

LOCAL MEMBER'S STATEMENT TO THE WDC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Planning Application Ref W/13/01686

Outline Planning Application for 8 no. dwellings to include 2 affordable units and new access.
Land between Pentalow and, Berrycroft, Blacksmiths Lane Crophorne

The comments below represent my core statement to committee they are not verbatim but used as appropriate and with additions

To Cllr Mrs L Robinson Chairman WDC Planning Committee
Crophorne residents, strongly supported by their Parish Council, call for refusal of Application 01686, their reasons based **on previous SWDP consultations, loss of green space, and related highway issues** including unsuitable access off Blacksmiths Lane near the problem junction on the village main street. These reasons are clear, logical and reflect a larger body of village opinion – a Localism Agenda.

This application comes to committee as an unallocated site. That was not always the case, historically it was allocated but appeared in the SWDP Significant Changes Document (August 2012) and was removed as a Housing Association had secured planning permission on a preferred options site in the immediate area, it became apparent sufficient building had been identified elsewhere.

The site is therefore outside the current SWDP proposal (due for acceptance early 2014), and the village development boundary – both issues which normally call for application refusal and GD1 comes into force.

The Officer's Recommendation for Approval relates to a NPPF Framework

The officer's decision for approval has sought to present a balanced view relating as it does to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in respect to a 5 year land supply, especially if we have a deficit.

I understood a Wychavon land deficit did exist, but from an officers report to today's committee I now understand we have a 5.26 land supply, probably 5.46 if we take into consideration a 20% buffer.

5.26 may not be robust – but we are NPPF compliant

On all these issues I would remind members that the terms of the Framework are clear, they in no way negate the merits of any application to be considered on its own right, and within that flexibility, and being land supply compliant would seek a consideration for refusal

Madame Chairman my earlier open letter to members detailed a number of related issues and I will but mention:

A highways situation which has fluctuated from unacceptable to acceptable, dependant on site status, members may wish to seek more detail to support any declaration's made

Heritage is important and must never be undermanaged; indeed this committee has seen fit to appoint a much respected Heritage Champion. Heritage and Conservation are not just about preserving and protecting areas such as this but also having the eyes to see into the future to PROMOTE them for future generations. Members may seek to obtain more information on the value of this site in terms of environmental issues, biodiversity, wildlife etc. all which seem in the present submission to be somewhat light in context.

Rural villages are all different, Cropthorne residents recognises the need for growth and controlled sustainable development. However in this case they see the benefits of this scheme being significantly outweighed by the harm that it will impose to what is a central and sensitive green lung of their village

Members, I believe you have a number of sound reasons for refusal and those I represent respectfully seek that support

The decision rests with you.

RESULT 9 FOR THE SCHEME, 4 AGAINST AND 1 ABSTENTION, THE DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN APPROVED AS AN INDICITIVE OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION.

Normal course of events now would be a follow up more detailed submission to the planning authority.

MOVING FORWARD - Additional comment to Parish Council and residents
The developer has indicated their wish to take all views into consideration on the design of the scheme as it further develops. I believe that any consultation will be good; issues for me would be numbers of affordable houses* some good guides as below, design and size of accommodation, landscaping, car parking, highways/access and best protection to walking routes.

***AFFORDABLE HOUSES - Summary of Estimated Housing Needs (Cropthorne)** it is acknowledged that there is an annual need for 167 additional affordable homes within the district of Wychavon. This need has not been met in recent years and therefore there is an accruing deficit in the district.

A Home Choice Plus choice based lettings scheme can also be used as an indicator of housing need although it is recognised that many households with a need for re-housing do not necessarily register and therefore this is likely to be an under-estimate of the real local housing need.

As at 9th October 2013, Home Choice Plus information indicates a total of **19 households who have a local connection to either the village of Cropthorne or an adjacent parish, who also have a preference for living there.**

In consideration of the information set out above and in light of the fact that in rural areas there is a requirement for priority to be given to people with a local connection for any new

affordable housing, it is considered that there is **a low to medium need for additional affordable housing in the parish.**

In terms of property type, the information available indicates that there is a need for a range of property types, with the predominant need being for smaller 1 and 2 bedroom homes to include houses, bungalows and possibly flats. In terms of tenure types, the main need is for rented accommodation with a very small proportion willing (*and able*) to consider part ownership (subject to local affordability levels).

£ Contributions to Crophorne for any new development

With any new development there is normally S106 monies allocated for infrastructure and related improvements. **If not sought for it will be used elsewhere**

In addition to the education, social housing and possible highways contribution the following social/community contributions can apply and are also secured within the S106 agreement:

- Off Site Public Open Space - total £7064;
- Formal Leisure to the Pershore Sports Hub - £13,600
- Cycling - £335 per dwelling.
- Arts and Culture - £600 total.

I am advised that a project has been identified for the formal leisure contribution. The key contact at Wychavon for all of this is Mr Jem Teal (Community Development Manager) and his team who are in the position to give officers projects so that we can justify the contribution but the intention will always be to make the contribution as flexible as possible in the formal agreement (unless the developer is insistent that the scheme is referred to). Jem carried out an exercise this year with members and parish councils to identify projects which developer contributions could go towards. **Hopefully the Parish have responded to this.**

Once the payment is made Jem and team will be in touch as to how this money should be spent. **In the meantime the parish might want to think about how they would like the money spent and communicate this to Jem.** Just one final point, the Parish cannot start to spend the arts contribution on cycling, or the formal leisure contribution on public open space. We need to be able to audit the spend on the broad areas identified above.

Well that's it, we now move forward to a more detailed submission, and you may see a need to be further involved and be smart to get the best deal for the parish. I acknowledge the support of residents and the Parish Council who made the presentations on your behalf at the planning committee, also those who attended to show their support on what was to be a very long afternoon.

Tom McDonald

Tom McDonald
Wychavon District Councillor for Fladbury Ward

10th October 2012