

## PLANNING APPLICATION OBJECTION

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### **Application No: CB/23/00941/OUT**

I'm a resident of neighbouring Shillington and a Parish Councillor, and I **OBJECT** to the above referenced planning application (the "Proposed Development"). For transparency, I am also a candidate in the 2023 Local Elections for the ward of Meppershall and Shillington.

Gravenhurst's Neighbourhood Plan is a shared vision of the village, and it identifies the site of the Proposed Development as a Protected View. It is important to the community that the rural character of the Parish is retained by protecting important and identified views. Central Bedfordshire Council should apply significant weight to Gravenhurst's Neighbourhood Plan and reject this application on these grounds.

The Proposed Development is outside of the Settlement Envelope and building in open countryside – as is proposed - would be contrary to several policies which others have commented on and provided detail about. I am certainly concerned about the permanent loss of agricultural land / paddocks to built-up sprawl, where there is no reasonable need identified and which would cause a permanent loss to the intrinsic character and beauty of our countryside.

Further, the Proposed Development is on a site that was assessed for Central Bedfordshire's Local Plan and excluded from it. Given that Central Bedfordshire Council can also demonstrate adequate land supply this Proposed Development should also be rejected on these grounds. Indeed, approving this application would itself undermine the principle of having an adopted plan, which should be avoided.

As a resident of a neighbouring village rather than Gravenhurst itself I have mentioned below the impact I expect from increasing traffic volumes throughout the wider area.

I'm a founding member of Shillington's Speed Watch group. Since inception we have witnessed a significant increase in traffic flow through the village, especially but not exclusively during peak times. This is a direct result of developments in Meppershall, Stondon, Gravenhurst and the surrounding area, and the reasonable expectation that people

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travel by car through Shillington to neighbouring towns such as Hitchin for employment. I'm concerned that the Proposed Development will further increase traffic volumes beyond sustainable levels.

Our country roads and their layout - winding, narrow in places, accommodating parked cars outside cottages resulting in one lane flow in village centres, and with a lack of clear visibility from most junctions - are simply not designed for such excessive use. Were the Proposed Development to be approved it would only add to the long-term prognosis that our villages will be ravaged by excessive and dangerous vehicle movements – at a time where further development is already planned in the area, including 500 dwellings in Barton-Le-Clay.

Speeding is already prolific and serious interventions or mitigations have thus far not been funded by either Central Bedfordshire Council or Bedfordshire Police. The ratio of speeders to law-abiding drivers is too high already and is not reducing. Without significant mitigation throughout our surrounding villages, I am concerned that there is a significant risk of serious road traffic collisions occurring, including with walkers, cyclists, horses, and their riders all of whom reasonably use our roads alongside motor vehicles.

We regularly walk with our dog, run and cycle around Shillington and Gravenhurst (and it's unavoidable to use the roads for most of the routes). There is a legitimate expectation that our country roads are shared by cars, cyclists, walkers, and horseback riders, but given the Proposed Development and increasing through- traffic movements, our opportunity to safely do so would be adversely impacted further.

Yours,

Blake Stephenson