

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

Application No:	SMD/2024/0247	
Location	Hollington Village Hall, Main Road, Hollington, ST10 4HR	
Proposal	Proposed new car park and new access at land adjacent to Hollington Village Hall	
Applicant	Hollington Village Hall	
Agent	Smytheman Architectural	
Parish/ward	Checkley	Date registered: 28.05.2024
If you have a question about this report please contact: Chris Johnston tel: 01538 395400 ext. 4123 <a href="mailto:christopher.johnston@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk">christopher.johnston@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk</a>		

## **REFERRAL**

The application has been called in by Councillor Mills for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would provide additional off-road parking and improve highway safety.
2. Land previously used as parking across from the Village Hall has changed ownership and is not available. This was also the assembly point on the fire risk assessment for the village Hall. The car park would be the new assembly point.
3. The Village Hall has recently been refurbished and is used by a wider range of community groups. Improving health and wellbeing.
4. The proposal would satisfy key aspirations and aims in the corporate plan namely to help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work and also to create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages.

### **1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

**REFUSE**

### **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

2.1 The site is in the middle of the village of Hollington and comprises a small rectangular plot of open land measuring approx. 22m x 9m, next to the village hall and which is also next to the road which runs past the site to the north. There is a front boundary stone wall of a max 1.0m in height and a narrow grass verge separating the plot from the road. The village hall lies to the east and is separated from the plot by a close-boarded 2m high timber fence. It has a small unmarked parking area in front and an existing vehicular access. To the west of the site is a new access road (separated from the site by another low stone wall) which leads to a row of nine recently built dwellinghouses ("Oldham Court") which lie to the south of

the site and directly face the plot of land to the north. The shared parking area for the houses is immediately to the south, separated from the site by a row of recently planted shrubs or bushes. Further to the west of the site is two dwellings which face the road. On the opposite side of the road to the north is mostly open land, several large trees and stables or farm storage buildings.

2.2 The site forms part of the new housing development to the south although an email from the applicant's agent states *"Transfer of ownership is with legals and will be in the name of Hollington Village Hall which is a charity."*

2.3 Streetview images from October 2023 show the site as being neatly grassed over as part of the landscaping for the new housing development although it has presently become more overgrown, unmaintained and untidy. The site was formerly part of a quarry which lies further to the south and was used as a materials storage area. Streetview images from 2009 onwards show this area to be gravelled over and completely covered with blocks of stone or concrete or other building materials stacked up to about 1m high.

### **3. THE APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 This is a full planning application for a new car park for the village hall, with five parking spaces. A new access off the road would be placed in the middle of the site frontage, by removing a 6m section of stone wall. The site would be completely covered with a porous Macadam surface. A small part of the east boundary fence would be removed to provide a pedestrian access and steps down from the car park to the village hall (which is on lower ground).

3.2 An email from the applicant's agent states the following in support of the proposal:

*"The reason for the carpark is to allow users to park safely and since the refurbishment the village hall is being used more and by a wide range of community groups. At present it has limited parking at the front of village hall, the additional 5 parking places would be beneficial to relieve congestion on the road."*

3.3 The application files including the drawings, reports and other details of the proposal together with consultation and notification responses can be viewed on the Council website at:

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=179004>

### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

SMD/2018/0045: Planning permission for nine new houses on the adjacent land with Section 106 Agreement to maintain the landscaping.

DOC/2021/0032: Discharge of Condition application for the above planning permission which included a landscaping scheme requested by Condition 8 of the above planning permission. Approved.

## **5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION**

5.1 The Development Plan comprises:

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Sep 2020

5.2 The following Local Plan policies are relevant to the application:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS9 Small Villages Strategy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- C1 Creating Sustainable Communities
- DC1 Design Considerations
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Checkley Neighbourhood Plan – May 2024

COM1 Community Sport and Recreational Facilities

DES3 Landscape and Rural Character

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).- December 2023

Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 4: Decision Making

Section 8: Promoting Healthy & Safe Communities

Section 12: Achieving Well Designed and Beautiful Places

## **6. CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 A site notice was posted and displayed outside of the site, facing the road, on 18.06.24. Notification letters were also sent to all adjacent dwellings including to the nine recently constructed houses to the south.

