

TO: planning@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

4th November 2019

**RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION 19/00616/OUT
UP TO 28 DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS, FEWCOTT ROAD, FRITWELL**

Thank you for consulting Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum (MCNPF) on this revised application. We have the following comments, which should be read in association with our comments on the earlier scheme of 38 dwellings, submitted in May 2019:

1. MCNP Policy PD1: Development at Category A Villages

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum is pleased to see the significant reduction in the number of dwellings now proposed for the reduced area of the site. Nevertheless, the number of dwellings proposed still exceeds the indicative figure of 25 for Fritwell for the whole of the Plan period, as set out in policy PD1. We would be prepared to accept that the figure of 28 is reasonably close to the indicative 25 were it not for the fact that this single development will put Fritwell in a position where any further minor development in future years (to 2031) would take the percentage growth of the village into unacceptable territory.

For this reason we disagree with the findings of CDC's planning policy team who conclude in their submission of 15th October 2019 that "The proposed development accords with policy PD1 of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan." This conclusion ignores the fact that, if CALA's scheme were to be approved, no further minor development should be permitted under policy PD1 in Fritwell up to 2031, an outcome which MCNP Forum considers to be short-sighted.

2. MCNP Policy PH1: Open Market Housing Schemes

This policy addresses the housing mix of the market element of new housing development schemes. A comparison of the mix set out in the policy with that proposed in CALA's application is as follows:

Bedrooms	Policy PH1	CALA scheme	Comment
One or two	30%	33% (6 dwellings)	Acceptable
Three	46%	22% (4 dwellings)	Unacceptable
Four or more	Not exceeding 24%	44% (8 dwellings)	Unacceptable

CALA is requested to adjust the housing mix such that the four 3-bed dwellings currently proposed are increased to eight or nine in number, with a consequent reduction in the eight 4/5-bed dwellings to three or four in number.

3. Commentary

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum is of the view that the revised scheme, if adjusted for the housing mix recommended by our policy PH1, could be acceptable despite the concern expressed above regarding the impact approval would have on any further development proposals in Fritwell up to 2031. In order to make it acceptable, we would wish to see a commitment – probably in the form of S.106 statements – to a

number of highly desirable outcomes for the project that would be of benefit to the local community, to Cherwell district, and also to CALA Homes. These outcomes are as follows:

- a) MCNP Forum considers that this scheme could be an exemplar for rural developments in respect of climate change concerns. The project should be designed as a whole to minimise energy consumption, and in particular to avoid use of fossil fuel sources. The use of ground source heat pumps and the design of dwellings to a very highly insulated level (approaching Passivhaus standard) should be seriously investigated for this scheme.
- b) MCNP Forum notes that CALA Homes is owned by Legal and General, who are commencing large-scale off-site modular construction of dwellings. We would like to see serious consideration given to using the Fritwell scheme as a pilot for at least some of the proposed dwellings to be constructed in this way. Such a move would sit comfortably with the pioneering work carried out in Cherwell District on self-build and modern forms of construction at Graven Hill and elsewhere. CALA would benefit from choosing this site to innovate, and to demonstrate that private housebuilders are prepared to do so.
- c) MCNP policy PD5 (a) requires a net gain in biodiversity as a result of the development. CALA Homes should bring forward proposals that exceed the minimum requirements for meeting this policy. An example might be the creation and maintenance of wildflower meadows and verges adjacent to the development or elsewhere in the parish.
- d) CALA Homes should demonstrate that they are prepared to respond positively to the list of concerns expressed by Fritwell Parish Council with regard to: support for local transport options; charging points for electric vehicles; traffic calming measures; new speed signs linked to mains electricity; enhancement of children's play area on playing field; provision of more recreational and sports facilities within Fritwell for all ages; support for the existing Village Hall, including additional storage, repairs and improved car park; developer funding directed to works in the village to benefit Fritwell residents (*all as per 22/5/19 document from Fritwell PC*).

4. Conclusion

MCNP Forum is prepared to support approval of the revised application SUBJECT TO:

- a) Modification of the scheme to meet the requirements of our housing mix Policy PH1 as set out above, and**
- b) A clear statement from CALA Homes in response to this submission that they are prepared to give serious consideration to the points made in the Commentary above, and if at all possible, to incorporate these as commitments in a S.106 agreement.**

The content of these observations has been shared with Fritwell Parish Council (FPC), as one of the member organisations of the MCNP Forum.

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum, November 2019