unattractive appearance of the large industrial sheds close to houses
- Too much industrial development in a residential area
- The overall scale of the development is too large
- Housing design is out of character with the existing architecture in the area
- There are no bungalows, contrary to promises made previously
- Existing bungalows are to be overlooked by 3 storey houses
- Loss of visual amenity
- Loss of privacy
- Need at least 2 parking spaces per home
- Need homes to be carbon neutral including ECV's
- Not enough social housing
- Too many affordable/social houses
- Housing density is too high
- Housing will be unaffordable
- Affordable housing is all clumped together
- Affordable housing is too close to existing housing
- Poor quality of housing provision
- Gardens are too small
- The buffering between new developments and existing is inadequate in many locations
- Concerns about the capacity of the sewerage system
- Concerns at the safety of SUDS ponds
- The closure of Hermit lane
- The impact on traffic use on Wharfedale Road, Farmhouse Lane and Pogmoor Lane
- The impact on accessibility of Barnsley Hospice and Gawber Church and school
- The loss of Public Footpaths in the area
- Other concerns
- Loss of farmland
- Industrial units too close to housing
- Housing too close to motorway
- This location will attract movers from nearby towns and cities, leading to excessive travel
- Will not attract the needed high quality employment, only low paid jobs
- The area will be over industrialised

- Will cause too much congestion at J37 of M1
- Effects of this development on mental health and well being
- The wisdom, danger and difficulty of building on former open cast sites
- Reduction in the overall quality of life in these areas
- Concerns at the extra HGV's on Higham Common Road
- All road improvements should be carried out before developments
- Lack of detailed plans to view to make comments on
- Loss of property values
- Loss of community spirit

## **6. Any additional comments?**

This section was included to enable residents to express any views or issues they had relating to the MU1 development that they felt had not been covered by the rest of the survey. 87 of the respondents took the opportunity to complete this section, some adding extra sheets in order to do so.

Inevitably, many of the comments repeated the issues reported in the 'Concerns' section above and these are generally not repeated here.

One comment was in favour of the MU1 development and said 'MU1 is good for Barnsleys' economy'

There were however some striking themes that were not outlined in the previous section and some of these are as follows.

### Feeling ignored by the Council

This was a common theme expressed in a number of different ways such as:

'Residents are ignored by Barnsley Council'

'Local views are not listened to by the Council'

'This is just like Penny Pie Park. The Council are riding roughshod over residents.'

'The Council, Sir Steve and the Developers don't give a fig about local people and what they think'

'The Council is just a dictatorship'

'We're being lied to by a Council claiming it's the best in the Country for consulting'

### The motives of the developers

Residents expressed concern that the developers interests here were only based on the profit motive and not in the interests of the local community.

'This is only in the developers interests'

'The developers are Vikings who rape and pillage one piece of green belt for all the profit they can make without regard to the local population and then move onto the next green space'

### The lack of faith in the BWC consultation procedure

Residents expressed concerns about the BWC/Pegasus consultation procedure.

'The consultation was a waste of time'

'This was not an open or honest procedure'

'The BWC consultation was not fit for purpose – complete lack of detail'

'Not all residents have good enough technology/skills to see the plans online'

'Not all residents got a BWC consultation'

'No-one on Hermit Lane got a BWC consultation'

'I only knew about the BWC website thanks to the Lib Dems survey'

'The BWC survey form only allowed half a page of comments (or 2000 characters online) unlike this Lib Dem survey'

## The future occupancy of MU1

Many residents expressed the view that the new housing on MU1 would mostly attract occupiers from nearby towns and cities rather than from Barnsley, leading to an increase in car travel in the area. This comment was typical;

'This development will simply create a commuter belt as property prices in Barnsley are much lower than Leeds or Sheffield'

'Not for people in Barnsley but for those in Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester'

'This housing won't help the homeless – just commuters from Leeds and Sheffield'

'Houses will be for commuters from nearby cities'

