

Jelson Development Barrow Upon Soar, Melton Road.

Dear members of the Planning Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on the proposed housing development. I am representing the residents of Barrow Upon Soar.

Firstly we are pleased to see the recommendations of the planning officer for refusal, but I would like to make the committee aware of some of the villagers' concerns relating to this development.

The assessments undertaken by the developer are factually incorrect and have not taken account of current on-going developments and their impact.

The information provided is selective, avoiding key points so as to present an impression that this will have minimal impact and is sustainable, when it is clearly not.

1. Highway Safety

We agree with the council in its refusal based on Highway safety grounds as the application is contrary to policy TR/6 and also TR/1. We categorically refute the developers claims that this will have little impact on the traffic and travel within the village. The proposed development would result in significant increases in traffic which would exacerbate existing problems.

- Their own capacity assessments identify 119 vehicles will be queuing over 600 metres through the village at peak times after their development is complete.
- Their report does not take account of current experiences, of up to 20 minutes to get out of the village when local roads are flooded, which is happening with increasing frequency contrary to the planning officers comments in his report.
- The single access to the development will be inadequate and dangerous.

2. Flood Risk

The Flood Risk assessment should be rejected as it is technically flawed and contrary to PPS25

- The development in the proposal is not affected - it is on a hill!
- Existing properties are already impacted by flooding from increasing development over many years - Flooding occurs on a regular basis, these are not freak events! This will only become worse with climate change.
- Network Rail have raised concerns about the effect of the Fishpool brook scouring the tunnel which receives the surface water & springs from around the village and will include the additional flow from this development - Remember it was the effect of scouring which brought down bridges in Cumbria recently.

3. Scale & Dominance

With respect to Scale & Dominance we agree with the council in that the site is contrary to policy EV/1.

Specifically we are concerned that;

- The development is over 15% of the existing total village housing area.
- Three storey properties will overlook the majority of the village.
- There is already development planned or ongoing of over 450 houses within the village.

We feel the council has not considered the suitability of the site for development adequately, it has gone into great detail about the five year supply & the sustainable location but not the suitability of the site and its impact which is not consistent with previous council policy decisions regarding this site in the Local Plan preparation process.

This development is contrary to policy CT/2. This will destroy the natural gateway to the countryside with its open aspects for all to enjoy.

In the consideration of this site in the local plan the site was discarded because it was considered "an intrusive development in a prominent and highly visible area of open countryside" - The Council's words.

Whilst we recognise the report which considered this site is dated for a number of reasons the physical attributes of the site have not changed and we would expect a similar stance to therefore be taken about the suitability of the site for development in principle.

4. Impact on Community and other services

The development will see a significant impact on community services;

- Schools in the area are already full - Hall Orchard is the largest primary school in Leics - Even the Head teacher and a governor has written in to object.
- The medical centre is overloaded.
- There are only 48 public car parking spaces in the village centre.
- There is no car parking or disabled access at the Railway Station, already commuters park on nearby streets creating a hazard.

5. Sustainability

This development is not sustainable as the developers have made sweeping assumptions with little power to implement them - that will fall to the Council along with any costs!

- Most residents will drive into the village due to its distance from the centre
- Public transport links are weak & unreliable.
- There are no major employers in the village so the majority will have to commute.
- Internet access is poor and the service slow, this will become worse as the village grows - this is not going to encourage people to work at home.
- Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – these criteria are not met in this proposal – loss of farm land, demand on local resources and pressure on existing infrastructure.

Because of all of these points, this should bring everyone to the same conclusion, that this it is not sustainable!

6. Conclusions

Although we are pleased with the recommendations of the Planning Officer to refuse the development these are based on technical or factual design reasons and we feel that there is a point of planning principle here to be further added as a reason for refusal along the lines that;

The development would be an incongruous feature in a prominent and highly visible area of open countryside, contrary to policy CT/2 of the adopted Charnwood Local Plan.

And we ask the committee to include this as an additional reason for refusal along with the other points identified.

Thank you