

The Bourtons Parish Council
Great & Little Bourton, Banbury, Oxfordshire

4 May 2022

Mr James Kirkham, Principle Planning Officer
General Developments Planning Team
Development Management
Cherwell District Council

Re : Planning application 21/00922/OUT : Land West of Foxden Way, Great Bourton

Bourtons Parish Council **object** to this application and would ask that our objections lodged on 4th May 2021 are also considered when determining this decision.

First Home applications are new to us and also to CDC we understand. As this may be the first of such applications, we can understand that CDC may wish to deliver it as a plus point on their target list. However, Great Bourton is not the optimum location for the reasons we and many of our residents have previously outlined.

As this application is likely to be the first of its kind in the Cherwell District and the applicant has, we believe, provided some misleading information to support their case, we would respectively ask that the following additional information also be considered.

Our additional information falls into the following categories:

1. Great Bourton is a category B village with limited transport services, no essential amenities and is therefore not sustainable;
 - 1.1 Lack of Transport.
 - 1.2 The traffic implications are far more serious than the applicant has reported; Foxden Way (the site entrance) is not a 'quiet lane' – it's a narrow lane with a 60mph speed limit;
 2. This proposed development would seriously impact on the local landscape;
 3. The provision for foul water and surface water excess is inadequate;
 4. The applicant's references to surveys and statistics are misleading.
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1. GREAT BOURTON IS NOT A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION:

1.1 Great Bourton is a category B village with a skeleton transport service and relies on the essential amenities and services which are available in the next Category A village (Cropredy) some 2km away. Furthermore, it is a greenfield site which would intrude significantly into the local countryside landscape and does not comply with Rural Exception Site Guidance.

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1.2 From what we have been able to understand, this revised application, now on a reduced site, has only the change of terminology for its content and its availability to potential residents. We note that one significant difference is that if First Homes are available in Great Bourton, they would be available to applicants across the whole of the Cherwell District so are not necessarily for local residents or those with a connection to the village.

1.3 We note that the information provided by the applicants, taken from the YouGov survey on the need for affordable housing represents less than 0.1% of Cherwell's population: although in fact we have no way of knowing if they live in Cherwell - the survey itself says respondents live 'in and around the Cherwell district'. It is not a survey of people for whom the First Homes initiative is intended, since the only qualification administered by the researchers was that respondents' income was less than £100,000 per year - which is true of 99% of Oxfordshire residents.

1.4 However, it is still a rural exception site and still subject to the limitations determined by its qualification as a Category B village as stated in CDCs Village Categorisation update 2014. This is further confirmed in the accompanying CDC village survey results in which Great Bourton meets none of the requirements which would support the description of 'sustainable'.

1.1 LACK OF TRANSPORT:

1.1.1. The Applicants' transport report T21512 (2.40) Table 3, refers to the 497 and 502 bus services, both of which have long been discontinued. A regular service is provided by Johnson Coaches for Little Bourton (2.1 km away) but does not provide a service for Great Bourton. The Agility bookable service, available on Tuesdays and Thursdays only to Banbury town centre, does not provide an adequate service for employment or education nor does it provide a suitable connection to any of the local Railway Stations and its existence relies on the financial support of local Parish Councils whose resources are stretched in line with those of CDC and OCC. This bookable service will remain only as long as Parish Council financial support is in place, so cannot be regarded as a permanent feature to the overall transport provision.

1.1.2 We have previously highlighted the fact that there is a free bus service to and from Cropredy school for primary school aged children, but for children whose choice of secondary school falls outside of the bottom two secondary schools in the league table ranking, there is a transport cost of at least £ £826 per annum. For the three top schools in the catchment area and for families choosing any other secondary school in Warwickshire or Oxfordshire other than Kineton, taxis are necessary (circa £1,000 per annum) or a robust car sharing system for parents to take the children to and from school. The preferred state secondary school for most families in the Bourtons is Kineton High School – travel cost £826/annum.

1.1.3 Therefore the travel options outlined in the applicants' statements 2.49 and 2.50 are incorrect: residents on this proposed site would definitely need to rely on private car travel so the proposals do not accord with the guiding principles of the NPPF. We submit therefore that a First Homes development in Great Bourton would not meet either the carbon footprint optimum or amenities criteria nor would it support a sustainable feature.

