

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

Comments on RLW application: **S/2075/18/OL**

Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for development of up to 4,500 dwellings, business, retail, community, leisure and sports uses; new primary and secondary schools and sixth form centre; public open spaces including parks and ecological areas; points of access, associated drainage and other infrastructure, groundworks, landscaping, and highways works.

Overall the Parish Council does not consider that the information provided within the application submission adequately addresses fundamental issues of concern.

Moreover, at this time there is:

- no adopted local plan policy to support the development of Waterbeach new town, indeed as SCDC now have a five-year land supply which makes this a speculative planning application contrary to policies in the adopted (2007) local plan.
- The application is to develop greenfield and will result in the loss of high grade agricultural land; moreover, the proposal is outside the village envelope.
- no SPD is in place to define and coordinate the process (as required in the draft local plan)
- no substantive outcome from the Ely to Cambridge transportation study to inform transportation assumptions and decisions made within the application. it remains the case that transportation is a critical concern of the Parish council.
- a lack of evidence of a consistent and coherent approach by the 2 potential developers of the strategic site.

Therefore Waterbeach Parish Council UNANIMOUSLY recommends REFUSAL of this planning application which it considers premature in principle until the Local Plan has been approved, and an SPD prepared, consulted upon and adopted.

Beyond the issues of principle and timing the Parish Council has significant concerns in respect to a number of impacts of the proposal as set out below;

However, the Parish Council discussed the application at its recent meeting and wishes to emphasise the following concerns which it has expressed consistently:

- **Transport infrastructure:**
 - There should be no development of the site until there is direct access off the A10 as there is no suitable route through the village for construction traffic.
 - The Parish Council considers no significant development should take place until there have been improvements to the A10 .
 - The Parish Council would like to see a joint travel/traffic plan between UC and RLW to reflect what is best for the village. Currently the travel plan proposals are not considered to be adequately coordinated or consistent.
 - There is a huge emphasis on cycling within the new settlement but the reality is that in all likelihood the biggest percentage of journeys will be by car users and the transport strategy needs to support all modes of transport to reflect the needs of the whole community, including the elderly and disabled.
 - The Parish Council do not feel the location of the proposed new station and dense building on the southern tip of the site is appropriate and feel the impact might be somewhat mitigated if the station site was further north.
- **Quantum of Development**

- The Parish Council reiterates its concern at the quantum of development. The combined planning applications for Urban & Civic (6500) and RLW (4500) gives a total of 1100 properties.
- **Scale and Height of Buildings**
 - The Parish Council remains extremely concerned at the visual impact of the development within the fen landscape particularly in relation to the taller elements proposed. It is proposed initial development will be in the area of the new station which is right on the edge of the site with no screening to help mitigate the impact of buildings up to 30 m high on the rural landscape, the walks along the river etc and this leads to an unacceptable change in the relation of the built environment and the fenland areas.
 - Particular concern was expressed in respect to this impact at night when the scale of the proposed development will be particularly evident.
- **Open Space**
 - The Parish Council is concerned in relation to the quantum and location of the proposed Public Open Spaces, there is insufficient open space adjacent to existing village and therefore little opportunity for screening of the proposed station area.
 - There is insufficient open space in the development itself as the acreage seems to be significantly focussed on the northern fringe of the site which will be at some distance from the proposed initial development area and remote to existing residents of Waterbeach.
 - It is not appropriate to include the water attenuation area as part of the required open space (see other reservations re this below under drainage).
- **Drainage**
 - The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the drainage strategy appears to rely on attenuation outside the development boundary of the SS5 site and believes that all essential infrastructure should be accommodated within the proposed SS5 boundary.
 - The Parish Council has concerns over the safety of the proposed open drains throughout the proposed development which may have significant water depth at times and pose a safety concern for children and other pedestrians/cyclists.
 - The Parish Council is aware that for many people in the vicinity of Long Drove their water comes from wells and boreholes and would like to see an assessment of the impact of the development on such water supplies to ensure existing inhabitants do not suffer any contamination or disruption of supply.
- **Water**
 - The Parish Council also voiced concerns in relation to water supply issues- based on the poor water pressure already experienced in the village; in particular the Parish Council requires SCDC to consider the following issues.
 - General shortage of water in the area.
 - Sufficient water capacity for the proposed development.
 - Maximising the use of recycled water.
 - Control of existing water and supply of water to the site.
 - No significant construction until a dedicated supply (i.e. new main) has been provided for the new town.
 - Confirmation that the water pressure available will be adequate for fire hydrants.
- **Housing mix**
 - The Parish Council believes.
 - There should be a variety of types and sizes.

- There should be generous street open space.
- Housing should be built to high environmental standards.
- There should be an appropriate proportion of affordable housing, some provision of self-build plots and potentially some areas for development by community land trusts (CLT).
- That the affordable housing provision should include a variety of sizes of house and not be concentrated on small 1 or 2 bed units.
- **Energy Centres**
 - The proposal is not clear on the siting of these, their impact or the impact of wind turbines which are also mentioned.
- **Public Amenity**
 - Currently Bannold Drove is a green track on the edge of the village. Bannold Road is well used by walkers, runners, cyclists and families to access the River Cam and surrounding countryside and fens. Together they are the main routes from the rural edge of the village to the open countryside. Urbanisation and industrialisation of these links in the public realm will destroy this access forever and cannot be mitigated.
- **Border with existing development (still commonly referred to as the “married quarters”)**
 - The screening of the edge of the development and the existing houses in the southern border of the site is inadequate, there needs to be significant green area between existing housing and the proposed link road with access to open space which existing and new residents can enjoy and have some separation from the dense urbanisation proposed around the station quarter.
- **Sports Ground Provision**
 - The Parish Council is concerned that the sports grounds are all located at the extreme northern end of the development site although the construction is likely to start in the area near to the village and therefore initially it is not clear that new residents will have access to appropriate sporting facilities placing a considerable strain on the Parish’s current facilities.
 - Additional sports fields need to be included in the southern part of the site.
 - Lighting pollution from the sports grounds may be significant and impact the nearby Denny Abbey and residents in the area.
- **S106**
 - The Parish Council feels that any significant conditions for development in the future need to be crystallised in an S106 agreement to which the Parish Council is a party rather than by conditions of an approval decision.
 - Contributions should be made to support existing facilities in the village which will be used in the initial stages until the development has provided all the education, health, community centres etc envisaged, and these are likely to be provided in phases not all at the outset. There will be pressure on existing facilities which may need expansion to cope, especially in the initial phase.
- **Timeline**
 - Firm indication of timing provision of specific facilities for education, health, community, sport etc are needed linked to the trigger points of housing/business development.
 - Mitigation, such as the shuttle bus not being guaranteed long term to ensure adequate access for the existing village.

- Provision of adequate sewerage infrastructure must be in place before any developments given the current problems with the existing pumping station when there is significant storm water.

The Parish Council notes there are other comments on this application from residents and bodies, such as Cambridge PPF, which express similar concerns and all these need to be taken into account including the need for a Crime Prevention Strategy.

In conclusion Waterbeach Parish Council unanimously recommend refusal of this planning application and believes significant additional information needs to be provided to address the issues identified and that no further application should be considered until the results of the Local Plan are known, the SPD has been finalised and consulted upon and an appropriate transport strategy has been provided.