### **Public response to consultation**

6.2 One letter of support was received from a nearby resident who considers the proposal will improve highway and pedestrian safety in the village.

### **Checkley Parish Council**

6.3 Checkley Parish Council are of the opinion that the proposal appears to be sound provided it is in keeping with neighbouring property and there are no local objections and it conforms with planning policies as defined in the Checkley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **SCC Highways Authority**

### 6.4 Recommendation Summary: Condition

Site Visit Conducted on: 12-June-2024

1. Nothing shall be placed, constructed, planted or allowed to remain within 2.0m of the edge of the car park frontage of Main Road that is greater than 600mm in height above the adjacent carriageway level. Anything that is greater than 600mm in height within 2.0m of Main Road shall be immediately removed.

2. Before the proposed development is brought into use the pedestrian link between the car park and Hollington Village Hall entrance shall be provided. The pedestrian link shall thereafter be retained for the life of the development.

#### **REASONS**

ALL To comply with NPPF Paragraph 114; to comply with SMDC Local Plan Policies DC1 and T1; in the interests of highway safety.

#### **NOTES TO PLANNING OFFICER**

Application is to provide an access and car park for Hollington Village Hall.

There is an access, recently constructed under SMD/2018/0045, immediately to the west of the proposed access. The existing village hall access and parking area is to the east.

Drawing HVHP-SA-XX-XX-DR-A-0202 shows hatched area denoted as 70m visibility splay. However, this shows only 2m setback and the extents of the splays are not shown. It is not clear that the 70m splay can be provided, particularly to the west where the existing dwelling is likely to obstruct the splay.

Condition is recommended above to keep frontage area of the site clear, which will maximise available visibility. This repeats similar condition on SMD/2018/0045.

Visibility to the east, primary direction, is available as far as the slight bend. Visibility to the west is restricted by the adjacent dwelling. However this is the secondary direction and there are two accesses between the proposed access and the existing dwelling one being access to a quarry and residential development.

Current records show that there were no Personal Injury Collisions on Main Road within 50m either side of the proposed access in the previous five years.

#### **Environmental Health**

6.5 No objection subject to conditions which restrict noise and disturbance during the construction phase, deal with any unexpected contamination found, require the testing of any imported soil, request details of any lighting of the car park for approval and require surface water drainage to pass through an oil interceptor before entering a watercourse.

## **Severn Trent Water**

6.6 No objection subject to a condition requiring details of drainage to be submitted for approval.

## **7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE**

### **Introduction**

7.1 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2023) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental. In accordance with policies SS1 and 1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, the Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect, and where possible, enhancing the environment. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2023).

7.2 The main issues with the proposal are as follows:

- The principle of the development in this location.
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact on residential amenity.
- The impact on highway safety.

7.3 The Small Villages Strategy, Policy S9 of the Local Plan, states that the small villages shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. It also states that this will be achieved in respect of enhancing community vitality by, inter alia, protecting and enabling services and facilities which are essential to sustain rural living.

7.4 The policy also requires new development to reflect and enhances each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

7.5 Policy C1 of the Local Plan, supports proposals which protect, retain or enhance existing community facilities.

7.6 Policy DC1 'Design Considerations' of the Local Plan states that new development should, inter alia, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. It also states that new development should, inter alia, provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.

7.7 Policy T1 aims for sustainable means of travel to and from a development.

7.8 Policy COM1 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan states that new community facilities in accessible locations for users will be supported, providing there is no significant adverse impact on the amenities of any nearby residential properties or landscape character.

7.9 Policy DES3 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan states that development should minimise impact on, and where possible enhance wildlife habitats, ecology, local landscape character, and landscape features.

### **The principle of development**

7.10 The proposal would provide additional car parking spaces for the village hall and this can be deemed to be an enhancement of an existing village community facility in line with policies SS9 and C1 of the Local Plan and also Policy COM1 of the Checkley Community Plan.

### **The impact on the character and appearance of the area.**

7.11 The planning permission for the nine houses to the south of the site included the area next to the village hall, the current application site, to be landscaped in accordance with a landscaping scheme, which was subsequently submitted and approved by the Council. This shows the site completely grassed over and a hedge provided along the rear and side boundary and the planting of a tree in the middle. A Unilateral Undertaking was also entered into with the planning permission requiring that the site be maintained as a green landscaped space. The site has been grassed over but this has not been maintained and looks untidy. Some shrub planting has been provided along the rear boundary but this is not a hedge. The tree in the middle of the site has not been planted.

