

## 20/07932/OUT: COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC

### Notes from public meeting held Thursday 22 October

All participants are noted by initials only to preserve some anonymity.

Other abbreviations used:

WC - Wiltshire Council  
WPC - Worton Parish Council  
WCS - Wiltshire Core Strategy  
NP - Neighbourhood Plan  
CSW - Community Speedwatch  
W&M - Worton and Marston  
CLH - Community Led Housing

*AF*

Five points to be made:

1. Proposed access road would emerge on to a blind corner where the traffic entering the village is supposed to have already been slowed down by the 30mph sign but mostly they don't.
2. Children attending the school would either walk but the pavements are narrow and large fast HGVs and farm vehicles can be intimidating. Alternative to this is driving the children to school thereby generating more traffic and congestion along High Street. The other option of cycling is far too dangerous for children of that age.
3. Sustainability - would only have a negative environment effects. Every journey from houses would be by car; school, employment, leisure would all be by car. Bus service is infrequent.
4. Land is outside the recently approved limits of development for the village without demonstrating any real evidence of need or support in the Wiltshire Local Plan.
5. Loss of visual amenity. The development would stick up on skyline and would be seen from a long way off even as far as trout lakes.

Next door to a conservation area.

*CM*

Back everything that AF has said about the road safety and access.

Question about blank document on WC website. Clerk suggested to try again as she was able to download all documents and none were blank.

Access and safety is most pertinent thing.

Sustainability and amenity: Sandlease Court was built into a dip so it couldn't be seen.

Waiting to come out of Worton Road junction this afternoon and gave example of speeding cars entering village at around 4.30pm, once every 5 seconds and they were not going at 30mph. Effectively blind corner.

Sustainability huge damage to the ecology and environment in terms of petrol consumption and pollution. Also there have been amazing sightings of the most extraordinary wildlife.

There is no continuous pavement so children walking to school would have to cross the road. Don't know how they would do that with the volume of traffic going through.

*C - Representing mother who lives in Sandlease bungalow.*

Mother had opposed the original application. Shares all the views of everyone - no sustainable, wouldn't be nice for anyone in the bungalows. Front rooms of bungalows would be overlooked.

*D&A*

Joined meeting to see what general feeling of village were.

Support CM's view of traffic entering village from that end. Plans shows widening of the splay at the access but would cause cars to enter the village more quickly because bend will be shallower. Too close for safety.

CN

Objector

The development is outside of the village boundary.

It is on agricultural land.

Endorse concerns already raised re safety of the highway and of the environment.

Not just the blind bend but opposite the development is Worton Road - a busy lane which all traffic to and from Devizes goes down. It will become a significant and dangerous junction.

Pavements - High Street would need to be crossed twice to get to school. Pavement by pub is only 1 person wide. Not safe for child and adult to walk down.

Endorse issues re transport and parking by the school.

No addition warning of children signs once you get past the school.

With parking by the school and all the cars, traffic becomes a one way system - very dangerous.

Total lack of community spirit by planning consultants in putting in application needing a major decision during time of pandemic with all that it involves. Total unacceptable. Planners are totally inconsiderate and have no real care for community.

CM

Endorse everything that AF, C, A and CN has said.

Cynical moment to apply for this permission while we are in grips of Covid

Main concerns are sustainability and the loss of visual amenity. Personally will be surrounded by 8 houses looking down at both ground floor and bedroom floor of property with no escape.

There will be between 75 and 100 new inhabitants in those 26 houses, none of whom will have jobs in the village as very few existing jobs and all have been taken; so they will all out commute. There will be so many more vehicle movements a day and chaos at that end of village.

Road and access - if you stand in middle of drive for Sandlease Court and walk approx. 21.4m to right you will end up in middle of where the access road will be. If you then stand there 2.4m back from the road is approx where you will be sitting in your car and then look to the right and watch traffic coming around the corner, you will see there is no time to pull out safely. There will be accidents, there will be litigation against WC at cost to tax payers.

Mainly sustainability - schools, shopping - either delivered or driven out for by all 26 households.

