

WESTON AND BASFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

HELD 10Th FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT	Councillor J Cornell (Chairman) Councillors J Chambers, J Densem and M Jones
APOLOGIES	Councillor T Gill

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests which they had in any item on the Agenda.
No declarations were made

18. MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD 19TH SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning Committee held 19th September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. PLANNING APPLICATION 14/5671N -PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FORMER GOLF CLUB ABBEY PARK WAY, WESTON

Proposed housing development (approximately 900 new dwellings), together with associated new employment development, a new primary school, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, supporting retail development and the layout of significant areas of new landscaped open space to complement both the new development and the existing Gorstyhill Country Park.

The Chairman reported on this application for outline planning permission and on the Special meeting of the Parish Council held 3rd February 2015.

RECOMMENDED : That the following objections be raised with the Borough Council:-

Weston & Basford Parish Council **strongly objects** to this application for the following reasons:

- **The site does not form one of the Strategic Locations for development in the emerging Local Plan.**
- **From its inception Cheshire East has identified Crewe as its biggest ‘Spatial Priority’ and has developed the ‘All Change for Crewe’ high growth strategy in response to this. The Parish Council does not consider that this proposal contributes in any way to the regeneration of Crewe.** There are much more sustainable strategic locations identified in the Local Plan closer to Crewe which have ready access to the primary road and rail network, employment opportunities, health, education, sports and retail facilities.

Wychwood Village forms an isolated bubble in the open countryside, in the order of 4 miles from Crewe – no more, no less.

- **In the Parish Council's view this proposal cannot be regarded as sustainable.** Most of the residents of Wychwood Village (present and future) are likely to be footloose and highly mobile with ready access to employment, education, shopping and medical facilities away from the village. This pattern has already been firmly established.
- **The applicants have failed to demonstrate a convincing case that the golf course is a totally unviable proposition.** The Parish Council can find no evidence that this use has been actively and openly marketed as such.
- **The proposal will have a crippling effect on the existing local road network both within and off the site.** Local observation and experience indicates that much of this is already operating up to and beyond capacity – this is without any further development. Traffic issues were a major area of concern in our Parish Plan back in 2011. Whilst it is appreciated that this is an outline application with all matters reserved, a development of the scale proposed will have severe safety and inconvenience implications for existing Wychwood Village residents accessing and exiting the site from the single access on to the A531. Similar problems will be created for the residents of Wychwood Park. It is also considered to be totally unacceptable to have any form of access on to Snape Lane (even as an emergency access), or to use this lane as a bus route - this is a single track, tortuous country lane serving the existing villages of Englesea Brook and Barthomley. Traffic is already gridlocked through Weston Village at peak times in trying to access Weston Road (A5020) – this will be greatly exacerbated. In the opinion of the Parish Council there is very little scope to improve the local highway network without incurring vast expense and disruption.
- **Wychwood Village was designed and marketed as a quality housing development within a rural setting integrated into an affordable Golf Course designed to have the widest user appeal, along with a Country Park.** This design concept was marketed heavily on this basis and tied together through a Section 106 Agreement which gave prospective purchasers the confidence to invest in the Village. The current proposal would totally negate this concept, be a major blow to existing residents and doubtless devalue many of the existing properties.
- **The amenities and quality of life of the existing residents will be severely prejudiced by this proposal.** The applicants state that the Country Park will be increased from 14 to 44 hectares. In practice much of this additional open space will be green swathes separating clusters of housing. A proposed bus route, which seems to be fundamental to making the scheme operate, cuts across part of the existing Country Park and this will greatly reduce its attractiveness. Existing wildlife habitats which have developed and matured over the years are likely to be disturbed and will be adversely affected by the addition of 900 dwellings. Many existing residents have effectively been living on a building site for the last 10 years – the building of 350 houses not yet completed. The addition of 900 dwellings will increase this most unsatisfactory state of affairs for a further indeterminate period.

- **A development of this scale will have a prejudicial effect on the amenities enjoyed by the residents in the established settlements in the immediate vicinity of the site, by introducing much more traffic, disturbance and general comings and goings.** Weston Village and Englesea Brook contain two Conservation Areas which would undoubtedly be put at risk in this context.
- **Properties in Englesea Brook Lane already experience flooding problems within their curtilage.** Parts of the hamlet of Englesea Brook is classed as flood risk area. A significant amount of drainage from the proposal is indicated to run in this direction.

The Parish Council also notes that there are factual inaccuracies and conflicting statements in this application and some of the data used is out of date. For example the retail data appears to be between 5 and 8 years old and only seems to relate to shopping in Cheshire: this site is right on the Staffordshire border and shopping trends have changed since then. None of this conveys total confidence.

Given the scale and complexity of this proposal and the limited time given to respond, the Parish Council reserves the right to submit further comments to the Local Planning Authority once it has had time to further absorb some of the more detailed points of the submission.

The Parish Council will also wish to address the Strategic Planning Board when the application is considered.

CHAIRMAN