

## Notes for Planning Committee Meeting, 15th November 2017

**S/3405/17/OL** - This has similar issues to the previous applications s/1969/15/OL and s/2553/16/OL. The holding objections and previous comments remain relevant to this application.

- This site is outside the village envelope and an omission site in the Local Development Plan (LDP) framework.
- The site was rejected in the SHLAA assessments, as having no development potential.
- Linton is a minor rural centre, which limits development to a maximum of 30 houses.
- That [there are positive signs about the Inspectors' view on five-year housing land supply](#) in the emerging LDP. Housing sites sufficient for 5 year needs are being identified without this.
- The sites around Linton were rejected in the LDP and the reasons for rejection still hold.
- The emerging Neighbourhood Plan (NP) does not support such housing development outside the village framework.
- The application is essentially a re-submission of earlier applications, which were rejected. For consistency, this should also be rejected. The assessments in the previous applications were identified as being out-of-date (e.g. Traffic flow, village facilities, etc) and remain so.
- In the indicative plan and layout, we see provision for 42 houses, 20 allotments, mitigation for loss of amenity and privacy, and many other features (see later comments). As LPC plans could only fit 44 standard garden allotments onto the site, we do not consider there to be sufficient space in the ownership of the applicant to deliver the development as indicated.
- The shortcomings of the site, noted in previous objections and including reasons for its previous rejection, have not been overcome.
- The data and assessments are out of date - particularly the traffic data - matters have changed considerably since then and have not been taken into account.
- Along with the cumulative nature of recent and proposed developments, this application would not provide any benefit that would outweigh the significant harm caused.

### **Landscape**

- The landscape and visual assessment appears very similar to that of the previous applications and does no more to address or mitigate the impact of this development on our village. The reasons for refusal of previous applications remain unresolved.
- The site is on rising ground, part of the area's character rolling chalk landscape, where the village nestles into the river valley.
- Housing here would have a greater visual impact on landscape and impact on current housing due to its elevation in this low rolling countryside.
- The landscape and visual assessment still fails to consider the adverse effect on the views from the east, views out of the village, views out of Linton's Special Conservation Area, and Linton's setting in the open landscape.
- A landscape mitigation strip would take time to grow and not compensate for the loss of the "soft edge" approach to Linton, and its effect on the setting of the village. The northern boundary hedge would be breached for the access road.
- The western edge of the site contains a strip of land that does not belong to the Diocese. This reduces the available area for hedging. It cannot be included as part of mitigation.

- The hedges and boundary treatments would be predominantly part of resident's gardens, where their protection and preservation could not be controlled, no matter what conditioning is placed upon them. We are aware that trees in gardens can cause problems or be unwelcome, resulting in their being lopped, pruned or lost, reducing the screening effect.
- Building here will neither conserve nor enhance the amenity of the village's natural, built and historic environment and resources. It certainly would not "improve" the edge of Linton, compared to the open countryside we now have. The scheme would detrimentally impact on the landscape, townscape, the outstanding Conservation Area, above and below ground heritage, and community facilities

### **Archaeology and Heritage**

- The site was rejected previously on archaeological issues. It is now known to contain significant evidence of Bronze Age barrows and a "regionally significant" Neolithic cursus monument (a processional way) along with more evidence of Saxon and Roman occupation: such remains should be preserved (perhaps like Arbury Camp?)
- The Archaeological Statement (6.2) states that *"Due to access and agricultural constraints geophysical survey formed the only feasible technique for archaeological field evaluation of the site prior to determination of the current outline application. There is no indication that the geophysical survey has provided anything other than reliable evidence for the site's archaeological potential"*. However, it was the digging that provided the evidence of the cursus, flint pits, etc.
- The Archaeological Statement (6.3) notes no current scheduled sites, but due to the potential of the site (6.4) what might further investigation reveal?
- It is not clear what the extent of destruction might be as the impact of building has not been properly assessed. It is likely that building here would result in complete destruction
- Linton is a village of historical significance (having South Cambs only Outstanding Conservation Area) which we promote in the Heritage Trail, for example. Each time there is new building we lose detail from the overall historic picture. We cannot afford to lose more of our cultural heritage. Loss of archaeological evidence diminishes our cultural heritage
- Further evidence of Linton's history is emerging with the enforced investigations for speculative planning applications. We already have evidence of over 5,000 years of habitation, we now have further evidence of the significance and importance of this area
- It is not sufficient to seek further investigation and suitable handling of finds through conditioning. Full investigation and sufficient preservation is required.
- The religious significance of the site is ironic, given that it is the Diocese that wants to destroy this obviously ancient spiritual site - which includes human burial sites.
- Further work is required to establish the extent of the cursus and other remains. Preservation of these should be required. This would, of course, further reduce the area available for development (along with the SUDS, LEAP, public open space, boundary treatments, landscape buffers, bunds and banking, area not owned by the Diocese, allotments, provision of sufficient parking, pedestrian links, area licensed to residents of Harefield Rise to mitigate the overlooking housing above their bungalows, etc..