Plans are to build in open countryside outside the village limits - not acceptable. All new builds should be confirmed to within the limits of development that already exist for large villages in Wiltshire except in exceptional circumstances. These are definitely not exceptional circumstances. Planning officer said in 2017 refusal turning plan down on 11 counts: "Not in accord with the sustainable development strategy outlined within core policies q and 2 of the WCS".

Some debate on whether or not the WCS is out of date but unlikely that the bulk of the WCS will not be carried forward in its present guise towards future decision making.

Large village developments where needed should be up to a maximum of 10 dwellings and set within the village boundaries - this plan blatantly exceeds this limit and is not only excessive but totally unsustainable. There are places already identified for modest building consideration in terms of numbers. One already built, one has permission and long been talk of 8 sustainable houses on the Seend end of the village which has had no objections raised about it.

Dramatic loss of agricultural land - needs to stay as farmland.

Development will not make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire. It is an unnecessarily dense housing plan and is simply designed to be intimidating in volume so it can be resubmitted at a later date with a reduction so as to appease fears so villagers can say well at least it is not 26 houses.

The proposed development will have to be designed to ensure that no detriment to the residential amenity of the residents of adjoining properties.

This proposal will totally destroy our residential amenity. Will be overlooked by the 8 new houses in their elevated position and approximately 20 existing houses will be affected by its proximity, suffering severe degradation in the quality of life from shadowing, noise and urban lighting. Gross intrusion on our way of life.

Visual impact on broader scale - it will shatter the current rural landscape and will go opposite WCS core policy number 51 on landscape which is: "Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character."

Incredibly prominent and will be a permanent blemish on top of ridge. Impossible to ignore or hide.

Impact on heritage assets.

Concern re highway safety - there will be litigation

*G&S*

People already said what we wanted to say.

CM covered in detail; CN's comment amazing.

Agree with traffic issues; greenfield site; better sites in village; settlement too big.

Against the idea.

*KM - Sandlease bungalow*

Echo everything that's been said including increased traffic, sustainability, the problems at the bend.

Only get natural direct light to front room and bedroom is from 8am to 11.45am; after that no direct light into living space at all. There will be no natural daylight once development goes up.

*JS*

Live at top of Gaisford Chase which is visible from a considerable distance in South due to fact it is on top of a ridge. Back Lane is another way to get children to school. Most direct and obvious way from new estate.

Access onto High Street - suggest move access onto Worton Road junction. Make 4 way junction with roundabout.

Not sure about car usage - most current villagers have cars and will drive outside village to get to amenities other than pub. Development will increase traffic but it is increasing anyway so may be not particularly relevant?

Concern - will allow access to Back Lane and in future will give ability to turn Back Lane into a road and open it up to further development?

*K & wife*

People have said most of concerns.

Big issue would be everyone's mental health, not good at moment due to Covid and new houses would raise mental health issues especially for those in bungalows and being overlooked.

Back Lane would be used a lot more - width of footpath in narrow; dog fouling would increase

*K*

Don't think that most people would sell land on other side of Back Lane to have development as would be impracticable.

Back Lane not suitable for pushchairs; in winter inaccessible.

Traffic around bend is another point.

Most things covered.

Traffic survey in planning document said 10-minute walk from development to school - disagree

Not a good idea in its current format - maybe fewer houses but would need to be looked at.

*LH & parents*

Most points covered by everyone.

Main impact for parents - will lose natural daylight

Impact from noise and light pollution.

Ecological report that was done is older and does not support the increase in wildlife at that end of village.

WCS refers to the ageing population of Wiltshire - do the houses in the plan support the aging population of the village?

Infrastructure is a problem - People drive outside of the village to services in twons. Those towns have the infrastructure and people are able to walk. Unable to walk to Devizes etc from Worton.

Lack of bus services - people will drive.

With the amount of traffic and the junction, it is dangerous and scary.

*MP*

Clarified that the plans show that the junction is to be kept exactly as it is. Where the bench is, that is the sightline.

No other cutting of corner to be done.

