

From: [REDACTED]
To: [External Email for Local Plans](#)
Subject: Local Plans Consultation (with especial focus on Lower Penn area)
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To
Strategic Planning Team
South Staffordshire Council
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To whom it may concern:

I have tried to voice my concern before now - concern over the lack of thought that has gone into the process of planning (a term that barely applies) and consulting (a term that decidedly does not apply to the hash of ignoring the voices of those directly affected by their proposed plans) on the local plans relating to the wider Lower Penn area.

Where is the concern for your neighbours? We live on the edge of Wolverhampton. Already my journey to work (on a bicycle) demonstrates every morning and every evening: these roads are at breaking point. Bumper to bumper - at times the traffic can stall from Warstones 'Penn Terminus' via Warstones Road all the way to Chapel Ash. Local roads are full. Local GPs are full. Local schools are full. On these and other concerns, I note the responses provided by Wolverhampton Council (South Staffordshire Local Plan Review – Preferred Options Consultation, dated 13 December 2022). Where they stress the need for co-operation and pooling resources, I wholeheartedly agree.

What I find especially concerning, since it suggests a deliberate attempt at exclusion: the fringe of Wolverhampton has not been contacted. At no point have my neighbours and my household received any direct communication from SSDC about the plans. We had to ask our neighbours in Lower Penn, to find out about the destruction of the local ecology that is set to unfold. 'Next door' in our case is 'in our neighbourhood'. We will be 100% affected by what you propose and appear intent on bulldozing through.

We will be affected by losing the wild spaces, the country walks, and the easy access to the countryside. We will be affected by the congestion and the competition for nursery, kindergarden, and school places created by your plans. We will be affected while construction is going on, and for ever after it is complete. Depending on how successfully the floodplains are drained, some of us will see their own risk of being flooded increase, and all of us will see wildlife that depended on the wetlands decimated. We will see our

journeys to work become yet more impossible, and - being on the border - we will see crime rise.

Policing services appear to have been left out of the discussion: how the two police forces (South Staffs and West Midlands) will handle the extension of the border/the intensification of areas that will attract interest from criminals.

The police are already struggling with the need to talk across the border. As someone who keeps animals in Lower Penn, I have painful experience of this fact, and despite being told every time that they do share information - I was forced to ring both forces separately, only to find that nothing matched and nothing was communicated across - and the worst of it: every time both sides averred that the crime was not their responsibility.

I was reporting on criminal activity that took place on both sides of the border but because the perpetrators crossed over after each act, I could not get any meaningful commitment from either police force to work together and tackle the youths. As a result, the gangs of young people learned that putting animals' lives and their own at risk, setting fire underneath a power pylon and creating a racket in the neighbourhood will draw no serious response from the police. When they at long last left off, it was to move their activities to a different area. We know that the pylon fire was seen by them as 'great fun' because of how ineffectual the services were that were called out by concerned neighbours.

How does that relate to your local plans?

The development of housing estates will increase the risk of property crime and other offences, and the vicinity to Wolverhampton will mean that unless the plans expressly address the issue of police forces being already very stretched and not having the means to co-operate with each other when it matters - locals and future residents in the new developments will be left vulnerable and at risk. Where are you addressing these risks? Have you consulted with both forces on how to allow them to cover the increased area while already being under strain?

In my humble opinion, your plans and the process to date suggest that you are guilty of treating this as un-connected local interventions. Your plans and the way you have proceeded with the semblance of a consultation are tantamount to an assault: on the local countryside, on the need to have farmland to balance the vagaries of international trade, on those who already live here and they are a betrayal of those who will buy the housing stock that is proposed - or be forced to rent it.

The needs of all these stakeholders have not been considered in a holistic and connected manner, in what looks like a bid to 'do as told' and put valuable land into the hands of developers who have no interest in the locality. If this was not bad enough, your actions to date suggest that you are happy to leave the management and the bearing of the fall-out to those living in Wolverhampton and over the border. To act in such a manner deserves to be condemned as unethical.

If any of the above relates to matters that you do in fact address, allow me to remind you that not having been included directly in your plans and consultations, and the greater difficulties we faced when trying to find out, has not improved our perception of your willingness to engage in open and transparent and meaningful consultation.

Yours,

Karin Dannehl