1.2. TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

1.2.1 The applicants' statement in 2.7 and 5.12 of report T21512, describes Foxden Way as a lightly trafficked rural Lane that essentially operates as a 'quiet lane': **this is untrue.**

1.2.2 All roads to and from Foxden Way are single track roads and to suggest that residents' driveways in School Lane can be used for informal passing points is unacceptable.

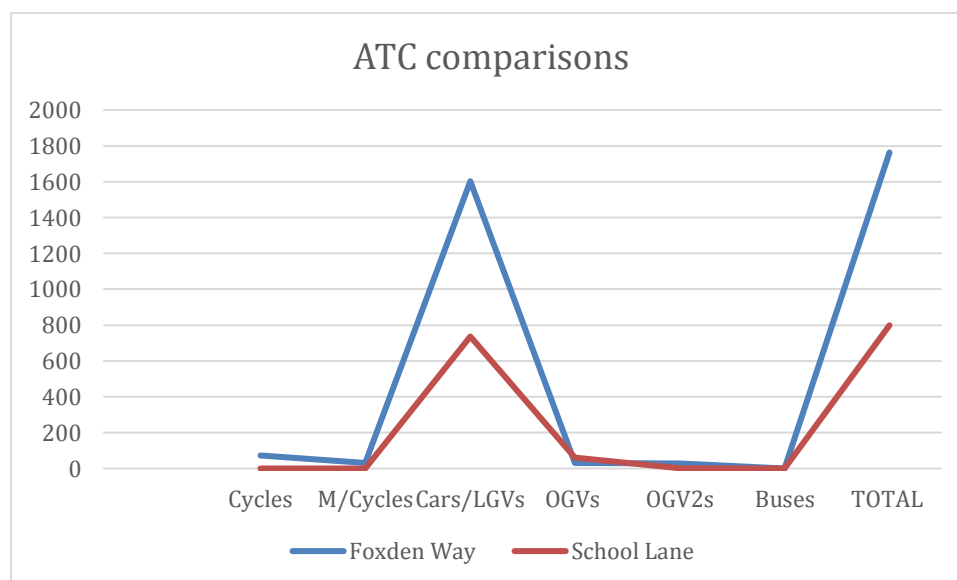
1.2.3 Crow Lane is equally difficult for vehicles to pass each other and only a noticeably short stretch of it can accommodate passing vehicles. Furthermore the entrance to it from Main Street is particularly narrow, making it totally unsuitable for incoming construction traffic.

1.2.4 Access for vehicles using the Little Bourton turn from the A423 is equally difficult. The cottages on Spring Lane have on road parking which makes access particular difficult for large vehicles, as the local farmers will testify.

1.2.4 The applicants' transport report T21512 (2.8) states that their ATC conducted on School Lane in October 2019 provides a reliable evidence base to assess impacts. **It does not.** The Parish Council's own ATC taken on Foxden Way at the end of April 2021 is far more relevant to this application, given that the proposed entrance to the site is from Foxden Way.

1.2.5 The full results of our ATC are provided as an Appendix in our first response but a quick guide and comparison is provided below:

ATC Location	Cycles	M/Cycles	Cars/LGVs	OGVs	OGV2s	Buses	TOTAL
Foxden Way (2021)	72	30	1601	32	28	0	1763
School Lane (2019)	0	0	736	61	2	0	799



1.2.6 Therefore by comparison the weekly traffic movements recorded by the applicant's ATC in School Lane, of 799 per week, does not provide an adequate summary of the traffic implications compared to the 1,763 weekly traffic movements recorded in Foxden Way. The

Foxden Way ATC also records 3.74% of vehicles travelling above speed limit in the 30mph, 20m stretch, between the 30mph sign and the junction with Crow Lane.

1.2.7 We suggest that the applicants' suggested figures in 4.5 of the T21512 TN calculating the expected number of traffic movements to and from the site is an underestimate, given that they are drawn from statistics relating to urban areas and for the reasons we have outlined in 1.1.3 above.

