

Fritwell Parish Council

Response to revised planning application 19/00616/OUT

Fritwell Parish Council appreciates the efforts made by CALA Homes and the landowners to revise their plans for homes on land off Fewcott Road in Fritwell. CALA have discussed their plans with the Parish Council and local residents at public meetings and their efforts have gone a long way to addressing concerns, by making improvements to the plan and indicating their support for mitigation and the village improvements needed to complement their proposed new development.

These include:

- Number of dwellings reduced to 28
- More planting including new trees and improved screening for the approach from open countryside
- Improved access closer to the village

The Council wishes to see new homes built in the village particularly for young families and those wanting to downsize, and to help sustain our village Primary School, shop/post office/café, village hall and the other businesses, organisations and facilities that support our community.

There is concern from some residents, particularly those living in close proximity to the site, who have voiced their objections and will be responding themselves to this consultation. Other residents have welcomed the plan for 28 new homes in this location.

This site has been under consideration for some time, first included in the SHLAA sites for CDC's Local Plan and assessed as "suitable, available and achievable" in the more recent HELAA document.

The Agricultural Land Classification document and the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment conclude that the land area is small, of low-grade agricultural importance and that the proposed development can be accommodated within this setting without resulting in a significant adverse impact upon the character of the site, its immediate context and the wider landscape setting.

The Parish Council supports these assessments and sincerely believes this site to be the most appropriate and sustainable for further development in Fritwell.

Housing

The total number of dwellings has been reduced from 38 down to 28, more closely complying with the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan policy PD1 which states that for Category A villages

"The total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the plan period either within the settlement areas of these villages, or adjacent to them, shall be approximately 25 for Fritwell..."

35% are to be Affordable (10 dwellings, part-ownership or rental) which is compliant with the CDC Local Plan recommendation.

The Market Sale homes include 2x2-bed bungalows and 4x2-bed houses, responding to views expressed by residents and the Council for properties suitable for young people and older residents wanting to downsize, and compliant with MCNP policy PH1 on Open Market Housing Schemes.

3-bed (4 dwellings) and 4/5 bed (8 dwellings) do not follow the indicative mix in PH1 and may need to be reviewed. However, the Parish Council considers that the 2 small developments currently under construction in the village (given planning permission some time ago and therefore not in the current “indicative number”) addresses this imbalance with 15 additional 2/3-bed homes to help meet the needs of the village.

We welcome CALA’s consideration of electric car points and ask them to also consider the suggestions made in the MCNP response for building design, construction and energy use in new developments.

Infrastructure and mitigation

In our submission to the consultation on the original application (for 38 homes) the Parish Council outlined a number of areas for support and mitigation to meet the needs and effects of increasing the village population and successfully integrating the new development.

The Parish Council would like to express our considerable support for proposals submitted to the consultation by the Playing Fields Committee, the Village Hall Committee and the Primary School.

The Playing Fields plan includes renewal and extension of the children’s play area and the introduction of new activities e.g. climbing wall and zip-wire for older children and outdoor gym equipment for all ages.

The Village Hall Committee is trying to extend the life of the current building with some renewal and refurbishment including new storage and chairs, indoor sports and games equipment and improvements to the car park area in front of the hall.

Fritwell Primary School seeks support to expand their nursery provision and enhance their facilities to meet current and expected needs. Children at the school will also benefit from improvements to the village playing fields and children’s play equipment.

Roads, Transport and Connectivity

There are currently no public bus services that come to the village, a situation causing problems for residents getting to work, young people accessing college courses, training and recreational activities and the elderly attending medical appointments, other services and shops. The village continues to campaign for rural bus services and a contribution towards current or future subsidies for transport services would be welcome.

All new adult residents are likely to own a car and parking on the narrow village roads already causes problems for motorists, pedestrians and householders. CALA should consider increasing the space for parked cars on the new development by adopting the maximum standards.

The Parish Council welcomes the inclusion by CALA of some road calming along the Fewcott Road including new signage, road markings and VAS signs (which should be solar-powered or linked to the mains electricity and able to produce data for traffic monitoring). CALA are aware that the village gates and speed limit will also need to be moved as indicated in the current proposal.

We would ask CALA and OCC Highways to consider additional “place-making” style road calming e.g. planted area to narrow the entrance to the village and “rumble strips” in keeping with those in

Hodgson Close. Paved road areas would be particularly suitable for a road used by children and adults to access the Playing Fields and Village Hall which are sited on either side of the Fewcott Road.

The Parish Council also notes the comments in the OCC planning response about the narrow Public Rights of Way footpath 219/6 that will connect the back of the new development to East Street and the shop/post office/café and the King's Head public house (if it is reopened). It is suggested that this should be surfaced to provide year-round access (not tarmac) via S278 agreement with OCC Roads team.

An increase in high-speed broadband capacity in the village should be included to enable effective home-working in rural settlements like Fritwell.

Bio-diversity and Green Infrastructure

The Parish Council supports the idea in the MCNP's response to consider additional low-cost measures like wild flower planting along verges or in other parts of the village, possibly along Fewcott Road to Ardley.

In summary, Fritwell Parish Council SUPPORTS this application for 28 homes and associated access, dependent on the appropriate mitigation and village improvements outlined in this and our previous response to the Cala Homes development. Key areas are road calming, public transport, Fritwell Playing Fields, the Village Hall and the Primary School.

We would ask that Cala also considers other points raised including electric car charge points, suggestions on design and build options mentioned in the MCNP response, and potential for wild flower planting.

We are all aware that the details in the current documents are indicative at this stage and would ask that any significant changes are fully consulted upon.

Fritwell Parish Council

4th November 2019

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