

TO: planning@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

**RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION 19/00616/OUT
38 DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS, FEWCOTT ROAD, FRITWELL**

Thank you for consulting Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum (MCNPF) on this application.

We have the following comments:

1. Fritwell is a Category A village under CDC's policy villages 2. The MCNP accepts this categorisation, although the village is the smallest and least sustainable of the three such villages in the MCNP area. Our policy PD1: Development in Category A Villages is clear that any residential development which is proposed outside the approved settlement area must have regard to all the criteria listed as (a) to (e).

The site for 38 dwellings is wholly outside both the settlement area and the Conservation Area. Taking each of the criteria in turn:

- a) "immediately adjacent to the settlement area" appears to be satisfied;
- b) most of the site is not previously developed land, and therefore is less acceptable for development;
- c) the significant loss of open countryside and intensive development of the site means that the landscape here cannot be conserved or enhanced;
- d) this appears to be satisfied as there is no impact on the conservation area or other heritage assets;
- e) there is no likelihood of coalescence with another settlement.

The development does not therefore satisfy all the criteria and so fails the test of a development outside the settlement area.

Furthermore, the number of dwellings proposed significantly exceeds the indicative figure of 25 for Fritwell for the whole of the Plan period, as set out in policy PD1.

If the site had, for example, a substantial element of previously developed land, then both criteria b) and c) could have been satisfied. In these circumstances a modest number of additional dwellings on this site, or on part of the site, might perhaps have been acceptable. However, this is not the case.

The indicative figure of 25 dwellings was arrived at in consultation with Fritwell Parish Council in 2017, on the basis that an increase over the Plan period of approximately 8% in dwelling numbers represented a sensible and sustainable level of growth. Of the three Cat. A villages covered by policy PD1, this is the highest percentage increase, reflecting an appreciation that Fritwell would benefit from growing at a slightly greater pace. However, a single development of 38 dwellings, as is proposed in this application, would represent an immediate increase of more than 12% over existing dwelling numbers. MCNPF considers that approval of this scheme would put Fritwell in a position where any further minor development in future years (to 2031) would take the percentage growth into completely unacceptable territory.

CALA Homes in para. 7.11 of its Planning Statement discusses MCNP policy PD1. As part of their justification for provision of 38 dwellings, it is suggested that “indicative” numbers of additional dwellings should be taken to mean “minimum” numbers. This is decidedly not the intention of MCNP in using the word “indicative”. Indeed, the Examiner of the MCNP in his report (p.20 para 70) makes specific reference to a submission made by CALA, where they make the same point (that the numbers should be regarded as a minimum). He says: “.....*Any proposals on this site would need to be considered against the criteria for development adjacent to the settlement areas of Category A Villages and I am not persuaded that it is necessary to make this change to meet the basic conditions.*”

We strongly contend therefore that, having found that the application does not meet all the criteria referred to by the Examiner, that there are no grounds for considering a flexible approach to the interpretation of the word “indicative”.

MCNPF therefore, regrettably, wishes to **OBJECT** to this application.

The content of these observations has been shared with Fritwell parish council (FPC), as one of the member organisations of the MCNP Forum. We understand that FPC acknowledges that MCNP is duty-bound to object to an application that so clearly does not meet the requirements of a key policy of the neighbourhood plan. Equally, MCNP respects the right of the current members of FPC to take a pragmatic view of the situation presented to them.

If, despite this objection, CDC decide to grant outline approval to this application, MCNPF requests that an additional requirement for planning obligations (see Appendix 1 of CALA’s Planning Statement) should be made. This should address the need for traffic mitigation measures for the parish and for neighbouring parishes which will be affected by additional traffic generated by the development. We also request that we be consulted on the extent and content of such measures.

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum

May 2019