

**Press Release
For Immediate Release**

20th February 2015

Still 22 Trees to be Felled if Redrow Plans Go Ahead on Sefton Park Meadows

The latest announcement by Mayor Joe Anderson on Redrow's planning application for Sefton Park Meadows cuts no ice with campaigners. They are calling this 'further political interference in a live planning application' and cynically timed to discourage people from making objections on the deadline day of Thurs 19th February. Anderson deliberately leaked details of Redrow's new, but not yet public, proposal to reduce the housing number to 20 from 34, and to remove one 'mature' tree instead of six. He claims this shows his personal commitment to Sefton Park with a lower housing density proposal and to saving the 27 threatened trees. Redrow have made no comment or resubmitted any revised application as yet.

The Save Sefton Park Meadows campaign are immediately hitting back, stating that the removal of one 'mature' tree is misleading and does not give the real picture. 22 semi mature and less mature trees are still under threat of felling on the Meadows, even with a 20 house proposal. All 88 remaining trees will be at high risk during building from construction machinery and 'builder mishap' - trees being accidentally or, in some well documented incidences (the King David site on Beauclair Drive in south Liverpool), deliberately felled without permission. All of the trees on the Meadows are in the Sefton Park Conservation Area and have Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) on them. In the council's own Development Plan, which still governs all planning applications, it states: '*..the city council will refuse planning permission for proposals which cause unacceptable tree loss, or which do not allow for the successful integration of existing trees identified for retention following consideration of the tree survey; require.. preventing all site works within the branch spread of any retained tree; and **only allowing the removal of any protected tree in exceptional circumstances, such as where the tree is a danger to public safety or is disease.***' (Unitary Development Plan HD22: Existing Trees and Landscaping).

None of the trees on the Meadows have been identified as a danger to the public or suffering terminal disease in the planning application Tree Survey. The campaign group have pledged to continue their fight to save all of the trees. They also remain committed to no housing development on the Meadows, stating their formal objections now submitted to the council's planning department clearly show the site as in Sefton Park and protected by current planning policy as not available for development.

Save Sefton Park Meadows campaign employed a professional planning consultancy, Lufton & Associates, to review the current Redrow planning application and show where the council and Redrow are failing to meet legal planning protections, as well as evidencing heritage, amenity and wildlife values of the site, as part of Sefton Park. Luftons has submitted a first formal objection report to the current planning application. The group are furious that Mayor Anderson timed his second intervention over the loss of trees for the final day of the objections deadline on Thurs 19th February. cont./

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Vice chair Janet Pell has hit back: ' We know the council has a right as landowner to ask Redrow to reconsider, but Joe Anderson has now clearly publicly interfered twice in this planning process - the first time on January 28th after the planning application went publicly online,saying he was rejecting Redrow's proposal due to tree loss. This caused major public confusion over whether the application was still live, and required the campaign group to get formal confirmation of this from the planning dept at Liverpool City Council. This time, Anderson has timed his announcement of a revised Redrow proposal to 20 houses and one 'mature' tree on the morning of the deadline day for objections, again to discourage people from making formal objections. The one ' mature' tree statement was specifically misleading.'

Janet went on, ' We are writing to the Chief Executive and Head of Planning at Liverpool City Council once again to make a formal complaint over Joe Anderson's interference in this supposedly independent and legal planning process.'

The campaign group's formal objection also challenges the legality of the Mayor's publicly stated'rationale' for the land sell off. He states the need to raise income in the face of financial cuts, by selling the Meadows to Redrow and receiving cash from higher rate council tax bands. The Lufton report states: 'Justification by politicians for this development proposal is being made on the basis of the severe financial difficulties of the City Council. These issues are muddying the waters with planning issues that do not in any way justify setting aside good planning and protections within the agreed Development Plan and other planning policies related to Public Greenspace. The Council and the Mayor seem to be confusing economic need in planning terms with the financial needs of funding public services. These are not the same and not a justification for a planning application contrary to the adopted Development Plan. They are certainly NOT of material consideration for approval of Redrow NW's planning application.'

Evidence of need for million pound ' executive homes' in Liverpool is challenged in their report: 'Often where it is the case that an applicant is pushing the acceptability of a planning case contrary to the adopted Development Plan they make great play of the need for housing to meet social, demographic and local need. There appears no such argument at all in this case of this proposal and it is difficult to know what to conclude,' the report goes on. 'For want of a better expression the City Council just appears to have 'given up' on monitoring whether they're meeting housing needs or not', states Luftons. 'The applicant in the case of this proposal seems to make no attempt at justifying why these houses are needed at all.'

