

Mr and Mrs R England  
8 Hodgson Close  
Fritwell, Bicester  
OX27 7QB

17<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Planning case officer Mr James Kirkham  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
OX15 4AA

Dear Mr Kirkham

**Ref: PLANNING APPLICATION No. 19/00616/OUT**

We write to register our unconditional objection to this outline planning application by CALA Homes (Chiltern). As residents of Fritwell for almost 22 years, we know the village and this greenfield site well.

We are extremely disappointed that the Applicant has yet again sought planning permission for this site, having withdrawn 16/01594/F in the weeks prior to that application going before the Planning Committee.

The applicant is now seeking outline planning permission to build even more homes than in the previous application and it is our opinion that all the points against approval cited by then Planning Officer Matthew Parry, weigh equally as heavily against the *principle* of any residential development of this greenfield site as they did against the full planning application made then.

We are most concerned about the Applicant's assertion in "Planning Statement" 09411222.pdf that "*At the point of submission, the Applicant considers that any outstanding matters of principle, or those of technical disciplines, are now resolved*". We fail to see how this can be, since nothing has materially changed in regard to the site or the local infrastructure since 2016.

In fact, two further brownfield infill sites within the village have recently commenced residential developments thus already creating an increase in pressure on the local infrastructure and naturally leading to an immediate reduction in the already diminished need for new local housing in Fritwell on a scale anywhere close to that as proposed by the Applicant.

We are also extremely concerned about the lack of engagement the Applicant has demonstrated to the local community in regard to this application. In their "Planning Statement" they assert that "*The proposed design scheme has also been presented to Fritwell Parish Council in November 2018.*" However, as residents of Fritwell we infer that the Applicant has no true interest in nor intention to consult with the local community.

Whilst the Applicant did hold a consultation meeting with the community in regard to their previous application, as noted by Fritwell Parish Council in their submission, "*We [Fritwell Parish Council] are therefore disappointed that none of our suggestions have been adopted by Cala Homes in the proposed application, rendering the consultation process a superficial exercise to give the illusion of engagement*".

There has been no attempt whatsoever by the Applicant to engage with the local community in regard to

this present application. We also ask you to take into consideration that the Applicant has to date not made any tangible offer to help the local community in lieu of development, by for example agreeing to allocate funds to provide services, support the construction of a new Village Hall, to improve public transport links etc.

We conclude that the Applicant is well-aware of the unsuitability of, unsustainability of and local opposition to residential development of the proposed scale on this site and is simply hoping to achieve planning permission in principle in order to sell the land on without having to take responsibility for the detrimental impact such a development will have on the countryside and our community.

We would also like to draw your attention to a series of inaccurate statements made by the Applicant within their "Transport Statement" 09411230.pdf, "Design and Access Statement DS.01" 09411225.pdf and "Planning Statement" 09411222.pdf and ask that you please take into consideration:-

1. The lack of amenities available to existing residents within Fritwell (and how this contrasts with the present categorisation level).

We concur fully with Planning Officer Matthew Parry's conclusions as noted in *Section 7.5 Page 162 - Public reports pack Thursday 27-Oct-2016 16.00 Planning Committee*.

*"Fritwell is one of the smallest villages defined within Category A. It also features few services and facilities with just a single village shop, primary school and village hall. It offers no genuine employment opportunities and no health facilities. Since the time of the adoption of the CLP 2031 Part 1 it now features no public houses and is no longer served by bus [see note 1 below]. Unlike some other Category A settlements, it is also relatively remote from larger villages that can provide such services/facilities and is some distance from the higher order services provided at Banbury and Bicester.*

*In short, new residential development will be almost entirely dependent on daily use of the private car for travel outside the village. Having regard to the criteria set out in Policy Villages 2 that requires consideration of the site's location to services and facilities, the scheme does not score at all well relative to many other Category A settlements. Officers are therefore concerned that the village is not sufficiently environmentally sustainable to accommodate new housing of the scale proposed particularly bearing in mind recent planning permissions on sites within the village for over 20 new dwellings."*

