



WESTONING PARISH COUNCIL

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Development Control
Central Bedfordshire Council
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10th February 2022

Land to the East of Flitwick Road

Application CB/21/05411/FULL

Westoning Parish Council wishes to make the following objections to the above planning application on the following grounds. The council has sought to engage with the agent and the applicant to gain improvements to the proposed scheme but we have received no acceptable response to our requests.

In February 2017 WPC responded to the site submission exercise setting out what our parish needed in the form of Community Benefit if any sites were identified in our village. That letter was not responded to by Central Bedfordshire so we assumed that our request for community facilities to be linked to any development had been accepted. We understand that the position of the planning department now is that the development is not large enough to include any football pitches or burial ground. It would have been helpful if WPC had been advised of this in 2017 so that we could have pursued alternative sites for those activities and facilities.

While the council accepts that the site has been identified within the Local Plan for residential development, that should not mean that any proposal put forward should be accepted and approved. We urge the Development Management Committee to ensure that our views on this application are considered carefully and used to improve the development.

1. Highways and Vehicle Access

The proposed access to the site through two junctions onto Flitwick Road either side of the mini roundabout is unacceptable to the council and is contrary to the guidance given to the developers. The existing mini roundabout should be enlarged and should be the single point of access to and egress from the development. Having two T junctions so close to the mini roundabout will result in unnecessary delay and congestion when traffic enters and leaves the site from the A5120 and will

increase the likelihood of accidents. The mini roundabout should have robust planting in the centre to give protection to the residents living in Old Flitwick Road from the headlights of vehicles leaving the site.

2. Cycle and Pedestrian access to Flitwick

The pathway to Flitwick is very narrow with a dangerous crossing point over the A5120 at the Flitt Vale Nursery. To provide safer and more useable pathway for cyclists and pedestrians this application should provide the funds to cover the cost of this work to widen this footpath throughout its length.

3. Burial Ground

While the council feels that a part of this site would offer an ideal location for a new burial ground for the village, if CBC is unwilling to make this a condition of any consent, there must be a financial contribution to the acquisition and development of a new burial ground to serve the village. WPC would welcome CBC's view of the size of the contribution that will be applied to any planning approval granted on this application. The current village burial ground has space for only 2 or 3 additional burials so the need for a new cemetery is now most urgent.

4. Junior Football Pitches

Audits of existing recreational facilities in our village conducted by MBDC over 20 years ago identified a significant shortfall in capacity. The council will have to provide two junior football pitches and implement a drainage scheme over the current recreation ground to enable the pitches on it to be used throughout the wet winter months. At the moment, the pitches have been declared as unplayable for half of December and the whole of January 2022 due to the standing water covering large areas of the recreation ground. The council requests that if new junior football pitches cannot be located on this development it would welcome CBC's view of the size of the contribution for these facilities that will be applied to any planning approval granted on this application.

5. Mix of House Types

WPC feels that the proposed mix of house types is inappropriate to the needs of the village and will result in an unnecessary and unwanted level of short-term ownership or tenancy as they will not be large enough to house a family. The council would like to see a reduction in the number of 4 and 5 bedroom houses and an increase in the number of 3 bedroom houses. This will allow occupiers and owners to remain in the village as their families grow and also participate more in the activities available in the village. It is unfortunate that no bungalows have been proposed in a village where many older people own large houses who may want to move to a single floor residence.

6. Self Build Houses

WPC feels that the space reserved for 15 self build houses will result in the individual plots being too small to provide a sustainable location for a home, garden and parking space. This form of development, although it may meet planning requirements, is not appropriate in this location. The council feels that self build houses should be removed from the proposed scheme and replaced with a smaller number of 3 bedroom semi detached houses. If self build housing is permitted, the main developer of the site should be required to maintain and keep fully operational during all construction on the site, a system for washing the wheels and undersides of all vehicles before exiting the site.

7. Maximum Number of Dwellings

The design capacity of this site in the Local Plan is 135 dwellings. WPC requests that the total number of dwellings should not exceed 135 and that the proposer of this application should be required to re-design the development to that number.

8. Pedestrian Access to the Development

Westoning Parish Council requests that a pedestrian access be provided to Greenfield Road alongside the boundary of number 45 Greenfield Road and the barn and land in the ownership of the owner of the application site. This will offer a shorter route to the Recreation Ground, the Recreation Club and the Baptist Chapel on Greenfield Road thus reducing the number of car journeys that will need to be made.

9. Traffic Management During Construction

In order to avoid obstruction and danger to other road users, all vehicles associated directly or indirectly with the development must be required to park within the site and not on the A5120, Greenfield Road, Bell Close, Bryson Close, Flitwick Road and Highfields. The main developer of the site must at all times ensure that adequate parking is available for use and that good access to and from the parking area(s) is available.

10. Preparation of Local Plan

In the four and a half years or more that it took to produce the Local Plan, the council is very disappointed with the total lack of communication between the local plan team and the Parish Council. We tried to be constructive in our correspondence with planners but our letter was neither acknowledged nor responded to. We might as well not have written to CBC setting out our community needs and the benefits we would expect to be commensurate with any successful planning application. Our experience of dealing with CBC in this respect is similar to the distanced way that small communities like Westoning experienced from Bedfordshire County Council.

We trust that our comments above will be communicated to members of your DMC when the application is considered.

Yours sincerely

Karen Barker
Clerk to the Council