

15th November 2015

37 Old Pinewood Way
Papworth Everard
Cambridge
CB23 3GT

Mr J Stone
The Planning Department
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge, CB23 6EA

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Dear Mr Stone

S/2647/15/OL: Residential Development at Land East of Ridgeway and Old Pinewood Way, Papworth Everard

I am writing to object to the outline planning application above – whilst the proposal is very detailed and clearly the applicant has spent considerable time and money with their retained consultants, their objectivity should be questioned and a number of material factors have not been considered adequately or with sufficient local detail / knowledge.

My objection is in three parts:

- 1. Impact on local residents, including access to the site**
- 2. Impact of village infrastructure**
- 3. Lack of consideration of wider factors, such as Local Development Plan and other development sites**

As a previous purchaser of a new-build Bloor home in Northamptonshire, I have no doubts about the design, workmanship and build quality in their developments. However, on this occasion the factors combine to make this an inappropriate time, location and design – I would therefore suggest that planning consent should be declined

1. Impact on Local Residents

a. **Access to Site:** the access along Wood Lane is severely constricted with:

- parked cars
- numerous junctions (4 junctions in the space of 100 metres)
- driveways and a block of garages, with vehicles reversing onto the carriageway
- traffic calming, with cars parked between the chicanes at most times
- there is a single narrow pavement, yet Wood Lane is a key road for children of all ages to reach the centre of the village for school buses or access to the primary school

An approximate quadrupling of traffic (4 times the number of properties as on Old Pinewood Way, before additional nursery traffic is considered) would cause **danger, delays and disruption** at peak times. Pendragon Hill is not a suitable access route either. This is without taking any consideration of **2-3 years' of mixed construction traffic**.

b. **Traffic volumes:** the supplied automated **traffic survey data is flawed** by taking summer days (June / July) when people have a higher tendency to walk within the village (or be on holiday). Also, the counted traffic survey on 5th March 2015 was a dry day – again, **wet weather considerably increases traffic volumes**. Also, the assumptions on how traffic volume would increase is **flawed by assuming 2011 Census Data** average for population and employment commuting trends in Papworth – as I explain later,

with no prospect of further employment within the village and inadequate public transport provision, the frequency of car journeys (with or without children) will be vastly higher than those assumed.

- c. **Emergency Vehicles:** whilst the traffic diagrams show that a fire engine could swing wide enough to access the site, this assumes that there **are no parked cars along Ridgeway, which cannot be guaranteed** – nor is it reasonable to put double-yellow lines outside the properties here to ensure access to turn into the proposed development

- d. **Nursery provision:** whilst additional childcare may be needed in the village, adding a nursey into a new housing development and alongside existing homes will **create additional noise** (which has not been assessed – children in large numbers playing outside generates considerable noise). It is noted that significant numbers of people work from home - they will be adversely impacted. Also, the transport assessment assumes that one-third of children will be dropped via a pedestrian journey – this assumption is flawed as it **fails to take account of the proportion of working parents** who will use the nursery facilities (i.e. higher than average, as they will drop their children in their car on the way to work) and also the location of the **proposed nursery being well away from the main transport links and existing primary school, meaning that car journeys will represent significantly more than the number shown and assumed** – this generates further traffic along Wood Lane, which will introduce considerable **2-way flows at peak times**, through a single lane stretch of road, thereby exacerbating congestion.

- e. **Residential Amenity:** all the existing residences of Ridgeway, Old Pinewood Way and Woodhead Place will be adversely impact by being **overlooked and a loss of privacy**. The tree planting in some areas will partially negate this during spring/summer, when trees are in leaf, but most of the planting is at low level and therefore privacy into the existing houses' windows and gardens will be heavily impacted. The **existing residences have a right to continued privacy and the quiet outlook they currently enjoy** – this will be removed when 215 houses, in a considerably higher density than existing housing, are placed adjacent to them

- f. Having **two foul water pumping stations** and an attenuation pond adjacent to a residential area is both inappropriate and dangerous, with **odours, noise and risk to children of deep water in a leisure area**. These intrusions are also very close to protected, ancient woodland.

2. Impact on village infrastructure

- a. **Schools:** Pendragon Primary School in the village is now over-subscribed, with children from the village failing to gain entry to the school – this is before the remaining homes being built at the Summers Field development are completed and occupied. Even if the school could be extended further on the existing site, the access along Varrier Jones Drive is chaotic at peak times. The unfortunate residents of Varrier Jones Drive and the roads leading from it strive to avoid the 8.20am – 9.00am period each morning, to get around the gridlock and road-rage that can be regularly experienced (particularly during inclement weather).
The catchment secondary school (Swavesey Village College) is also at capacity (despite an extra intake class being added in the last year) – alternative schooling would need to be found for the significant numbers of children who would be living on the Ridgeway development.