## The motives for MU1

Residents also expressed a view that the reason that Barnsley Council were in favour of MU1 is that it will generate income for them in the form of Council Tax and business rates;

'Filling the pockets of the Council. Its disgraceful. Can't manage what they've got'

'Its all about money for BMBC'

'Its only to generate more Council Tax'

'To increase income for BMBC'

## Other comments

There were a wide range of other comments which are summarised below;

- The development is not compatible with climate change policies
- The destruction of green belt contravenes NPPC
- The jobs created will be low paid and poor quality
- We need to find a way of solving HGV problems on Higham Common Road without the link road such as more traffic calming and weight limits
- Use more brown field sites to build houses, not green belt
- The location of the school breaks promises made by STRATA reps..
- Should construct a temporary road to take construction traffic
- This is all causing great stress to the elderly
- A new M1 sliproad would help
- Limit the height of the industrial units
- Plant all the buffer zones with trees
- Convert existing buildings into affordable housing
- Masterplan promises, particularly on mitigation are not being adhered to
- The MU1 development should be scaled right back
- Higham Lane won't cope with the traffic
- The local roads will become unsafe
- The Council needs to reassess the impact of MU1
- Residents get no updates from the developers
- MU1 will ruin my retirement
- Barnsley is losing 13% of its accessible green space

- We need to hold BMBC to the standards it set in the Local Plan
- The site will generate too much travel
- Once we lose this landscape, we lose it forever
- The Planning Board is not fit for purpose
- COVID has changed the need for all this new housing
- We need to keep all the trees and Hedgerows on Hermit Lane
- We need to provide as many parks and green spaces as possible on MU1
- The road layout at the top of Wharfedale Road needs addressing

## 7. Finally

The purpose of this consultation was to gather the collective views of the community in the vicinity of MU1. The views reported in this document are not necessarily the views of the Lib Dem Councillors for the area, nor are they the views of any one person.

There will be no further commentary or analysis of these views in this document but they will certainly be used by the Lib Dem councillors to inform their approach to the future development of MU1. This document will also be made available to all decision makers in the process of developing MU1 in the hope that the communities views are properly considered. We strongly believe that the views of everyone in the community must at least be heard.

It is worth saying that the development of MU1 is now at the stage of the developers submitting a series of planning applications to be considered by the Planning Regulatory Board of BMBC as part of a quasi legal process. We must not, however lose sight of the fact that this development is having and will have a major impact on the lives of the local community and nothing illustrates this better than the comment below submitted by a resident in response to this survey.

Councillor Peter Fielding

Councillor Chris Wray

July 2021

*I came to live here in 1978 when I got married. The house was chosen because of the green belt and footpath through the fields. I have usually always had dogs and adore wildlife. I love the hedgerows as they hold such a lot of birds, rodents and insects which we need for the planet.*

*I am hoping to get another dog when I retire next year at 66 years old. If they build on there all my dreams will be shattered as it will be hard for me to have a dog. I have waited and not had my house done up which needs sorting from top to bottom so I can do it in my retirement. It looks like all my aims and dreams are finished if they build.*

*I have a beautiful view from my bedroom windows over the fields – it lifts you in a morning – if I have to look at a development it will make me want to leave the home I thought I would die in. At my age and fitness it would be very hard to leave. Probably to somewhere smaller and having to get rid of furniture and things I love. It will probably shorten my life – the stress and strain will be too much – instead of expecting time to sort out the garden when I retire and be able to sit and rest when my back needs it.*

*Those views meant something years ago when a home had a rateable value – I questioned why my rateable value was higher than the same house elsewhere and was told by Barnsley Council it was because I had a view from my bedroom.*

*There will no longer be the lovely views and the lovely walk down the footpath or wildlife to enjoy. If they build, what about all the extra dust making my eyes and nose stream. We are used to a quiet street so the noise will get on peoples nerves. As you can see, I am very worried about all of this and what quality of life I will have after working for 50 years.*

*Sorry this is so long but this is the first time I can tell anyone what all this is doing to me as I am on my own.*