### **Surface water run-off and Flooding Assessment**

- We would query whether the SUDS scheme is appropriate for the site in principle, in view of the poor percolation of the soil elsewhere on this hillside. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the ground is appropriate and would not markedly increase the flooding to the village, and there is no clarity over future management and maintenance of the system, and no clarity about the necessary outlet to a watercourse

within the control of the applicant. The proposal is likely to cause significant reduction of permeability over the site and considerable flooding of existing properties below the level of the site.

- The Drainage Strategy, has not taken into account the updated EA flooding Assessment Mapping report, but the strategy does now concede the significant flow of surface water from higher ground resulting in greater potential for flooding.
- Surface water flooding is an issue affecting neighbours, especially those to the south and downhill of the site (as recently seen in Bakers Lane, Martins Lane, Lonsdale, etc)
- The site remains higher than the surroundings housing - considerably higher than the ground level in Harefield Rise (around 5ft or 1.5m from garden level to the field level)
- The treatment at the access of the site (3.2.4) protects the site but adds to flooding potential to Horseheath Road and adjacent properties; the proposed mitigation strategy, should it work, will increase the risk to Lonsdale. This is against LP policy CC9 which allows no increase in flood risk elsewhere. How would the developer insure against this risk?
- The site is above a major aquifer, acknowledged in 3.2.3, which would be sensitive to pollution and any sewage overflows (the village drains system is at capacity - the pipelines regularly block and back-up)
- We would question that the proposed soakaways and SUDs could cope with the sudden torrential rainstorms that we have recently experienced. Climate change predictions would postulate that this would be an increasing phenomena.
- The flow of water in the revised SUDS related scheme is towards the housing in Martins Lane and Lonsdale. The bunds and banks designed to halt this are likely to be washed away or flattened over time (particularly if they should be in private garden - conditioning would not prevent this happening). They would be of reducing efficacy over time.
- The proposed SUDS has an infiltration trench located in the SW corner at the lowest point of the proposed overland flow route. This is near 'Test Pit 1' in the infiltration tests, which drained at only  $1.2 \times 10^{-5} \text{ ms}^{-1}$ . This is lower than the Council's minimum rate which the applicant quotes as  $50 \times 10^{-5} \text{ ms}^{-1}$  (section 3.4.2). At 2.5m depth, the base of this test pit will be at the ground level of the neighbouring properties, which would take the water soaking into the ground here.
- These infiltration tests are the second set of tests to be carried out on this site and that infiltration failed in 3 of the 4 test pits previously.
- The analyses appear to be performed using FSR technique, rather than using the FEH method which might produce a different conclusion. The Environment Agency is clear on the effective differences, including soil wetness across both seasons and time.
- The failed porosity tests and an independent report show this part of the village is lacking in drains capacity and flow.
- The proposed SUDs has no outlet to a natural watercourse so would overflow into neighbouring properties and down lanes.
- Flood water from the surrounding rising ground eventually feeds into the Granta affecting the floodplain (which will be further compromised by recently approved applications on Bartlow Road). This will increase flooding to our village, its centre and villages downstream.

#### **Indicative layout and site plan**

- The area indicated for each dwelling appears rather small, especially when compared to the plans drawn for this to be allotments - we could fit only 44 standard allotments, with screening. The applicant's plan shows 42 houses and 20 allotments, along with the SUDS, LEAP, public areas, boundary treatments, landscape buffers, bunds and banking, the area not owned by the Diocese, sufficient parking, pedestrian links, area licensed to residents of Harefield Rise to mitigate the overlooking housing above their bungalows, etc..