[note 1] Within their "Design and Access Statement DS.01", the Applicant states *"There are bus services that run to both Bicester and Banbury from bus stops located on East Street and at the end of Forge Place, both a short walk away from the proposed site."* This is an inaccurate statement. At the time of writing, there is one bus service (81) operating one 3-hour return journey per week to Bicester. This extremely limited bus service, whilst better than none, is completely impractical for those who would use public transport for regular commuting, shopping or leisure outside the village. The lack of a regular bus service to Fritwell has a documented impact on the quality of life for existing residents, as can be evidenced from the data at:- <http://www.fritwell.org.uk/content/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/bus-survey-data-report-nov-2017.pdf>

We consider that Fritwell's category A status needs to be reviewed. Fritwell residents have already raised this topic with Fritwell Parish Council but have been advised that this cannot happen until the next local plan. We have one small village shop which operates limited opening hours, a small one-roomed village hall which dates from the 1950s and a primary school. We have no public house nor do we have any other shops or places suitable for social events within the village itself or within safe walking distance.

Plans for a new village hall on the site of the old George & Dragon pub have recently fallen by the wayside. In particular, for teenagers and young adults, Fritwell presently has very little to offer in the way of local social activities and entertainment.

2. The continued reliance of existing and new residents on the private car and the true impact on the highways and highway safety arising from a development of this scale on this site and in this location.

We understand that it is the objective of the Approved Local Cherwell Plan policy SLE4 to encourage development in locations where future residents are provided with accessibility by active and public transport modes, whilst also seeking to ensure that there are no highway network safety or capacity implications.

We ask you to consider whether residential development of this site goes against this objective. With almost no employment opportunities within the village, limited amenities and just one bus service a week, the private car remains essential for those who need to work, shop or socialise outside the village.

This almost complete reliance on the private car by existing residents has a significant impact on the roads in and around Fritwell - particularly at peak times - and we are very concerned about the further impact a residential development of the proposed scale on this site will have.

Road access to the proposed development site can only be achieved in two directions - either through Ardley-with-Fewcott, which consists of a narrow residential road along which there is a hairpin bend, sections without pavement and which often cannot accommodate two vehicles passing due to parked vehicles, and through the centre of Fritwell itself.

In regard to the former route and the Applicant's previous application, Ardley-with-Fewcott Parish Council have stated *"In summary we object to the proposed development on the principle of traffic generation with no mitigation."*

The latter route consists of a T-junction between Fewcott Road and East Street, opposite which are allocated residential parking spaces. East Street, in which the school crossing is located, is almost always narrowed by residential parking so that even outside of peak hours the road is usually not wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass easily.

We are extremely concerned about the Applicant's proposed access to the site. On page 16 of their "Design and Access DS.01" document, the Applicant states *"A revised layout was produced to provide central access into the site from Fewcott Road. This was to reduce projected vehicle speeds through the provided sight lines."*

This is not Fewcott Road, but is actually Fritwell Road. The road is an unrestricted speed zone and at the site of the Applicant's proposed access there is very limited line of sight visibility in either direction due to a bend in the road.

Vehicles approaching at speed do not have line-of-sight to the proposed site of access. Should you decide to grant permission, we ask that you consider imposing a condition such that the developer must extend fully the 30MPH zone from its current location in the direction of Ardley-with-Fewcott to beyond the site boundary, with all associated and necessary signing and traffic calming measures - not just from the existing 30MPH zone at the entrance of Fritwell to their proposed access point.

Furthermore, we ask you to consider that, as in the words of Cherwell District Council, *"...alterations and additions to the existing highway network and associated infrastructure should seek to prevent damage to the rural character of the roads affected"*.

Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department has asked Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan to consider that *"development outside the settlement area of Category A villages is unlikely to be sustainable because of poor access to public transport and the likelihood of poor accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists."* and

we ask you to consider that this most definitely applies to Fritwell and the site in question.