1.2.8 The first response to this application from the Highways department objected to the application on several grounds – not all of which have been addressed in their second submission which made no objections. We have taken up this concern with the highways department directly since they have addressed only the access to the proposed development but more worryingly have not addressed how the construction traffic plan will be managed nor the points made about the access to transport or essential amenities. Whilst the applicant states they envisage Foxden Way being used for Construction traffic, there is no indication about how this would be safely achieved since none of the adjoining road links are capable of easily accommodating large vehicles, at any time of the day.

2. THE IMPACT ON LOCAL LANDSCAPE:

2.1 The proposed site is a greenfield site which would intrude significantly into the local countryside landscape and does not comply with Rural Exception Site Guidance.

2.2 Throughout the application, this parcel of land is referred to as semi-improved, species poor grassland which gives the impression that it is unsuitable for further agricultural use, our records from June 2021 to August 2021 suggest otherwise, please see our evidence below:



June 2021



August 2021

2.3 The parcel of land in question is adjacent to a greenfield space which was deliberately considered and chosen when we re-sited the Bourtons Allotments in 2017: we were assured at the time by CDC that the allotments would not be regarded as the boundary of the settlement. Furthermore, the submitted plan bears no relationship to the existing settlement other than the

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addition of a footpath for which the proposed usage is unconvincing at best. For residents on this site who would choose to walk to local amenities in Cropredy, would no doubt use Crow Lane to access the footway – it is highly unlikely that they would walk initially in the opposite direction to walk to Cropredy via South View and the length of Main Street to access the footway.

2.4 The footpath would be of no use to the majority of the allotments holders who live either in Little Bourton or the eastern part of Great Bourton to access the allotments. In fact it would be useful only to one allotment holder who lives in South View and who most often currently drives to the allotments.

2.5 No doubt this footway was added to demonstrate that the site would have a connection to the existing settlement as required by such a development but we would suggest that it serves little or no useful purpose to existing or future residents.

3. THE PROVISION FOR FOUL WATER AND SURFACE WATER EXCESS IS INADEQUATE:

3.1 We presume that as this proposed site is outside of the existing settlement is the reason it cannot be connected to the Thames Water sewage system. The provision of a Sewage Treatment Plant to discharge into the existing ditch along with excess surface water, is fraught with problems for the reason we have previously outlined. Basically this is a short length ditch with a significant gradient which would overflow into Crow Lane and ultimately add to the existing water discharge which heads towards Cropredy during the winter months and during heavy rainfall in the summer. We should note here that the applicant has stated that this will be discharged as clean water: we know from our previous research into systems such as this that it will not be clean water: it contains toilet tissue and foodstuffs which are not adequately processed, sweetcorn being the most noticeable content. The exiting water also leaves a grey sediment which then attracts rats and other vermin to the outlet. The ditch in question would need to be at least double the depth it is at the moment; we are surprised that none of the reports mention this.

3.2 The drainage consultation document has said that water will be retained in onsite soakaways. This seems equally flawed, given the known impermeable nature of the local mudstone substrate.

3.3 Overall this is an inadequate solution to manage both the foul water and surface water excess.

4. APPLICANT'S DATA AND STATISTICS:

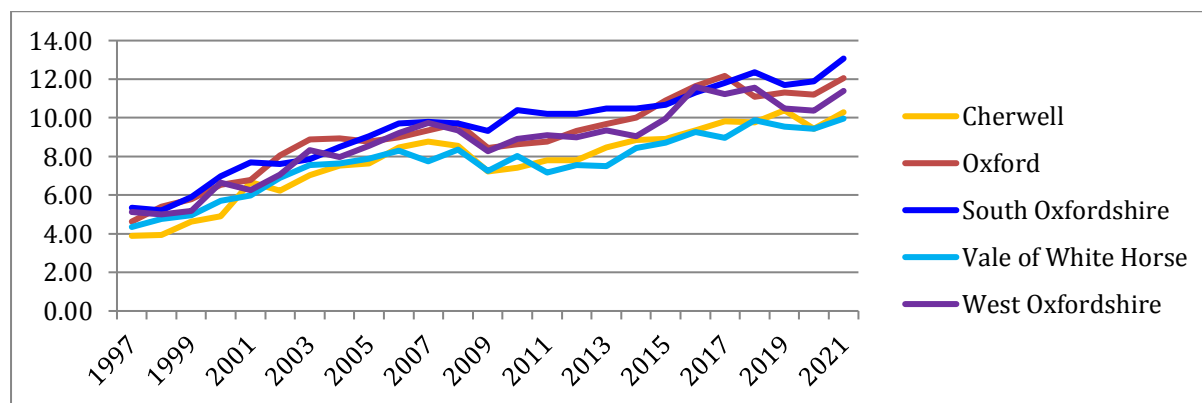
4.1 Throughout the applicant's proposal, data and statistics provided in support of their application has been misleading at best and completely inaccurate in some cases.

