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Cherwell District Council
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4th October 2019

To whom it may concern

Re: OBJECTION to Application 19/01705/OUT

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed development of up to 95 dwellings on land adjoining and west of Bloxham recreation ground South Newington road, Bloxham as proposed by Gladman of Gladman House, Alexandria Way, Congleton, CW12 1LB.

In the draft local plan 2006 – 2031, there were 83 dwellings allocated to Bloxham; the number of dwellings built since 2006 has very significantly exceeded this allocation.

Bloxham has already played its part in the provision of local housing and further development will be both socially and environmentally detrimental to the village.

In addition, the proposed development directly contravenes policy decisions and guidelines in the Bloxham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 - 2031 (referred to in the text below as BL), National Environmental Sustainability (ESD) Policy, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Cherwell Local Plan Policies (Policy Villages 2).

There are a number of significant issues that make this proposed development non-viable in Bloxham:-

- BL Para 2.2 – Clearly shows that Bloxham is a rural community which the 2007 Dept. of Transport 'Manual for Streets' categorises as 'low density rural.' Policy ESD13 of the Adopted Plan (2015) seeks to protect and enhance local landscape. The proposed development encroaches significantly into the rural countryside surrounding the village and cannot be seen to protect or enhance the local landscape.
- BL policies 1 & 2 (*Policies on sustainable housing and size of developments*) – In the Neighbourhood plan shows that a development of circa 85 dwellings to the south of the Milton Road are supported. These dwellings have been built. The proposal therefore contravenes BL 1 & 2.
- The Policy Villages 2 (Cherwell local plan) specifies a total of 750 dwellings to be constructed in Category A villages (of which Bloxham is one). Cherwell District Council (CDC) already has plans covering the 750 dwellings and has a full 5 year housing supply plan fulfilling its obligations. Therefore the proposed development in Bloxham is not required to meet the requirement.
- BL policy 7 – *Development should not increase flooding*. The area on and around the proposed site includes a flood plain. It is in an area that regularly floods. The development works have the potential to cause disturbance and blockages to culverts and drains thus increasing the risk of additional flooding.
- BL policy 9 (c) and NPPF 108 (c) – *effect on traffic and mitigation*. There are significant road traffic issues in the village.

- A Road Safety Foundation report (Sept 2015) which places the stretch of the A361 between Chipping Norton and Banbury – the main road through Bloxham - as the 8th most dangerous road in the country, with the report identifying 46% of the accidents being cyclists or pedestrians and the situation has worsened in the 4 years since the report was issued.
- The High St area by the shops is persistently congested causing long traffic jams and potential safety hazards for pedestrians.
- The local shops are becoming crowded and require more frequent deliveries to keep stocked, which adds to the congestion in High St.
- The A361 is heavily used, including large HGV vehicles. The road junctions at Courtington Lane/Tadmarton Road (by the primary school), Courtington Lane/A361 (by Bloxham School) and Tadmarton Rd/A361 (by the garage) become quickly congested.
- The roads around the primary school are dangerously busy at peak times. Councillors approving this development will have clearly been to this area during the peak times and will have deemed it to not be busy or dangerous.
- There has been no significant investment in traffic infrastructure associated with the other recent housing developments and the addition traffic caused by this proposal will exacerbate an increasingly dangerous situation.
- BL policy 9 (d) and NPPF 94 – *Schooling for new development*. Bloxham primary school is full. There is no scope to expand the school. The increased numbers waiting for places will decrease the catchment area and put stress on other local villages. The Warriner School is full. The local playgroups and nursery are full.
- BL policy 11 – *Development should respect the local character (c) and the historic and natural assets of the area. (c) it should make a positive contribution to the character of Bloxham and its rural feel. (f) To preserve existing areas of open space and to create new open space to retain the rural character. (i) To protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats*. The proposed development eradicates a section of rural land replacing it with housing, which will not respect local character or preserve historic and natural assets. The development destroys a significant area of open countryside on the current boundary to the village, which has views over to the church spire across the green fields. It is well known to all that the development encroaches on the Slade Wildlife reserve (registered), which is a rare wet woodland area. It cannot be seen that a development adjacent to this can in any way protect or enhance biodiversity and habitats.
- ESD10, ESD13, NPPF 84 and NPF 174 – the same issues and arguments above (BL policy 11) apply.

I express my opposition to the proposed development.

Bloxham is no longer able to sustain the developmental rates that are being subjected to it. Little if any infrastructure investment has been allocated to the village in conjunction with the many recent developments. An urgent and full review of what the village needs to support the increases in population, social capacity, local infrastructure, environmental effects and traffic management is required before any further housing developments are approved in the village. This proposed development must not be approved.

Yours sincerely

Mark Bletchly