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I write on behalf of residents of Carlton Avenue, Newcastle Road and 177 signatories of the petition against the proposed development.

The land is currently empty. It is designated as Open Space by Northumberland County Council and was formerly allotments. As residents, we would like to stress that we are not opposed to the development *per se*, however safety is imperative. Securing safe access via the proposed Carlton Avenue route is impossible.

Having considered all documentation closely there would appear to be no indication that a Road Safety Audit has been undertaken. This is a requirement as part of Section 38 and Section 278 agreements. The Highways comments provided by NCC make no reference to a Road Safety Audit, or indeed whether any investigation has been completed with regard to adjoining sections of the highway.

Carlton Avenue is a small cul-de-sac of 18 primarily 1920s houses. Residents rely on on-street parking. The road width is 8m. This makes the street a single-lane road. The report from Highways Department compares Carlton Avenue to Plessey Road, a 9.2m wide street with multiple access and egress points and a far wider main access point with clear visibility on to Newcastle Road. This comparison is entirely inaccurate and grossly misleading.

The close proximity of the Church, Parish Centre, and Doctors' Surgery at the entrance to Carlton Avenue from Newcastle Road creates an acute parking need. This density at the junction is already dangerous and unsuitable for additional traffic. Several residents have had accidents and near misses on this junction with Dawn Bell (N<sup>o</sup>8) suffering three collisions within a two-year period.

In 2007 a previous application was rejected by the Highways and Engineers Departments. Their report stated:

“Access and egress onto Newcastle Road by vehicle onto Carlton Ave. is frequently constrained by peak time traffic flows along Newcastle Road and it is difficult to see how, if at all possible, any improvements to traffic flow and access and egress can be effected here”.

Since 2007 significant additional housing has increased traffic on Newcastle Road, and the vehicular speed has heightened. These, along with more parked cars, have magnified problems at the junction with Carlton Avenue. This increase has been particularly noticeable since the development of Portland Wynd, Locomotive Street estate, and Rayburn Court. In addition, plans to alter the road layout across the railway will further impact traffic congestion in the area.

There are presently 30 vehicles on Carlton Avenue (1.66 cars per household). The proposed development of 27 houses would increase the number of cars by at least 45; this 250% increase will result in 75 cars daily using the already hazardous access and egress to Newcastle Road. A similar increase in accidents is inevitable. Are you, as councillors of the Strategic Planning Committee, comfortable accepting responsibility for these when they occur?

Whilst we accept the validity of this development, there is not an urgent need for housing in Blyth. There are currently over 600 empty houses. You must not approve development at any cost. The cost of safety and human life is priceless.

The proposed development site has two additional, alternative, means of access. Firstly, via Newcastle Road Ends, south of 91 Newcastle Road; and secondly via Junction Close on the Locomotive Street estate. Both of these are served by mini roundabouts and would maintain the flow of traffic and reduce the risk of accidents. Surely you agree with us that the additional cost of creating an alternative access road is outweighed by the benefits in terms of safety.

We are not opposed to this development in its entirety. However, we are vehemently opposed to the proposed access route. Your own council judged this access road to be unsuitable in 2007 and conditions have worsened, not improved, since then. Alternative, safer, access options exist that would avoid the inevitable increase in accidents. The safety of all is precious and incalculable.