This latest cry of foul play from the campaign comes after accusations that Redrow and the council were playing ' fast and loose' when the planning application was made public at the end of January. The site was misleadingly titled by the council and Redrow cont./

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as 'Land at Park Avenue, L17', when it is commonly known locally as Sefton Park Meadows, The Meadows or Meadowlands. This is confirmed in the council's own planning

documents, including its 1992 Bye-laws for Parks and Gardens. Important planning details of the application, they also claim, were deliberately concealed in complex online only documents, that were not clear or properly titled. This was confirmed by the professional planning consultant hired by the campaign group to review and comment on Redrow's application.

Luftons state in their objection report: 'First, the description of the application as Land off Park Avenue, Mossley Hill, Liverpool. I understand the proposal site is very widely known to the local community as 'Sefton Park Meadows'. The site was also described in Liverpool City Councils bye-laws document dated 1992 as the 'Meadow Fields': "*SEFTON PARK – RIDING TRACK RUNNING ADJACENT TO AIGBURTH DRIVE AND MEADOW FIELDS DISSECTED BY PARK AVENUE ONLY*". He went on, 'Describing the proposal otherwise as a location off Park Avenue is obtuse and appears like a deliberate attempt to wrong-foot those who might be concerned about the development of 'Sefton Park Meadows' from the very start of the consultation process. This I believe is unfair, unreasonable and unjust and could be subject to legal challenge. Given that the application site is shown on the Proposals Plan of the City UDP as very clearly with the same notation and as part of 'Sefton Park', any 'reasonable' person might have expected 'Sefton Park' to be used in the proposal description.'

Regarding the presentation of online planning documents, Luftons goes on to object, 'As a full planning application the contents of these documents and the detailed drawings they contain are a fundamental part of the application that would be of interest to the local community and other parties. In effect hiding these obscurely titled documents again appears like a deliberate attempt to wrong-foot those who might be concerned about the development. Again this is I believe unfair, unreasonable and unjust and could be potentially subject to legal challenge.'

MAP OF TREE REMOVAL SHOWN BELOW (and attached)

For further Information contact:

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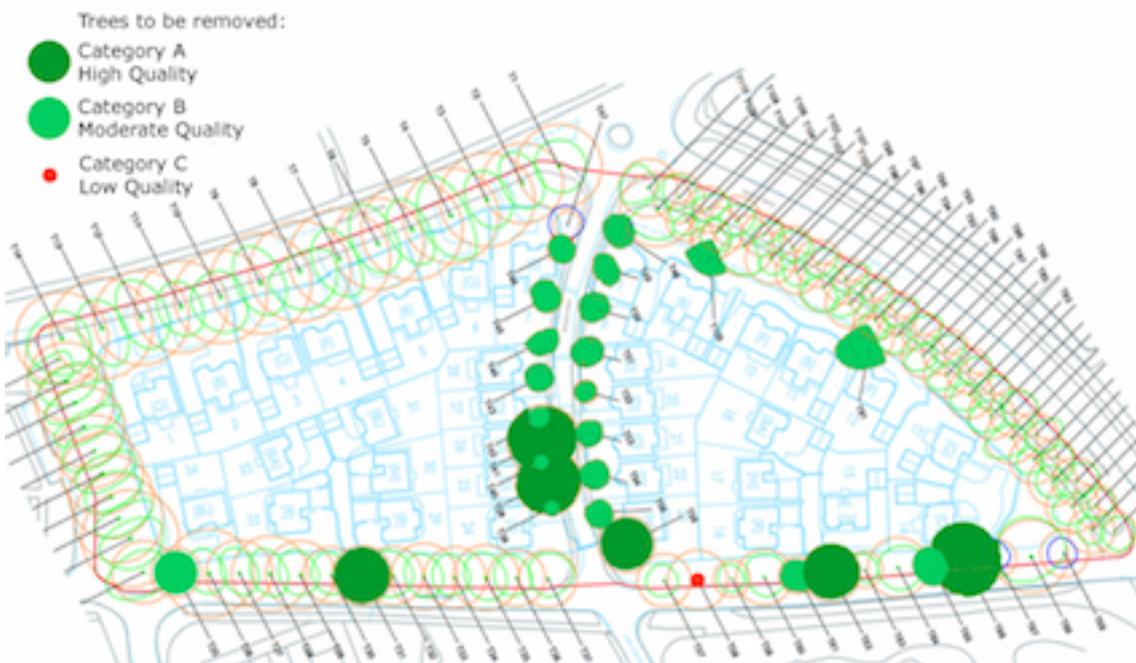
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Redrow's current 'live' planning application is for 34 houses and 27 trees to be removed.

A new revision according to Mayor Anderson, is for 20 houses and the removal of one 'mature' tree. This is one of six Category A High Quality trees which were under threat on the map below, along with 22 semi mature and other trees, which remain under threat.

Redrow's Tree Removal Plan for Sefton Park Meadows



ENDS