- We have concerns that back-to-back distances would not be met, size of houses being adequate for comfortable living, space for the proposed screening, etc.
- The houses would be similarly close to Wheatsheaf Barn, affecting amenity of the residents.
- The Design and Access statement 8.13 notes that there would be "*defensible garden to the front, in common with existing built form*" This again reduces the achievability of spacing.
- The emerging Local Plan recommends 2 parking spaces per household (1 within curtilage) or 1 per bedroom. Garages are being built too small to accommodate modern cars. There is little public parking, especially if it is to include space for those using the allotments.
- The housing needs for the village are predominantly for bungalows (for disabled access and for older residents to downsize) and affordable homes to reflect the needs of our current population. We note that there are no starter homes included in the mix.
- Housing is described as "mainly being 2 main storeys" (Design and Access Statement 9.2), but recent housing designs tends towards 3rd floor living space, and permissive development allows conversion to living space in the loft/roof space. This would be greatly out of character and with even greater impact on neighbours and the landscape.
- Bungalows on the southern edge are around 1.8m below the ground level of the field, set low so that only part of the roofs are visible from the north. Even the proposed bungalows would overlook the mature dwellings on Harefield Rise and Martins Lane. However, this is outline application only with no guarantee of the final housing mix or plan.
- We question whether the planned development is deliverable, as indicated.

### **Sustainability factors**

- The Planning Statement again includes as benefits such things as affordable housing (which is mandatory) and stipends for the Diocese - not a material planning consideration
- The statement has the usual errors, such as us having 29 shops, nearby bus stops, etc.
- The travel distances are not accurate - see additional information and walking distances map
- Linton is a minor Rural Centre which allows a maximum of 30 houses in a development.
- The infrastructure is already at or very near capacity for GP and medical services, water, sewage, roads, etc.,
- Schools and the Village College are confirmed to be at capacity (In particular LIS has little physical scope for expansion). Expansion of numbers for Linton children will impact on local villages. The resultant need to travel for education is not sustainable and would be an additional cost to CCC.
- Recent development outline approval at Bartlow Road and the piecemeal and cumulative infill developments recently built, or in the course of being built in the village, will absorb any current capacity in utilities and amenities.
- There has been no developer consultation prior to submission - as there was no consultation on layout under the previous application. There has been no public consultation by the Diocese, nor interaction with the Parish Council over this application. This does not meet the requirements of the Localism Act.
- The indicative design of the development with its LEAP and open space, its distance from the village facilities, with housing predominantly for commuters, etc, would lead to an introverted community, not "*facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities*" (3.9)
- Even the supposed link to the village only leads into Lonsdale, a small estate at the edge of the village - and there is no guarantee that a link could be legally created.

Another link is proposed down Martins Lane, which is privately owned, un-adopted and a run off route for surface water flooding. These links are theoretical only.

- To walk to the village centre with its shops, pubs, schools and services, is 1km <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> mile. To the Rec and sports facilities, nearly a mile (1.4 km). As few will walk, we expect more cars and congestion in the village centre. It is nearly 2km from the Village College. These would be unlikely to be accessed on foot. As a result, the development would add to the traffic and parking problems of the village. See *LPC Sustainability Distances and map*.
- Except for a modest Co-op, our shops are small, serving specialist/niche markets. Residents will shop elsewhere - where they can park - bringing no economic benefit from commerce and no new jobs. Conditioning of Travel Plan packs and co-ordinators does not actually provide any sensible alternatives to car journeys. We have no safe cycle routes, and pavement on only one side of Horseheath Road.
- There is no separate economic assessment but the Planning Statement notes that there will be input to local shops. Linton has few retail shops, and those are mainly aimed at small niche markets. Due to congestion, lack of parking and the distance from the village centre most shopping is done on-line or at supermarkets in Cambridge, Saffron Walden or Haverhill. The other commercial premises appear to be thriving with their current clientele and village workforce.
- The planning statement indicates that additional jobs would be created during construction, with more in associated employment. Unless there is control of the contract of the Main Contractor (who does the actual building work), which can stipulate and measure the labour used within, say, the local post-codes they will use their own established supply chains. Thus, it is unlikely that there will be any additional employment for local people. We are aware that there was no work for local builders or other trades from the development of The Rookery, Nichols Court or Keene Fields.
- This site provides no potential for employment within the village (except for a Travel Plan Co-ordinator, who might be less than busy) so would probably attract incoming commuters, only adding to the burden on the infrastructure and A1307.
- This application is not sustainable by the criteria applied in the NPPF, and these numbers are not deliverable. It would be an unsympathetic and damaging neighbour to our existing housing and community

