

RESPONSE OF OUNDLE TOWN COUNCIL TO PLANNING APPLICATION NE/21/00742/FUL.

OTC OBJECTS to the application as revised.

HOUSING NEED

Although the council accepts that the site is potentially suitable for some residential development the application submitted fails to adequately address the particular challenges posed by the location and topography of the proposed site. There is also the question of whether any further residential development (other than windfall) is required in Oundle in the period to 2031 given that the joint core strategy minimum development number for the town for the period to that date is already exceeded by virtue of the outline planning permission granted for residential development on land off Cotterstock Road and St. Christopher's Drive and there is no satisfactory evidence to show a need for this additional housing provision in Oundle at the present time.

INFRASTRUCTURE

As a general point any substantial residential development in Oundle – and the council considers this application to be substantial – should be accompanied by adequate infrastructure improvements as the town's infrastructure is under considerable pressure in many areas and this development will exacerbate the concerns that exist in a number of areas. For example the council is mindful of the response to this application made by the Nene Clinical Commissioning Group on 28/06/21 stating that the Oundle Surgery was at full capacity even before the work starts on either of the major residential developments in the town which have been granted outline planning permission let alone the residential development of this site. Whilst provision could be made for extra capacity through section 106 funding it would be preferable for that additional capacity to be in place before this site is granted permission for development.

If this application were to be granted the developer must make a significant contribution towards infrastructure improvements in addition to the provision of the much needed cemetery extension, the land for which must be conveyed outright to the council which owns the existing cemetery. The council understands that the revised plans for the development were influenced by the comments of the Planning Authority and that a reduction in the amount of land being provided for the cemetery extension has resulted from this. The council finds the reduction unacceptable and asks that the amount of land to be provided for the extension be restored in the event that permission to develop the site residentially is granted in view of the need for additional cemetery provision both now and for the future.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The council is concerned that if the residential development of this site is permitted at the present time the town will face very considerable disruption as a result of three separate residential developments within the town being progressed at the same time and would seek that appropriate conditions are imposed to ameliorate the practical effects of this.

A construction management plan must be in place to ensure that the on site work causes as little nuisance as possible to existing residents in Clifton Drive and Warren Bridge. This must include nuisance occurring whether as a result of noise, smell, smoke, dust or mud and limiting work on site to set hours: Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800 and Saturday 0800 to 1300 with no work permitted on Sundays or bank holidays.

The council asks that the developer produces a scheme for the archaeological investigation of the site prior to development in consultation with the County Archaeological Advisor.

FLOODING

There are significant issues with regard to flooding in the area of Warren Bridge and it is the concern of the council's experienced Flood Warden and of the council itself and of residents in both Warren Bridge and Clifton Drive that the proposed residential development of this site will exacerbate those difficulties with the applicant failing to put forward adequate proposals to deal with them. Residents are concerned that even if the measures proposed would prevent flooding on the development site they are likely to displace the risk of flooding to both Clifton Drive and particularly to Warren Bridge which would be completely unacceptable. It is self-evident that building on the site will lead to additional problems arising from run off and the measures that are proposed to deal with this appear wholly inadequate. The council has particular concerns about the siting of the proposed pumping station feeling that this could be a source of problems in itself and that there would be a better location for this further from the brook and closer to the estate road and the attenuation pond. The council also believes that the proposed footbridge linking this development to Clifton Drive could result in an increased flood risk. The council notes that the Flood and Water Management Team are not happy with the applicant's proposals and feels that the developer should be required to come up with a well-engineered solution – assuming one is possible – to the flooding issue before any further consideration is given to the application.

CRIME AND DISORDER

Residents in Clifton Drive have expressed further concerns about the proposed footbridge fearing that it will impact upon the security of their homes and worrying that pedestrians using the bridge as a link to Clifton Drive and to the Benefield Road beyond could be at risk of injury as there is no footpath within Clifton Drive which would result in them having to share the road with vehicular traffic entering or leaving Clifton Drive.

ROAD SAFETY

The council is concerned by the impact of this development on the Stoke Doyle Road and specifically the bridge at Warren Bridge which in its present form would be inadequate to deal with the volume of traffic that will be generated from a site with parking provision for 182 vehicles and which could struggle to cope with the construction traffic generated by the works being undertaken on site. While the erection of permanent traffic lights on either side of the bridge rendering it one way in each direction on an alternating basis would afford some amelioration there would be an adverse visual impact from these and associated pollution issues and, more particularly, there is a risk that traffic queuing at the lights might back up in both directions causing problems. Quite apart from this there is no adequate footpath provision at the bridge at present leaving pedestrians to walk in the road. With the likelihood of a significantly increased quantity of pedestrian traffic originating from the site there would need to be not only a footpath from the bridge to the development site access but also a footpath/bridge at the location of the present bridge to keep pedestrians and vehicular traffic safe and separate. Whether it would be feasible for the existing bridge to be retained and used for pedestrians only with a new bridge being provided for vehicular traffic would need to be resolved between the Highways Authority and the developer and potentially other neighbouring landowners but this is the council's preferred solution. There might be an opportunity for the stone wall that was partially washed away in the 1998 floods to be restored as part of this exercise which would improve the visual aspects at the current bridge although it would be important to ascertain

whether its restoration would be likely to increase the risk of flooding impacting properties in Warren Bridge in which case restoration should only go ahead if any resulting additional flood risk could be mitigated in other ways. It is noted that there is a proposal to extend the existing thirty mile an hour limit to beyond the entrance to the new site. In the interests of road safety consideration should be given to extending the limit to beyond the Wood Lane junction with Stoke Doyle Road in the event that permission for the development is granted.

On a related note there should be no tandem parking arrangements anywhere on site and if this means that there would have to be a reduction in the number of dwellings then there should be such a reduction.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The developer seeks to assert that it would not be economically feasible for there to be 40% affordable housing provision on this site. OTC is firmly of the opinion that there should be such a level of provision and that the level of affordable housing proposed is inadequate. The council notes that the Housing Strategy Manager's response to the original application (25/6/21) sought clear evidence that the site could not be economically developed with more than 20% affordable housing provision and does not feel that the applicant has established that this is the case. The council is also concerned that the proposed 'balance' of the estate could be adversely affected if in future home owners are able to extend/alter properties adding additional bedrooms and/or other living accommodation thereby reducing the 'pool' of smaller properties and if it would be possible to include a condition on any permission granted which could prevent this happening then this should be done.

IMPACT UPON EXISTING HOUSING PROVISION

The council is aware of objections from residents in Clifton Drive that due to the topography of the development site houses in the proposed development would overlook their properties and supports the suggestion that the orientation of houses on the new development should be altered so that the impact of this is removed or at the least reduced and is sympathetic to the idea that opaque glass be used in any side windows facing Clifton Drive. The council is disappointed that the resubmitted plans have failed to address this issue and that material supplied by the developer in connection with the development is misleading by failing to show the impact upon Clifton Drive of the housing proposed. The council is also concerned that insufficient care has been taken to lessen the impact of light pollution from the development (through street lighting, the lights in the proposed new houses and vehicle headlights) on the existing properties in Clifton Drive

LANDSCAPING/ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

In a similar vein the council shares concerns expressed by residents regarding the adequacy of the proposed planting/landscaping scheme and supports the objection of the Wildlife Trust in connection with the impact of the proposed development on the protected wildflower verge.