In 2017 WC Highways did not see an issue with the speed of cars. They looked at the stats from the developer, which were very low, and the Parish Council metro counts - quite a difference between the two. WC thought the higher speed limits would be ok. WC Highways need to clarify.

NS

When Sandlease Court was built in 2008, part of the Highways permission for the Sandlease Court access required the access for Sandlease Farm bungalow to move to Sandlease Court drive as too close to the junction.

Q. To what extent if this development was permitted would it set a precedent for Worton and other villages

NS referred to the application documents Planning Statement September 2020, in particular 6.64 and 6.65. Why have the planners mentioned the adjacent Grade 3 land? Are they considering other sites?

Q. What is the benefit of the development for Worton? People will not necessarily use the facilities in the village. Will need to drive away from the village. Would query the assumption that adding more houses will help the infrastructure of the village.

*P&DC - Cedar Close*

No strong views but quite interested.

Neighbour made point that Wiltshire is full of lovely little villages, like the little villages so much that she bought a house in Worton and would like in to stay a little village but aware of the need for more houses.

Need compromise. Take opportunities for smaller developments in smaller plots thereby reducing the number of house in the Sandlease development.

Possibly unreasonable to say no to new housing

Sympathetic with everything that has been said.

Roundabout would have the effect of slowing traffic down and create access and would make junction safer and easier to navigate.

Answer to crossing road - zebra crossing either end of High Street

Back Lane is narrow and difficult - needs to be improved by WC. Brambles need to be cut back on one side and put down decent surface.

(Objects to having anonymous A4 flyers with inaccurate information and telling him how to object but not suggesting that he doesn't have to object)

*PB - High St opposite Sandlease*

Not much more to add,

Access - only aspect of application that is not to be reserved matter which means if application is approved the access could go ahead as designed.

Proposal is exactly the same as submitted in 2016 and amended in 2017 to widen the width of the access slightly. No mention of Highways when the application was refused in 2017.

WC Highways need to look at the current proposal and visit the site.

Outside the limits of the village and contravenes the WCS.

This application is effectively exactly the same as the one which was turned down.

Support issues already mentioned on wildlife and intrusion.

Not mentioned is energy conservation - the short statement accompanying the application is not worth the paper it is written on.

*RSI*

Not opposed to sustainable development. Limited development in village has merit. Concerns re sustainability of pub and school without sustainable number of young people etc.

Concerns re this proposed development.

Ethical issues with the proposition. For those who invested in Sandlease Court, to have their views and amenity taken away - ethical issues with that.

Did not feel that the Parish Council effectively represented the views of the village in 2017. Prime aim is that views of village, as expressed to WPC are accurately reflected to WC, noting that WPC's influence in this matter is limited.

*DP - Adjoins the proposed site*

Application is outline planning - final design could place garages and houses anywhere.

Back Lane possible option for school children - muddy and unlit. Unlikely to be made into major route.

Cycling to school is a possibility but there are a lot more cars, speed is high, lot of drivers distracted, lot of white vans. Uncomfortable with children cycling from Sandlease into village.

Almost all points raised by other eloquently covered.

Background to why application has reappeared. Wiltshire have a good local plan - the WCS. In this, settlements are placed in a hierarchy; priority is to place around urban centres where development is sustainable. No real intention to put houses in large villages unless they are within settlement boundary or there is an identified genuine need for housing.

Wiltshire Council have to maintain a 5-year rolling land supply; if they don't the WCS is considered out of date. There is a good land supply for Wiltshire especially in our area. Two big developments in Warminster and Salisbury have been delayed and have affected land supply meaning that it is currently less than 5 years. This is why the application has been put through again.

Up to last year, WC had planned to build up to 5,500 houses but have built over 8,000 houses from 2016 to 2019 so have overdelivered housing by 149%.

WC don't want to build in villages.

Developers will take the opportunity to exploit the loopholes.

Covid makes transparency much more difficult due to restrictions. Make communication difficult and makes it difficult for people to get across their view whether pro or anti.

A4 flyer - DC said he thought the speed of traffic through the village was inaccurate; he said those estimations of average speed had been challenged by speed CSW. DP replied that the figures for the traffic taken from the metro count survey. There are over a million vehicles a year coming through Worton. The speeds are quite high and the data is just from the metro count.

