

Application 13/3210N Heathfield Road/Mill Lane, Audlem  
Statement to CEC's Strategic Planning Board 9 October 2013

Presented by Heather Jones

This unwarranted development is outside the settlement boundary dominating Salford, a Conservation area and one of the oldest parts of the village. The proposal is also contrary to our Village Design Statement – see <http://audlempc.audlem.org/doc/D5918.pdf>

Audlem doesn't have the infrastructure to support such a development.

- The sewerage system is already substandard, which leads to problems with blockages and consequent environmental issues. United Utilities have confirmed that the sewerage works will struggle to handle additional capacity
- The medical practice is at full capacity as you have heard
- We lack local employment and our village does not have Superfast Broadband to support the self-employed

Focusing on a just a few major issues:

Access:

The hypothesis that residents will use Hillary Drive is seriously flawed. Access to the site is likely to be via Heathfield Road, a narrow road - down to a 2.9m single track, with no footpath for the majority of its length. The proposal for public access with 21 parking spaces only adds to the problem.

Transport

The NPPF of March 2012 requires developments outside the settlement boundary to be located and designed to have access to high-quality public transport facilities.

The wrong model has been used to determine vehicular trips. Can the developers really believe that Audlem is similar to Truro, Workington and Northallerton? These places have over 15,000 residents, good public transport systems, and large numbers of employment opportunities. Audlem's public transport is inadequate. It is impossible to reach major employment areas directly.

Drainage/Flooding

The bulk of the site sits on high land and will inevitably have a negative impact on drainage to the lower edge of the development which is on a flood plain and, potentially, on neighbouring properties. The statement that Audlem Brook is largely culverted is untrue.

There is potential risk to health if the sewerage works is unable to cope with additional demand as its run off goes directly into the River Weaver. Diverse flora, fauna including water voles, otters and other protected species are endangered and no bat or badger survey has been undertaken.

A similar proposal was rejected in 2003. In the subsequent Public Local Enquiry (see attachment) the Inspector rejected the appeal, stating that "the boundaries to the site mark the transition from the urbanised development of Audlem village to the sporadic dwellings characteristic of the open countryside." We are glad that Cheshire East's Planning Department believes this logic still applies in 2013.

Audlem is not against development but we believe residents should first be allowed the opportunity to take part in the 2014 Local Plan consultation so we can ensure a proper infrastructure is in place for plan-led, rather than premature development.

On behalf of its residents, Audlem Parish Council strongly urges the Committee to refuse this application.