### **Traffic and Transport**

- The Transport Assessment looks familiar, using data from 2011 to determine the accessibility, weight of traffic and the problems that would be caused. It is stipulated by CCC Highways (see e-mail from Tam Parry) that traffic data should not be more than 3 years old. The village has more housing since then, as have surrounding villages, Haverhill, Saffron Walden, etc. All of these add to the traffic flow through and affecting Linton.
- More recent data gives a more detailed analysis of the increasing problems on Horseheath Road, for the village and local highways - LPC can expand upon this.
- We would like to highlight the increasing use of Horseheath Road by commuters. We are aware that Horseheath Road, like Balsham, Bartlow and Back roads, and our High Street are being used as a commuter intersection to avoid the issues of the A1307 and to reach the work places around Cambridge (confirmed by the ICENI data for recent planning applications). This results in Horseheath Road being increasingly busy during peak hours - just when residents would want to leave the site. To describe Wheatsheaf Way as quiet is inaccurate, to say the least. It is the route to the junior school and Balsham Road, which is now a preferred route from the A1307 to the A11 and the City.
- The junction with A1307 is difficult and dangerous; commuters would leave by safer routes through the village, adversely impacting our vulnerable historic village centre.
- Due to parked cars, a large section of Horseheath Road from Wheatsheaf Way as far as the junction with High Street is effectively single lane for much of the day. Insufficient

parking on site would lead to further parking on the road, reducing sight lines and increasing hazard.

- Parking and traffic issues are already threatening our bus service. The nearest bus stops are outside sustainability distances with access to express buses around 1.6km, on the A1307.
- Traffic from site would add to the problems caused by recent and expected developments on Horseheath Road having insufficient on-site parking. This road is part of the Safer Routes to School, used by children and the "walking bus". There is pavement on only one side
- The site access is into a 60 mph area, adding to safety issues. The access is opposite that for Wheatsheaf Barn (the Vet's house) compromising their safety of access to Horseheath Road.
- There is only one access to site for cars - a proposed off site path only leads to Lonsdale. Any foot access to Bartlow Road via Martins Lane (3.8 and 3.9) is not likely, especially due water and puddles that form here.
- The paths to the village are not in good condition and poorly lit. Dropped kerbs have already been provided by the Parish Council through MHII. One more, for the benefit of the site, and a few cycle racks would not make development acceptable

#### **Other factors**

- Allotments are part of this plan, but if these are leased rather than village-owned, they will easily be lost to further development. Linton has already lost at least 3 leased allotment sites and LPC were pursuing purchase of this land for village food production.
- This is good agricultural land, which should not be lost for food production.
- The status and permanence of the proposed allotments has not been made clear
- The long-term management of the boundary treatments, SUDS, LEAP, etc is also unclear.
- The s106 does not include sufficient Planning Obligation. The scheme would not provide sufficient contribution to compensate for the increased demands on local infrastructure, roads, schools, and other facilities including flood abatement.
- In the absence of clear up-to-date reports, the Holding Objections of s/1969/15/OL remain.
- This development would bring significant harm to the character of the landscape, its historical significance and the environment, that far outweighs any benefit the housing would bring (as there are likely to be more suitable sites elsewhere in the district).

The Local Plan is becoming increasingly robust regarding the housing land supply, ensuring the growing population of Cambridge will be housed, without the need to cause harm to our village by this unsustainable development. Also, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan does not support such developments as this for Linton.

Linton is a thriving village, growing at a natural pace, following development since the 1970's which saw it more than quadruple in size. We have since had small developments, infill houses and extensions, with more expected. We still have space for limited infill housing and would like some social housing to be maintained as rental properties. We can cope with these, but neither want nor need large developments like the four we are faced with at the moment.

In order to remain viable and thriving, Linton does not need to grow beyond the current settlement boundary. This planning application would substantially affect the village and our hard-won quality of life. The obvious and significant harm caused by it would outweigh any claimed benefits.