This application generates a lot of friction in the village. WPC response is only a small element of the overall decision making process. It is supposed to be Plan led - WC will use the WCS.

DC - doesn't feel friction has been caused but feels that the different points of view should be listened to.

*SP-H*

Agree with most of what everyone has said.

*V&JM - Sandlease bungalow*

Objecting

Bungalows will be directly overlooked by development.

All points covered

No privacy in garden or anywhere at back of bungalow

Access is dangerous

Agree with all points made

*DJ - Commenting as Speedwatch Volunteer*

Some people have questioned the figures on the A4 flyer.

WPC have requested up to date metro counts from WC. Figures on previous metro counts may be right, but some of those speeding vehicles may have been emergency vehicles going through at excessive speed as village is rat run for some of the emergency services.

Have also requested stats from CSW for the last year.

CSW shows that most speeding is in the high 30s, don't get many into the 40s.

*CN*

DJ has answered questions on traffic. Since last planning application for same site, 3 years have passed and appear to have seen an increase in volume of transport coming through the village. Please to see WPC is looking to refresh the information they hold.

*PB*

Metrocount carried out in 2017 and pleased further count is being done.

Design of junction is based on 2016 data collected by planners and ignores the later metro counts. If the later data were taken into account, it is believed that the design of the junction would not comply. WC Highways need to be encouraged to make a site visit.

*CM*

Thinking about current pandemic, the W&M Community Facebook group was set up at beginning of lockdown specifically to support the community. Important to remember the context in which this application is occurring. People have mentioned about the effect of the lack of natural light. The effect on everyone's mental health has been mentioned with what is happening with Covid. The developers are exploiting a loophole; we have a community here and it is surviving at the moment and anything that does anything to damage that community, especially at this time when we are trying to fight off the possibility of another lockdown, has to be considered when responding to WC, whether you are pro the development or against. The context needs to be taken into account.

*GC*

What has happened to NP?

What has happened to plot of land on corner of Mill Road

*MP*

Land at Mill Road owned by W&M Charities. They withdrew application in 2017 when the original Sandlease application was rejected so that theirs was not rejected as well. Were looking at CLH but this has not progressed due to Covid.

NP was put on hold due to the expense of progressing it and no guarantee that NO would have an impact in the planning process.

Waiting for further information on the Government planning policy.

*BD*

A village meeting had been organised to explain CLH but could not go ahead due to Covid lockdown.

*DP*

Housing supply in our area was so good so that there was no pressure to have a NP because the WCS deals with inappropriate applications. Cost of NP - designed for larger settlements than us; quite a cost involved.

WC are reviewing WCS to extend it to 2036 so quite a few changes may be considered.

*K & wife*

Vehicles are speeding through village and this is unsafe - would speed bumps help?

*BD*

In the past extensive efforts in looking at traffic speed through the village can be influenced positively; on site surveys carried out with WC to look and what could be done and solution were found not to be practicable.

Did manage to get a change to speed limit at Seend end to lower the speed of traffic into village.

*CM*

Thanks to DJ and CSW volunteers. Suggest they position themselves at proposed access and record speed of vehicles coming round the bend.

*DJ*

CSW have set the positions which the local police force have risk assessed and not allowed to move off those spots. Only 4 positions in full length of High Street. Standing elsewhere will affect personal insurance.

*NS*

NP - In the WC meetings, focus changed from NPs to Community Trusts and CLH.

Disappointed the CLH site didn't progress due to Covid.

WPC doesn't have much influence with WC. Individuals encouraged to write to WC.

*DP*

CSW - the idea is that the volunteers are visible.

Of the two metrocounts carried out in 2017, the one at Mill Head showed the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed as 37.4mph - 85% doing below this and 15% above. This was a count of 32,000 cars.

Encouraged people to write to WC whatever their views are.

*K & wife*

Q. Is there a certain amount of rejections that will make WC refuse application?

*Clerk*

WC planning officer will read all the comments but the decision will be taken based on planning law and not on the number of responses. Reason for everyone responding is that you may all make different points.

