

Ref: Planning Application CB/15/03927/OUT Outline planning application on the Land West of Sandy (Girtford Bridge)

Although Central Bedfordshire Council has withdrawn its Development Strategy, CPRE believe the Council has a duty to protect those areas unsuitable for development for policy reasons that are likely to feature within its new Local Plan. The lack of an approved Community Infrastructure Levy scheme will also result in a further detriment to Sandy by granting planning permission to this application.

Objections in Relation to Mid Beds Local Plan - December 2005

Development of prime agricultural land

While part of this site can be considered as “brownfield” and would therefore be appropriate for development, more than half of it is “greenfield”; DEFRA and Natural England maps show the whole site as good agricultural land, with much of it designated as Grade 1. As the site is not designated for development under the Local Plan, **Policy CS9** requires that development should be refused.

Development outside the settlement envelope

The proposed development is outside of the Local Plan settlement envelope and under **Policy CS19** should be refused.

Accessibility by public transport, cycle or on foot

Policy DPS19 requires developments to be “... readily accessible by public transport, cycle and on foot ...”. The proposed development meets none of these requirements. There is no safe walking or cycle route to amenities within Sandy - the proposed footbridge is not accessible from the care home and while it is accessible from the residential development, it deposits pedestrians at the North end of the busy London Road, approximately a 1 mile walk (20 minutes for a fit adult), longer for the elderly occupying the proposed care home) to facilities in the centre of Sandy. Schools are even further.

Transport

Policy TP1A requires developers to show how developments will reduce the need to travel and reduce reliance on cars; the proposal fails completely on both counts. Residents will be highly reliant on cars to access all local amenities.

Protection of landscape features

Under **Policy CS1**, CBC “... will seek to protect important existing landscape features, including woodland, trees, hedgerows, watercourses, lakes and ponds ...”. The whole of the W side of this proposed development impinges on the River Ivel; more importantly, there is a brook to the E of the Ivel which forms the western boundary of the development. There is no indication of how pollutions risks will be prevented.

Impact on species protected by law

The brook forming the eastern boundary of the development is an important breeding area for Water Voles, a fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and which is a priority conservation species. Under **Policy NC7**, *"The Council will resist development that may have an adverse impact, directly or indirectly, on animal and plant species protected by law. Where development is permitted, the developer will be required to take steps to secure the protection of such animals and plants."*

Development of commercial activities

The proposed development includes a designated commercial area - which is accessed through a residential area. **Policy DPS7** states that *"The development of new commercial activities within residential areas, including the provision of dwellings designed to facilitate working from home, will be permitted unless there is a likelihood that it would unacceptably harm the amenity of neighbours and/or the locality, and that reasonable and effective mitigation measures cannot be provided."* Access to the commercial area through the residential area will clearly *"... unacceptably harm the amenity of neighbours ..."*.

Impact on Surface Water Drainage

Such a large development immediately adjacent to the A1 and to the Ivel will inevitably result in considerably increased run-off, threatening both the A1 and properties downstream of the development. Under **Policy DPS17**, this application must be refused.

Objections in Relation to Core Strategy & Development Management Policies - November 2009

Development within and beyond settlement envelopes

This proposed development is outside the settlement envelope for Sandy; accordingly, under **Policy DM4** it should be rejected. CPRE accepts there is a housing requirement in the area but there are already identified development areas within the settlement envelope which have not yet been developed - CPRE contends that such areas already identified for development should be given priority.

Biodiversity

The proposed development threatens key Water Vole habitat along the Ivel and, more importantly, the small brook forming the western edge of the development; the Water Vole is a fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. Under **Policy DM15** this development should be refused.

Objections in Relation to the National Planning Policy Framework

The **National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 49)** presumes in favour of sustainable development; the important qualifier is *sustainable*. This proposed development is not sustainable:

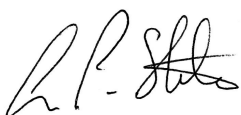
1. It is separated from the rest of Sandy by the A1 dual carriageway and A603. The only recognition of the problems this causes is an inappropriately-positioned footbridge

depositing pedestrians at the North end of London Road. From here it is approximately a 1 mile walk (20 minutes for a fit adult), longer for the elderly occupying the proposed care home) to facilities in the centre of Sandy. Schools are even further.

2. London Road is already heavily used during morning/evening rush hour both by Sandy residents and motorists diverting off of the A1 to avoid the queue for the A1/A603 roundabout. Any pedestrians accessing Sandy at this point will have to negotiate a very busy "rat-run", not a quiet residential road.
3. There is no clear, safe walking route from the proposed care home to the development end of the foot bridge; this means there is no pedestrian access from the care home to facilities in Sandy.
4. Despite some commercial presence on the proposed development, the majority of residents will undoubtedly work elsewhere and will access work by car, as will most parents getting children to school. The size of this development will put something like an additional 400 cars onto the A1, which is already very busy and congested at this point. In addition, care home residents and their friend/relative will have no choice but to use cars to access the care home. All cars leaving the development will have to travel first North on the A1 before many will then have to cross back across the A1 to travel South. There will be a very significant increase in traffic congestion on this section of the A1, leading to increases in noise and air pollution.
5. Schools and GP surgeries in Sandy are already at capacity.
6. There is no public transport to regularly and reliably link this development to the centre of Sandy where all local facilities are located.
7. With the withdrawal of the CBC Development Strategy and consequently no Community Infrastructure Levy in place, there will be no contribution being paid directly to Sandy to mitigate the effects of the development. There would be no economic benefit to the area as the developers of this site will no be contributing to the community in any way. This makes this site 'unsustainable' in terms of economic benefit.

In conclusion, CPRE sees no merit in this proposal, considers that it is inappropriate for its location and asks that it is rejected.

Yours sincerely,



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