

SADBERGE PARISH COUNCIL

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27th May 2017

Dear Emma,

Planning application reference: 17/00358/FUL

Description: Erection of 25 dwellings on land to the east of Middleton Road on the southern edge of Sadberge

Sadberge Parish Council objects to the above planning application for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed development would be detrimental to the community spirit and quality of life in Sadberge.

The question of development in and around Sadberge was addressed during the preparation of the 2007 Sadberge Parish Plan. 57 people attended an Open Meeting on the subject of Planning & Development, and 459 people (out of a population of about 700) completed Parish Plan questionnaires. In response to the question "How many new houses should be built in Sadberge over the next ten years?", 60% of responses were either zero or up to 10 new houses.

One of the specific actions in the Parish Plan was for Sadberge Parish Council to ask Darlington Borough Council to retain the current development limits for Sadberge.

The Parish Plan was revisited in 2013, with another Open Meeting and another questionnaire. This time, 61% of respondents said that there should be either zero or up to 10 new houses.

It is clear that the Sadberge community does not want any significant development in or around the village.

In a show of hands, the majority of the residents who attended the Sadberge Parish Council meeting on 23-May-2017 voted to object to this proposed development.

2. Sadberge is not a suitable location for sustainable development.

Darlington planning strategies – including the Darlington Local Plan and the Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy – have consistently not included Sadberge as a suitable location for development. In the Interim Planning Position Statement, Table 3 (Summary Of Key Sustainability Factors For Darlington Borough Villages) – which is reproduced on the next page – shows that Sadberge does not satisfy any of the criteria for sustainable development.

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Table 3 -Summary Of Key Sustainability Factors For Darlington Borough Villages

| Village | Large Villages | | | Other Villages (select examples) | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| | Hurworth/ Hurworth Place | Middleton St. George/ Middleton One Row | Heighington | Sadberge | High Coniscliffe | Bishopton | Neasham | Great Stainton | Piercebridge |
| Primary Schools Proximity (Within 1km) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Public transport – Bus (Daytime Service 8am to 6pm) every 30 mins or better | ✓ | ✗ 1 service, hourly, weekdays only | ✓ | ✗ 3 journeys on a Monday only, and supported by subsidy. | ✓ | ✗ 3 journeys on a Monday only, and supported by subsidy. | ✗ 3 journeys on a Monday only, and supported by subsidy. | ✗ 3 journeys on a Monday only, and supported by subsidy. | ✓ |
| Public transport – Rail (within 2km of Rail Halt) | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Local/District Centre (within 2km) | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Local Shop/Post Office (within 1km) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| GP Surgery Proximity (Within 1km) | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |

Table 3 from Darlington Borough Council's Interim Planning Position Statement

3. The proposed development is outside the Sadberge limits to development.

The Parish Council is aware that the development limits in the Darlington Local Plan are considered to be out of date as a result of Darlington Borough Council's failure to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land to meet objectively assessed need. However, the logic underlying the development limits remains valid. Restricting development to within the 'village envelope' is necessary to protect the identity of Sadberge as a compact rural village surrounded by open countryside.

By extending beyond the village envelope, the proposed development would compromise the identity and setting of the village.

The Parish Council points out that granting permission for this development would set a very unhelpful precedent. There are a number of other fields around Sadberge whose owners might be tempted to 'make a quick buck' by selling their land to developers.

4. The proposed development would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework's policies on promoting sustainable transport and making "*the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling*".

The residents of the proposed development would have no practical alternative to owning private cars and using their cars for the vast majority of journeys.

There is only a very limited bus service through Sadberge. The bus only runs on Mondays, when it makes three return trips from Sadberge to Darlington. This is totally inadequate for anyone wishing to use public transport to get to work or school.

Middleton Road carries a high volume of fast-moving traffic, making it unsuitable for cycling. Data collected by the Sadberge vehicle-activated speed sign during April 2017 showed that on a typical weekday about 3,400 vehicles come into Sadberge on Middleton Road and about 35% of those vehicles are recorded as exceeding the speed limit when they come within the range of the speed sign, which is situated so that it only detects vehicles once they are inside the 30 mph limit.

There is no pavement along the east side of Middleton Road between the development site and the centre of the village. Anyone wishing to walk into the village from the proposed development would have to cross the road, which carries a high volume of fast-moving traffic.

5. There would be problems with parking in and near the proposed development.

Most of the households in the proposed development would have (at least) two cars. Although the development would have 58 parking spaces, it appears very likely that a considerable number of those spaces would be “one behind another”. Experience with the St. Andrew’s Park development in Sadberge suggests that, in these circumstances, residents avoid the inconvenience of having to shuffle cars around by parking on roads near the development. In the case of the proposed development, this would mean parking cars along the edge of Middleton Road. Given the volume and speed of traffic on Middleton Road, this would cause a hazard.

6. Increase in traffic

There is already a problem with the volume of traffic passing through the centre of Sadberge, particularly during rush hours. A traffic survey in 2006 showed that the traffic through the central crossroads peaked at just over 1,200 vehicles per hour – i.e. one vehicle every three seconds – during the morning and evening busy periods. Recent data from the Sadberge vehicle-activated speed sign indicates that over 400 vehicles per hour come into Sadberge along Middleton Road during evening busy periods.

Elderly residents have problems crossing Middleton Road during busy periods.

The Parish Council is concerned about air pollution from vehicles queueing on Middleton Road during rush hours, and is working with Newcastle University to set up a community air quality monitoring project.

The proposed development would further increase the volume of traffic in Sadberge.

7. The proposed development would be out of character with the village.

The development would consist of town-type houses in a village setting.

The Parish Council also points out that:-

8. The developer’s community consultation leaflet was only delivered to about a third of the households in Sadberge^[1] and the planning consultants declined an invitation to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss the proposed development.

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^[1] The Statement of Community Involvement says that the leaflet was delivered to 110 households. Parish Council flyers are delivered to about 320 households in Sadberge.

9. Middleton Road is an old Roman road, and there is a risk that the development may damage or destroy archaeological features of historical interest.

Yours sincerely,

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