Information on what points will be considered and what won't be considered by the planning officers on WC's website (<https://bit.ly/3mieKsz>) but Clerk will post on WPC Facebook and website as well

### **Emails and telephone calls received**

*BF*

I support this application. Worton needs more housing to support the community facilities, pub, school, church, playgrounds etc.

*LH*

That corner is even more dangerous now than it used to be. Traffic is three times heavier, and even less inclined to obey the thirty mile an hour limit; a lot of people, even in the village seem to think our High Street is an A road anyway, which it isn't (it's a C road, previously unclassified,) and lots more cars use Cuckold's Lane as a cut through, making the corner even more dodgy! When advertising this development, if it does get built, the developers need to consider that there is no shop, post office or petrol station, the pub has been teetering on the brink of closure for the last ten years, and a lot of the movers and shakers who moved here 30 or 40 years ago, are now old, and either dead or moving to more accessible accommodation. That's even without Covid!

*RSh*

My comments are drawn from the principal reasons why the last (in 2017) and previous (in I believe 1987) applications were refused.

1. The vision for Wiltshire contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy is to create stronger more resilient communities by seeking to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth in the county. Policies seek to balance the development of new homes with jobs and infrastructure provision in order to help reduce the propensity to commute, and the need to travel, through improving levels of self-containment. The proposed development would conflict with this settlement strategy, would therefore be unsustainable. It would conflict with the Council's plan-led approach to sustainable development.
2. The previous application was refused as the site was not allocated for development within the local plan, and was outside the development boundary. Furthermore, the proposed development would adversely affect the setting of Worton in the landscape and the amenity of the area. This is still the case, and there is no requirement for more dwellings in this Ward.
3. The development will not conserve or enhance the existing landscape character or protect existing views into, within and out of the site. This urban development will have a harmful impact upon the local landscape character, on the visual amenity of adjoining residents, and on users of local public rights of way.

*D&RP - copy of response to WC*

We have reviewed the outline plans and we have grave concerns surrounding traffic management in the immediate area.

We would like to draw your attention to the following:

Transport Statement - Existing Movement Data Vehicle Speed Survey

1. The vehicle speed survey is 4 years out of date (22nd September 2016)
2. The timing of the vehicle speed survey was only 1 hour and in the off peak period, 12.20 to 13.20pm. It was during wet weather, which slows people down and we are sure drivers seeing traffic being monitored would have also slowed them down. This is evident when the village hold their own speed watch sessions. Therefore, we feel this is not a proportional representation of traffic speed and flow in that area.
3. Access to the site is approximately only 25m from the apex of the bend and Sandlease court access is only 10m away from the new proposed access.
  - a. Traffic from both of these sites could have combined visual impairment whilst trying to get onto the main road.

b. The proposed new site entrance is close to the bend of the main road and could be a potential accident spot. eg residence slowing down on a blind corner to turn into the new site.

4. Footpaths - we do not agree with the statement that there are good footpaths throughout the village. There are paths, but they are narrow in places and you may have to cross the road to safely access a continuous route. A few residents in the village have been hit by the wing mirrors of passing vehicles.

In our opinion, an independent, up to date, and thorough traffic speed, flow and safety survey needs to be commissioned before any decisions are made regarding site access.

#### *G&KC*

We are not resistant to change and would welcome appropriate development that would enhance our community. However, we will be submitting an objection to this proposal to WC for the following reasons:

- The site is outside the limits of development recently adopted for good reason to protect the rural landscape while allowing for reasonable development.
- There are few facilities available in Worton and all these are concentrated a considerable distance from the proposed site. The existing footpaths are inadequate, narrow and non continuous. Thus the vast majority of journeys would be made by car, adding to the already unsustainable number of car journeys made from and within Worton.
- There is a serious road safety problem with the High Street, both for pedestrians and road traffic. The proposed access to the site is in a ludicrous position far too close to a blind corner for traffic approaching the village.
- The reasons for outright rejection of this plan in 2017 still stand. If a technicality were to allow the scheme to go ahead now, it would spell the end to the protection that the planning system provides, opening the floodgates to opportunistic and damaging development while stifling the efforts of those trying to provide good quality, sustainable homes and infrastructure that is less reliant on the car and enhances the rural landscape rather than destroys it. (The proposed site is currently well used productive farmland)
- The position of the proposed development is on elevated ground where it would dominate the views towards the village from the South while also looking down on a significant number of existing homes and gardens.
- The valley to the south of the village already has a significant flooding problem which impacts homes and road access downstream at the South Western limit of the village, as well as access to Marston. This development would significantly increase run-off into Worton Brook and increase the extent and frequency of flooding.