4.2 A perfect example is the content of the more recent submission from the applicants' challenge to the professionalism of the Landscapes officer's report, which also referred to the latest information published by ONS regarding the affordability ratio of median house price divided by median workplace-based earnings, broken down by local authority district. The applicant's reference to a recently published ONS dataset (specifically [House price to workplace-based earnings ratio](#), the affordability ratio of median house price divided by median

workplace-based earnings, broken down by local authority district in tab 5c) is a good example of the misleading use of statistics.

4.3 The applicant highlights that the ratio for Cherwell has moved from 9.4 in 2020 to 10.3 in 2021 which, allowing for rounding, is correct. However, the same ratio was 10.4 in 2019. The applicant has presented just two individual data points which support their argument, where it requires only one more data point, to just as effectively undermine this argument. Such selective use of data as the applicant's is often an indicator that the wider dataset does not support the conclusion the user wishes to draw. We can explore this here.

4.4 Acknowledging the general, UK-wide trend of earnings growth not keeping up with house price growth, the dataset tells us several things: that Cherwell (ratio of 10.28 2021) is the second most affordable district in Oxfordshire (average ratio of 11.35 in 2021); Cherwell is in the top third (21st) of districts in the South East (64 total) in terms of affordability, and; that the longer term decline in affordability in Cherwell is less pronounced than in Oxfordshire or the South East overall - the chart below illustrates this best.



4.5 Together with the irrelevant conclusion of the YouGov report and the School Lane ATC which bears no significance to the Foxden Way traffic, which is pertinent to this site, we can only assume that the applicant's submissions are offered in a dilatory manner because they believe that they will achieve their aim without due diligence and the need to provide truthful and accurate information.

5. OUR FURTHER CONCERNS AND OBSERVATIONS:

5.1 We are tasked of course, as are the planning officers and planning committee, to consider only the application before us. Just one application for the 9 First Homes on one site. Based on its own merits we do believe that although this, in any other circumstances, could be regarded as an admirable intention, it should not be regarded as a 'Windfall site': it is an 'Opportunist site', in the wrong place and by default of its unsustainability, would not serve its residents well.

5.2 Parish Councils are often accused of taking a short term view, especially on planning applications. This is not the case for us. We see the bigger picture. We see that that the rest of this site would be open for further development if this application is granted. Moreover, we can see this if this application is approved, it will undoubtedly pave the way for the South View field to be developed: it is owned by the same landowner, the access to it from Foxden Way has

already been identified and the South View field is already shown in the CDCs local plan list of sites for possible development for at least 120 houses.

5.3 Also we are concerned that the land opposite, also outside of the existing settlement and also identified on CDCs local plan list of sites, may more easily be accepted for development.

5.4 On 6 August 2020, the government published 'Changes to the current planning system' which stated that *"First Homes should be a product to benefit local areas and local people, which is why it is important for local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups to have flexibility over how the product works in their local area."* From the objections already lodged by residents and the Parish Council's submission, we submit that this application does not meet either the Government or Cherwell District Council's mandate.

5.5 Bourtons Parish does not currently have a neighbourhood plan in place because as you know they are costly and take a considerable time to formulate. However we are in the process of producing a Community Plan which will be devised from the comments from our Community plan Questionnaire and our feedback from the open events which we are planning. We envisage this plan to be the basis on which we shall respond in future not only to the CDC Local plan but also to respond to exceptional applications of this kind, which challenge the scope and shape of our community.

Our submissions regarding the unsuitability of this site for development throughout its application history, is based on the evidence we have gathered so far and also reflects the concerns and views of our residents, over 100 of whom have objected to this application.

Based on all the above points and those which we have previously submitted, we would respectfully request that permission for this outline application is REFUSED.

Sue Upton
Chairman
Bourtons Parish Council