



Longwick-cum-Ilmer Parish Council

PL/25/4603/FA – Application from Nicholas King Strategic

Longwick- Cum – Ilmer Parish Council vigorously object to the application on the following grounds :

The proposal is beyond the agreed development number of new dwellings in the Parish, which was set at 300 homes, within the Neighbourhood Plan to run from 2018 to 2033.

We are already at that number, with 7 more years to run. The imposition of such large numbers has doubled the settlement size in a very short time, and has already had a major impact on both the environment and social cohesion of the Parish. The Council is already burdened, on behalf of the Community, with trying to moderate the impacts. Further building in the short term will make matters worse.

The Proposed site extends beyond the agreed settlement boundary of the Parish and, if it was developed, it would stretch into green, open, meadow land, which would show as clear urban development from the surrounding Chiltern Hills, notably from Whiteleaf Cross and the Icknield Way. This view encompasses adjacent areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and was to be protected within the designs of our Neighbourhood Plan. Allowing such dereliction of the view from the hills, would also fly in the face of the developing County Plan,, which sets out to retain the clear rural settings of existing village communities and settlements, of which Longwick is one having such heritage and complimentary characteristics.

The developers suggest that there is an “acute need for affordable housing in the area “ – this is far from the case as the Housing Needs Study, covering the Parish, and published in March this year, suggests differently, indicating that it is possible that the current rate of movement of our housing stock could be sufficient to meet the needs going forward, especially given that there has been no development of employment opportunity in our location, and employment opportunities remain in areas demanding external travel. The developers contend that Traffic issues “would not cause unacceptable congestion at peak hours times” that is a subjective judgement as we can clearly see over the last 5 years that exits onto the A4129 now frequently have a build up of vehicles trying to enter the traffic flow.

The developers suggest that public views about the proposals were sought ahead of the formal planning application – responses recorded seem to be very few, and suggests that only those in the immediate vicinity were canvassed. We would suggest that if the developers were to come and meet the residents of the wider village they would have a much different information base to work with. Development needs to benefit the community as a whole, and our Neighbourhood Plan was designed with that in mind. We continue that important focus.

Previous developments promised infrastructure improvement in travel links and bus routes – there have been none provided. New residents have difficulty accessing medical and other facilities which are not in our Parish. In particular, the nearest medical provision is not within a reasonable 15-minute travel distance, meaning the development would place additional strain on already overstretched healthcare services and fails to meet sustainability and accessibility requirements. This lack of provision highlights the absence of supporting infrastructure for such growth.

Most domestic and social needs have to be satisfied by travelling to nearby towns – proposals from this developer do nothing to improve that position.

Previous development highlighted the fact that the existing sewage system within the Parish is in need of upgrade, with the current system unable to cope for significant periods of time, resulting in sewage egress and flooding in the North West of the village of Longwick. Thames Water are aware of the issue, and regularly have to use tankers to clear up the excess. They have given no indication of plans to rectify the problem and the Council are pursuing accordingly.

Traffic through Longwick, both ways on the A4129, on to which vehicles from this proposed development would move, has increased dramatically in both volume and speed since the settlement expansion – appropriate speed and calming controls have still not been put in place despite Council requests. The issues are ongoing, and circa 100 + extra vehicle movements a day, on and off the A4129 would compound an already unsatisfactory and unsafe situation, with very significant traffic flows, in both directions across the proposed entrance to the A4129.

It is also noted that parts of the proposed site have potential contaminant issues and no existing drainage connections in use. On that basis such development further prejudices the ability of our existing overstretched sewage provision to cope. Environmental risk is quoted as “moderate to high”.

These are all serious issues and the Parish Council urges the Planning Authority to refuse this application.