7.12 The green landscaping of the site as approved under the planning permission for the nine houses and in complete accordance with the approved landscaping scheme is considered to contribute positively to the appearance of the new housing development and the street scene along this part of Main Road and is certainly an enhancement on the former use as a materials storage area of the quarry. It would also contribute positively to the overall rural and semi-rural character and appearance of the area, completely in line with the aims of policies SS9 and DC1.

7.13 The proposal to provide a car park would lead to the complete hard-surfacing over of this space, leading to the total loss of the green open space to the detriment of the appearance of the new housing development when viewed from the road, spoiling its layout and would also be detrimental to the street scene along this stretch of road and therefore also the rural setting, character and appearance of the area. This is conflict with policies SS9, DC1 and also policy DES3 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan.

7.14 It is not considered the benefits of the scheme in providing five further parking spaces for the village hall would outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area. The applicant states the car park would relieve congestion on the road. However, the stretch of road close to the village hall is wide enough to park on without obstructing cars and is fairly straight, deemed to have a good level of

visibility by the local highways authority (when viewed from the proposed access). There are no parking restrictions on the road. Furthermore, the local highways authority, whilst not objecting to the proposal, has also not raised any existing highway safety issues on the road, commenting that there were no road accidents in the last five years. Although there is no footway along the road, no evidence has been provided that the road is currently unsafe for pedestrians and motorists. It is anticipated that when the village hall has been in use historically, users have arrived by foot and by car and given that it only looks possible to park a maximum of four cars on the current hard-surface in front of the hall, it is presumed that a number of visitors arriving by car would park on the road. The village hall has been refurbished and it is claimed is in use by a wider range of groups. However, it has not expanded and there is no evidence there will be a significantly increased number of visitors in the long-term.

7.15 Although the current situation is not ideal and the provision of five further spaces would amount to some improvement, given that there is no evidence of highway safety issues, the benefits are considered to be limited and would not outweigh the harm caused to the character and appearance of the area.

7.16 Furthermore, the policies in the Local Plan (such as policies DC1 and T1) and Checkley Neighbourhood Plan seek to encourage sustainable modes of travel, such as walking or cycling. The village hall is in a central location within the village and can be easily reached via these modes. The provision of a parking area for cars is therefore seen as contrary to these aims.

7.17 For the above reasons, it is considered the application should be refused.

### **The impact on residential amenity**

7.18 Policy DC1 'Design Considerations' of the Local Plan states that new development should, inter alia, protect the amenity of the area, including the creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.

7.19 It is not considered the proposal would harm residential amenity. The outlook from the new houses is onto the village hall and shared residents parking area and the site would be screened from view by planting. The landscaping of the site is for the benefit of visual amenity and the new dwellings have front gardens and also private rear gardens in the interests of their amenities. It is also not considered the proposed five new spaces would lead to a significant increase in noise and disturbance given that it is adjacent to the residents shared parking area.

### **The impact on highway safety**

7.20 With regard to policies DC1 and T1, the design of the new access is deemed to be safe and there is a satisfactory level of visibility along both sides of the road, despite the presence of a dwelling to the west and a slightly bend in the road to the east.

## **Other Points**

7.21 The surfacing would exceed an area of 25 sq.m, and is therefore subject to biodiversity net gain as the application does not meet any of the exemptions in the PPG. No BNG metric has been provided with the application. The agent has stated on the application form that the reason for this is that the site meets the temporary exemption for small sites. However, this came to an end on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 and the application was submitted in May 2024. Whilst the area was formerly used for storage of quarry materials, the metric must consider the current status of the land, which is as a landscaped area, prior to any unauthorised degradation, which could include failure to provide and maintain the landscaped area in line with the Unilateral Undertaking. The application fails to provide such a metric and therefore it is not possible to assess whether a 10% uplift in BNG could be achieved.

