

LAND ADJACENT TO ST ISIDORE'S APPLICATION - P/21/2176

RESULTS OF SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY BIGGAR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

This report sets results of a consultation undertaken by Biggar Community Council (BCC) in connection with the application for planning permission for 4 new houses the field adjacent to St Isidore's church, Lindsaylands Rd, Biggar (application reference P/21/2176). The application has been made by the RC Diocese of Motherwell.

Biggar Community Council welcome the opportunity to comment on this application reflecting the views of the local community.

The survey method and results are presented in the report.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

BCC arranged a simple online survey of local residents using Survey Monkey which was publicised via the Biggar Community Council website, Facebook page and on the Biggar Community Facebook page. As well as the online survey, paper copies of the survey were made available at the Gillespie Centre. The survey ran between Mon 24 Jan 2022 and Mon 7 Feb 2022.

The survey had two questions:

- 1) Do you support the proposal for 4 new houses at on St Isidore's field?
- 2) If you have any particular comments about this proposal please let us know here.

Question 2 also included some information about what can be considered material considerations in the planning processing highlighting that these can include:

- Whether the application fits with planning policy and the local development plan.
- Effects on conservation areas and listed buildings and views from public places.
- Effects on traffic and parking.
- Effects on the local economy.
- Ability of local infrastructure to cope.

It also pointed out that loss of views from neighbouring houses and reduction in value of neighbouring properties were not generally material considerations.

Given COVID restrictions and timescales, no public meeting (either face to face or online) was held regarding this application.

SURVEY RESULTS

41 responses were received to the Survey Monkey survey. No paper copy surveys were returned.

Question 1

Not supportive of the Application	19	46.3%
Supportive of the Application	18	43.9%
Not Sure	4	9.8%

Question 2

25 respondents provided comments in Question 2. Some gave comments which covered several issues or made points both for and against the proposal, while some simply gave general comments for or against. There were more points made against the proposal than for it.

The main reasons for opposing the proposal were:

- Safety on Lindsaylands Rd and the Wynd and effect on parking (14 responses).
- Loss of mature trees and other habitats (7 responses).
- Ability of local infrastructure to cope (5 responses).
- Wrong type or design of housing (4 responses).
- No new housing needed in Biggar (4 responses).
- Contrary to Local Development Plan (3 responses).

Several responses highlighted poor sight lines at the access onto Lindsaylands Rd and concerns about the safety of pedestrians on parts of Lindsaylands Rd and the Wynd which have no pavement.

Responses regarding the type or design of the houses felt that smaller social or affordable houses would be preferable and that the houses were too large for the plot which might adversely affect the setting of St Isidore's

The main reasons for supporting the application were:

- More houses are needed (5 responses).
- Site is suitable for development (4 responses).

The full list of comments is given in Appendix 1.

CONCLUSION

There was a very slight majority against this proposal, but this was almost exactly balanced by residents who were in favour of the proposal.

Given the fine balance of opinions expressed, BCC do not wish to take a formal stance either for or against this proposal, but ask SLC to note the views of Biggar residents in this report.

If this application was to be approved, BCC asks SLC to consider what measures might be introduced to mitigate concerns on issues such as safety on Lindsaylands Rd and the Wynd, potential loss of mature trees and the ability of local infrastructure to cope with additional population.

APPENDIX 1 – COMMUNITY COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL

Full responses to Question 2 of the survey.

New houses will allow Biggar to continue to thrive as a buoyant community
Serious concerns regarding road safety. No pavement, lack of visibility for pedestrians and drivers when walking along Lindsaylands road. The number of children playing in the area between Lindsaylands rd and Knocklea is a real safety concern and I fear an accident is waiting to happen.
The land had hardly been used for years. With a shortage of homes, it is a good idea.
As it stands there have been too many new houses in the area. Schools are now full. The access to this from the main road is dangerous enough without more traffic. Building these will in love removing mature trees
Ideal area for new houses.
The site is not on local development plan 2 for housing. There are 3 entrances, not one as stated on the application. Leaving the development you are on a hill start with very poor sightlines.
Effects on traffic and parking
It's already a dangerous road though it's increasingly used by cyclists and walkers, school children etc - visibility from and to the Lindsaylands proposal is very poor from both directions. The houses are very large - there are already many large houses being built in the Loaningdales/Pentland Reach area - if Biggar needs any more houses, they should be affordable. St. Isidores is a listed building - this development is out of keeping with the existing lime avenue and house. It doesn't therefore fit with the local development plan or planning policies.
Excellent infill development. Makes common sense.
More housing needed in Biggar. The people of Biggar say they are friendly and welcoming and use our towns shops etc. However they are not open to any kind of change!!!
There has been far too many houses being built in Biggar recently. The school is full, the roads are too busy and these are not going to be affordable for local people. Yet more expensive houses for commuters.
I object on the grounds that this area is already heavily developed, and this oasis of greenspace should be conserved for the native species plants and insects that thrive there. TPOs have already sought, and granted, for existing trees threatened with felling in advance of planning application being granted. It is unacceptable that more trees should be felled for this project, given the loss of habitat provided by the existing mature trees, especially considering the loss in other areas of Biggar at this time. With the Story homes development, the town's infrastructure is already struggling, with both primary and secondary schools at capacity. I have serious concerns about the impact of the increase of cars along the rural Lindsaylands road, not to mention the issues with lack of parking spaces for current residents in the town itself.
Ability of local infrastructure to cope
Too many houses being built in Biggar. Losing all character and changing the town
no chance more houses means less countryside and nature
Increase of traffic on already dangerous road leading up from Biggar High Street up the Wynd The proposed houses are not planned with the environment in mind ie not eco houses Felling of healthy trees and loss of ecosystem in that area.
Not an appropriate area for development
I have concerns over: (i) impacts on wildlife due to proposed felling of trees. Recently too much felling of nice quality woodland habitat has happened in Biggar and this needs to stop; (ii) issues with access to the road - the houses would feed into an already busy road with lots of obstacles. Of particular concern is as the road drops into Biggar visibility is very poor and there is no pavements. Children and their parents often have to walk on the road and this is dangerous. I take great care driving down this portion of the road because of this but I do not think increasing traffic along this road would be wise. Its an accident waiting to happen, plus the exit comes at a confluence of different roads; (iii) the site is too small for 4 detached houses and almost inevitably will lead to increased traffic. It would be far better to focus construction efforts on affordable housing for young families and people, rather than detached dwellings.
Biggar is getting too big. This is not a good place to build houses, there is already no parking in that area and the roads too busy. The doctors surgery and school are already at capacity!!

On one hand this is a gap site in the town and could provide additional housing. However it is not in the Local Development Plan. If approved there would need to be robust protection for the trees, and measures to ensure road safety, particularly for pedestrians on Lindsaylands Rd and the Wynd.

There are lots of beautiful, mature trees - it would be a shame for any of these to be taken away. However, there is a need for more housing. Please try to save the trees if it goes ahead.

Effect on traffic

Does not address the lack of affordable homes in the area. More, lower priced properties would be preferable

Too many houses proposed, Increase in traffic on Lindsaylands Rd which is used as a rat-run & the speed limit exceed by very many!

Looking forward to welcoming more families to our area.

Concern over the lack of pavement on Lindsaylands for these houses and also further traffic and another access road on what is already a dangerous stretch of road due to its size and the number of walkers that use it .