

PLANNING APPLICATION RESPONSE

Blake Stephenson
59 High Road
Shillington
Bedfordshire
SG5 3LP
hello@blakestephenson.uk

Peter Vosper – Principal Planning Officer
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Bedfordshire
SG17 5TQ
Peter.Vosper@CentralBedfordshire.gov.uk

25 October 2022

Application No: CB/22/03640/OUT

Introduction

I am writing to **OBJECT** to the above referenced planning application (the “Proposed Development”).

This application differs very little from a prior and very recent application (CB/22/00679/OUT) and the points made in my objection to that application are equally valid here. They are reiterated in summary form below -

1. The development is not necessary to meet our local housing need given that there is already a site allocation within the Local Plan for Shillington (HAS45) as well as in the nearby settlements of Barton-Le-Clay, Gravenhurst, Stondon and Meppershall. To agree to a development on this site would, I suggest, ride rough shod over CBC’s Local Plan.
2. There is an unsustainable increase in traffic volumes from nearby developments already and the Proposed Development will increase traffic volumes further, on an already busy stretch of road.
3. There are legitimate road safety concerns at the site location given the sharp bend in the road nearby, which is a longstanding accident “hot spot”.

Further to my previous points of objection -

Whilst the zero-carbon credentials may *prima facie* be attractive to decision-makers (and weight seems to have been placed on this during the prior DMC hearing), the various claims are felt by many to be grossly over-stated and un-substantiated.

All household will need to make use of cars to go about their daily business given the rural location and distance from services such as shops and GP practices, and there being no safe routes to walk to the Shillington Lower School. And, it is fanciful to think that owners will

PLANNING APPLICATION RESPONSE

own only electric cars. Is CBC also sufficiently certain that there is grid capacity available to ensure the charging infrastructure promised can in fact be delivered as part of the build?

Bus services are also not currently frequent enough and do not travel to sufficient locations, so this transport mode will not in reality be a meaningful alternative to the car for most residents. For this same reason, the site location is not suitable for bungalows targeted to older people. Provision of bungalows would be more reasonable in larger villages or towns in the vicinity such as Barton-Le-Clay and Stondon, where there is easy access to GP services and local stores. There has been ample opportunity to build these in the various developments underway or planned.

There is also a claim that the construction itself will be free from carbon emissions. This claim is based on a commitment to “offset” to zero by planting trees in some undefined place, which is not the same as carbon emissions not being produced on-site. In any case, there is no guarantee that the trees will be planted and there is no realistic way for CBC to ensure it happens. There is not even an indication that such planting could benefit Shillington directly.

With no commitment to the purported carbon zero construction at all for the 20 plots for self-build, which will make up a substantial part of the overall scheme, this leaves a great deal of scope for building in a way that is not remotely carbon neutral.

I would encourage a heavy degree of scepticism about the zero-carbon claims that have been made, given the reality of the site location and of construction. Further, many will question the legitimacy of CBC’s Local Plan which will effectively have been over-ridden by a speculative development of this nature if it is approved, and this could have unintended and negative consequences for future developments throughout the county.

Yours,

Blake Stephenson