- b. **Employment:** With the impending move of Papworth Hospital out of the village to the Addenbrookes Biomedical Campus, employment opportunities in the village will be vastly reduced, meaning that new residents in Papworth Everard will be forced to commute to their workplaces – this has substantial impacts on the existing infrastructure:

- c. **Public Transport:** the provision in Papworth Everard of public transport is severely limited – there is **one bus route for commuters / students to Cambridge** with a **single peak-time bus leaving the village at 7.28am** – after which, the next service leaves the village at 9.23am. At the other end of the day, the last bus leaves Cambridge for Papworth at 6.05pm, meaning that for most working people, where working hours need some flexibility; this is far from an ideal situation. The provision of buses to / from Papworth has diminished over recent years, so there is not any realistic likelihood of this increasing – even with the additional bus service proposed, from recent experience, **take-up is likely to be severely limited and unless the subsidy is continued indefinitely, the service will be unviable** – the traffic situation means that commuters to Cambridge have to have **flexibility to get them to the door of their workplace**, rather than the constraints of a bus service (which will be **considerably slower** than the equivalent car journey, due to additional stops / detours to villages)
- d. **Road Links:** Papworth Everard has benefitted from the bypass built a few years ago – however, it is **effectively marooned within the overstretched networks of the A1198 and A428**, even when things are running smoothly. As most employment opportunities are towards Cambridge, commuters must endure the A1198 south from the village towards Caxton Gibbet roundabout for the intersection at the A428. This whole route is made up of solid traffic stretching back into the village adjacent to Summers Field / Papworth Business Park and also back along the bypass. It typically takes **30-40 minutes to get from the back of this queue out onto the A428** – further traffic from the village would only exacerbate this situation. When there are traffic problems on the A1 or A14, the **gridlock round the village** can occur at any time of day, with the A1198 being the primary alternative north-south route through Cambridgeshire – this happens with surprising regularity and is dangerous to the residents of Papworth, Cambourne and surrounding villages due to the miles of blocked single-carriageway roads that occur (emergency access is severely restricted)
- e. **Doctors Surgery:** I cannot comment fully on the healthcare provision in the village. The Papworth Surgery has already been extended once, so I suspect there is **not room for further expansion on-site**. Whilst access to appointments is currently acceptable, I would expect that a further 750 people in the village would take things over-capacity, particularly given the greater than average demands of some residents within Papworth.
- f. **Services and Utilities:** I have limited knowledge of the provision of water, electricity, gas and sewerage services within the village. What I can say is that are regular odour issues with the existing volumes of waste being processed at the sewage works at the northern end of the village.

3. Consideration of Other Factors

- a. **Local Plan:** Papworth has had a local development plan in place for many years. This has provided **guidance to residents, developers and land-owners over the last 2 decades** as to what they might expect in their community and environment. By proposing a development outside this zone, the proposer and land-owner are seeking an opportunistic profit, without any advantage to the village community, and indeed, **puts at risk the very village that they seek to add to**. I understand that **South Cambridgeshire District Council** have declined to approve development / planning opportunities on this site on more than one occasion over recent years.
- b. **Residential Development within Papworth:** there are a number of suitable **development areas within the existing boundaries of the village and closer to local amenities**, without having to draw traffic / residents up a small feeder road (Wood Lane). These are both green-field and brown-field/reclaimed

land – these should be **explored and developed first**, and certainly before any future development on agricultural land in Papworth is considered for permission. Also, with the closure / transfer of Papworth Hospital considerable development land in the centre of the village is likely to become available – hence the **timing of the Ridgeway development is ill-considered** given that a more central residential development may be possible. Note that all of the above ignores the impact I have highlighted in section 2 of the burden of further development in the village.

- c. **Other Residential Development Land in South Cambridgeshire:** Cambourne has more widespread opportunities, with thousands of houses planned for both **West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield**. Also, **Northstowe** is being planned from the outset **for long-term viability and sustainability**, with the **appropriate transport links and infrastructure** being considered as part of the development, rather than trying to add opportunities onto existing villages

In conclusion, I would respectfully suggest that if Bloor Homes feels that more houses should be built in South Cambridgeshire, it should explore the options outlined above – no doubt the land costs in these locations will be higher than at Papworth.

The claim on their *Ridgeway* website that Papworth offers a “sustainable development” location with access to a “number of facilities including a school, doctor’s surgery and public transportation” is frankly inaccurate currently and will be stretched beyond breaking point with an additional 215 homes in the village.

I would implore South Cambridgeshire District Council and its Planning Committee to reject this outline planning application as it undermines the fabric of the existing village community in so many ways. I would be willing to speak to any member of the council / planning committee to explain my views and any detail more fully.

I look forward to receiving your response to my letter.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Davis

With copies to:

Heidi Allen MP (South Cambridgeshire)

Papworth Everard Parish Council – Clerk and Assistant Clerk

Chris Howlett (local councillor)