There are currently no formal cycling routes or facilities within Fritwell, and all cycle trips are required to be on-carriageway.

We also ask you to consider the statement made by Oxfordshire County Council in their pre-application advice to the Applicant's previous application, i.e. that this site is a *"very unsustainable location for this number of homes."* (16/01594/F, 08620558.pdf, p.32) and that nothing has materially changed to alter such a conclusion.

3. That residential development of this site in principle is not in accordance with the key objectives of local, regional and national planning policies.

The objective of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), policy PSD1 *"Presumption in Favour of Sustainable development"* is to focus the bulk of the proposed growth in and around Bicester and Banbury, limit growth in our rural areas and direct it towards larger and more sustainable villages whilst also strictly control development in open countryside.

We ask you to consider that Fritwell is among the least sustainable of Category A villages and therefore residential development of this site to the proposed scale is inappropriate.

Residents within Cherwell recently voted in support of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. We believe that the objectives of MCNP policies PD1 and PD2 are to prefer the use of brownfield sites over greenfield sites and to resist the loss over time of the all-important countryside between villages.

Whilst we recognise the MCNP does allow for development outside the built-area, when deciding upon this application, we ask you to take into consideration the quantity of new development already attained and currently in progress within Fritwell from in-filling on brownfield sites in such a quantity of which we believe negates any argument to support development of this greenfield site to the scale proposed.

4. The impact that development of this edge-of-village, greenfield site will have on the rural, visual character of Fritwell and the surrounding countryside.

As this site is outside the existing built-environment, we ask you to consider the major visual impact on the countryside that any development on this site will have and in particular on the character of this rural village location.

5. The loss of views, loss of privacy, overlooking and overshadowing of properties in Fewcott Road and Hodgson Close and neighbouring PRoW.

It is recognised by the applicant's own assessment that, for existing neighbouring property, any development on this site will have a high visual impact. For some properties in Hodgson Close, development will lead to a direct loss of privacy due to overlooking and overshadowing.

We ask you to consider the possibility that for some properties it could even be argued that loss of enjoyment of their property may be the result of such a development.

For existing properties in Hodgson Close and Fewcott Road, we ask that you please consider the increased visual impact of any development on this site at all times of the year - particularly throughout the autumn and winter months when the existing trees and hedgerows that might otherwise form a visual screen between existing properties and the proposed development site lose their leaves.

This also applies to the views enjoyed from the existing PRoW which borders the south-east edge of the site.

6. The significant impact that development of this site will have on utilities and services within the village - particularly foul and rainwater drainage, increased risk of flooding and already limited available expansion for services such as internet access.

There have been recurring problems with foul and surface water drainage in Fritwell over many years which have caused downstream flooding to Forge Place and the surrounding area. To mitigate the risk of foul water overflow into the surrounding area, Anglian Water have in recent years had to provide back up to the Fritwell Water Recycling Centre using tankers on a daily basis to remove excessive effluent.

The risk of flooding downstream due to inadequate surface water drainage is a known historical issue, although the site itself has been assessed as low risk. We would ask that as a condition of any planning permission that the developer is required to liaise and comply fully with the local water authority to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to minimise any flood risk to existing properties.

The local telephone exchange in Fritwell is shared with Ardley-with-Fewcott and is already at capacity such that no new internet connections are available. Such a shortfall in service increases the possibility that occupants of any new development will not have the option to work from home.

## 7. Noise and disturbance

As the site is currently greenfield, any development will have an immediate and significant adverse impact on neighbouring houses. We ask you to take into consideration the introduction of light-pollution from the developed site to neighbouring properties and the surrounding countryside and also the increase in noise to the existing settlement from the development.

In making your decision, we ask you to please consider whether or not there is a demonstrable need for this scale of development on a greenfield site on the edge of a small rural village, particularly taking into account the great number of developments in progress and already planned within the wider area in Bicester, Banbury and Upper Heyford.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration when deciding upon this application.

Yours sincerely,

Robin H England  
Elizabeth England