

Presented by David Latchford

I wish to oppose this application on the following grounds:

I consider that this proposal contravenes one of the main objectives of the Village Design Statement that no large-scale developments be permitted in Audlem, a view to which Cheshire East Council resolved to give due weight when considering planning applications in the Parish.

The VDS is in favour of infill of small gaps between existing buildings as the preferred way of providing additional local housing, a view which I believe is shared by the Council. In this respect, at the Public Local Enquiry into objections to the Local Plan in 2003, the Inspector determined that despite the assertion by the objector, Hockenhull Properties Ltd that this was an infill site, this was not the case. He concluded that development of the site would merely extend the already urbanised boundary of the village into open countryside.

The Inspector also accepted the Council's opinion that the loss of a dwelling and creation of a new access would have significant adverse effect on the street scene. I cannot see why these views would not remain the same today.

Hockenhull Properties' case now, as then, is partly reliant on the perception that insufficient land has been allocated by the Council for development. It is my understanding, however, that the Council can demonstrate this not to be the case and this will form part of the awaited Local Plan. That said, in the present absence of such a plan, the argument for refusal is hampered by the current presumption in favour of housing in open countryside.

I, and many other residents, consider that Audlem does not require additional housing on the scale proposed. There are few opportunities for local employment. Local residents would suffer unwarranted extra traffic and any road widening or pavement provision scheme to ensure pedestrian safety required as a consequence of the development would result in hardship, loss of land and additional expense to frontages along Heathfield Road.

In summary, I hope your Committee will agree that preservation of the open countryside in this location carries greater weight than the problems granting permission would cause.