7.22 The point regarding fire assembly points is not a material planning consideration.

## **8. CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

8.1 The site was approved as a landscaped space for the adjacent housing development, grassed over and with hedge and tree planting. The proposal in covering the whole site with a hard-surface to provide a car park and the loss of the green open space would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and this would not be outweighed by the limited benefits of the scheme in providing five additional parking spaces for the village hall. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies SS9 and DC1 of the Local Plan and COM1 and DES3 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan and the government planning guidance in the NPPF. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

### **A. That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:**

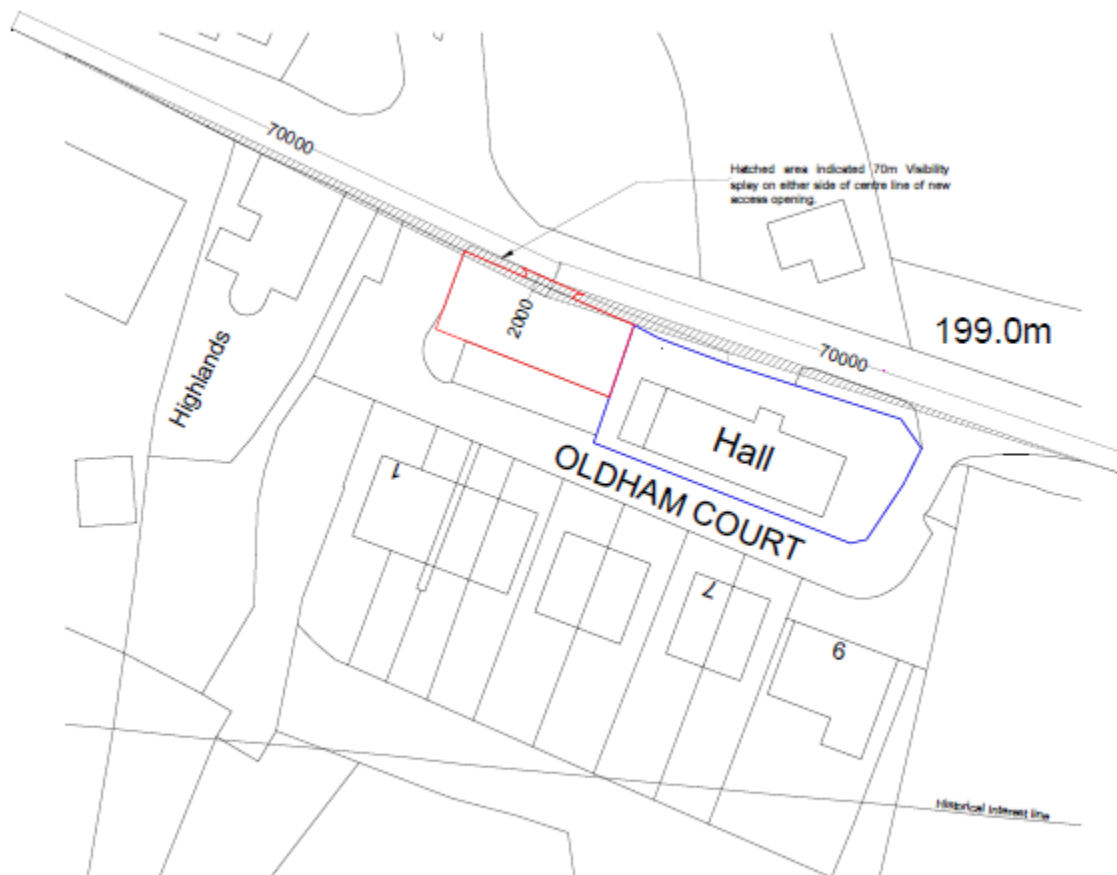
- 1. The proposal in hard-surfacing over a space approved under planning permission SMD/2018/0045 to be soft landscaped and planted would be harmful to the rural and semi-rural character and appearance of the area including the street scene of Main Road, Hollington. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies SS9 and DC1 of the Council's Local Plan (September 2020), policies COM1 and DES3 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan (May 2024) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).**
- 2. The applicant has provided insufficient information to allow the mandatory Bio-diveristy Net Gain requirements to be assessed contrary to Policy NE1 of the Council's Local Plan (September 2020), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).**

**B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/in formatives/planning**



obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's Decision.

## Location Plan



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Proposed Block Plan  
1:500

Scale 1 : 500