



The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN
(Submitted via Appeals Casework Portal)

3 October 2024

Case: APP/C4235/W/24/3349825
Site address: Gatley Golf Club, Styal Road, Gatley, Cheadle, SK8 3TW

Dear Inspector,

I believe the development proposal being considered by this inquiry is inappropriate for the area. This was my position as a local councillor for Cheadle West & Gatley and it continues to be my view as the Member of Parliament for the Cheadle constituency.

It will come as no surprise to members of the inquiry that I'm advocating that the Stockport Council decision to refuse the application should be upheld.

My position has been informed by extensive discussions with local residents over the years. It is unfortunate that the developers were not prepared to adopt a similar approach themselves.

I believe the most significant elements of the proposal are:

1. That there would be **significant loss of Strategic Open Space** in an area that is acknowledged to be deficient in such space.
2. That (the potential for) **an operational sports facility would be lost**.
3. That **278 homes would be provided**.

There are no significant disputes over that facts relating to the above and that it is accepted that the first two outcomes would be harmful to the area. When the application was considered by members of Stockport Council's Planning & Highways Regulation committee their conclusion was that, **on balance, these potential harms outweighed any potential benefits of the scheme**.

It would have been reasonable to have also included issues relating to the site's relative inaccessibility and the damaging traffic impact on local roads in their determination, but it



seems clear that at the time they made their decision the committee felt they already had sufficient grounds for refusal.

I note that since the decision to refuse the application the members of Gately Golf Club have chosen to close the course and that this is being presented de facto confirmation that the club was not a viable facility. I don't accept this position and would ask the inquiry to consider that the club had for decades operated successfully. As part of the application review process, a specialist surveyor reported to the council that there wasn't compelling evidence to support the case of the club being unviable. Indeed, other golf facilities within the borough are thriving and have reported significant growth in demand since 2020.

Although the club is closed at present, there is clearly the potential for it to be brought back into use as a golf club. Whatever the reasons for the club's decline in recent years, it is not unreasonable to conclude that a significant driving factor was not that demand for golf was falling, but rather the potential financial incentives associated with closure of the club and subsequent potential development of the site for housing.

I believe the refusal earlier this year was based on solid grounds and was entirely reasonable. There is also the possibility that the applicant may have thought this too as it wasn't until after the present Labour government was elected and proposed changes to the NPPF and associated housing land supply calculations, that the appellant lodged their appeal against the original decision. That a change in government and a potential change in the rules could result in a perfectly correct planning application refusal being overturned is not something that I think most of my constituents would think of as appropriate or justified.

I hope that when you reach your judgement on this case that you will uphold Stockport Council's 15th February 2024 decision to refuse the application.

Yours,

Tom Morrison
Member of Parliament for Cheadle