These are some reasons why WPC should object to this proposal. It is important to note that should a need for a significant number of new homes in Worton be identified, there are other sites in the village that in the longer term could become available to which the objections listed would not apply. There is no need to extend the east (or west) extremities of this already long thin village.

#### *P&KW*

Our concerns are :-

1. The proposed access and its proximity to the boundary of the speed limit for incoming vehicles.
2. What type of housing is being proposed? We hope there will be a good mixture across the board.
3. 26 houses is a large development for this area and extra pedestrians must be catered for, bearing in mind the inadequate safety factors i.e. there is no continuous pavement through the village on the High Street.

#### *SN*

With regard to the outline planning proposal at sandleaze farm, I would like to remind you of the results of the village survey undertaken by the neighbourhood planning committee.

The village was in favour of small parcel development of less than 10 houses and the requirement was for small to medium sized homes.

I believe this is still the case and would strongly object to a development of the size proposed.

#### *Mrs P - Sandleaze*

Totally object to development.

It will encroach on a lot of people who live in Sandleaze.

Moved here 18 yrs ago to live in rural area. This development will make it less rural, more urban.



It will mean more people, more vehicles, more pollution, more noise, more street lights.  
Main C20 road is dangerous where the proposed access is.  
In will increase the traffic through the village (there is enough already).  
No amenities to support more people e.g. no shop, PO etc.  
Nothing should be built there.  
There will be an impact on wildlife.  
It is a complete and utter disgrace.

*AD*

I am against the development on many grounds and have written to the planning management stating my reasons.

*DC*

Whilst I make no apology for what I said at the above discussion, I know that I was feeling very antagonised by the anonymous 1 sided note referred to, and that this emotion caused me to express myself badly. Accordingly, I hope you will allow me to make a few points for your consideration.

As I understand it - a developer has acquired an interest in the farm land that slopes away behind Sandlease Court and is adjacent to Sandlease bungalows. Somewhat understandably the said developer is applying for Outline Planning Permission for the second time.

The developer has little to lose by this tactic and I believe there are many examples of such persistence paying off – sooner or later. It is with this in mind that I would have thought a more reasoned argument was likely to succeed, rather than a total objection.

After all, the grounds of ACCESS and SAFETY, which everybody seemed to mention, could in my opinion be easily overcome by placing a mini roundabout at the junction of High Street and the Pottern Road, with a spur off to the plot. This would have the added advantage of slowing the traffic down through the village. If in addition, Back Lane was improved and 2 Zebra crossings were painted across the High Street, you'd have an easy and safe walk to school.

Surprisingly, nobody mentioned the detrimental effect on the value of their property – so soon after paying search fees to County, which I assume indicated no intention to build on what was/is Green Belted land. Certainly, if I had bought a house there in the last 5 years, and had been advised by a Search that development was unlikely – I would regard it as a betrayal to even consider a development. Otherwise, what is the point of a Search?

As well as upsetting its neighbours, 26 houses would easily be the biggest and most dense estate/road in the village, and as such would cause an imbalance which would have a considerable impact. An alternative might be fewer and lower houses (bungalows) further down the slope of the field.

If Worton is to become the site of more houses for the County, there are several other plots that could accommodate 10 – 20 houses that would be more suitable for this small village. It might be an idea to exploit these as a means to reduce the demand of 26 on the currently proposed plot.

Worton is a nicely proportioned Village, and I am very much in favour of trying to keep it that way. Accordingly, I wish you success – even if it didn't sound it the other evening.